CHAPTER – VII
SUMMING UP
This marvelous creation described as a submissive wife whose reason for being was to love, honor, obey and occasionally amuse her husband, to bring up his children and manage his household. Physically weak and ‘formed for the less laborious occupations’ she depended upon male protection. To secure this protection, she was endowed with the capacity to create a magic spell over any man in her vicinity. She was timid and modest, beautiful, and graceful…the most fascinating being in creation…the delight and charm of every circle she moved in.

—Ann Frier Scott

The final chapter is concerned with bringing together the salient elements that have emerged in this present work. The preceding chapters have attempted to explore the theme of colonial innocence and awakening as reflected in Black feminist fiction from Zora Neale Hurston and her successor Alice Walker’s novels a vanguardal breakthrough voice in African American women’s novelistic tradition. Since the study is related to black women and their infernal experiences in white America, these terms are placed not in the ethical or theological context, but in the context of slavery, racism, colonialism and feminism. Viewed from these perspectives, innocence denotes a zone where the true self of the oppressed person is moulded, subverted and distorted in such way that it is ultimately driven to a state of powerlessness, normlessness, facelessness, dependency, and insipidity existence to the extent that it is almost “infantilized”(Sharpley, 647) or made analogous to what Jacques Lacan calls “mirror stage” in which the infant possesses no individuality or self that can act as the subject of its experience and the creator of its own consciousness.

If innocence denotes psychic impairment, mutilation of self and loss of consciousness, then experience, in a sense, means creating a grammar of self, moving into the zone of ontological empowerment and reversing the whole order that holds a person in psychic bondage. It is in short, moving oneself into a state of decolonization which, as Frantz Fanon (Fanon, 28) defines,
Transforms spectators crushed with their inessentialities into Privileged actors, with the grandiose glare of history’s floodlights upon them. It brings a natural rhythm into existence, introduced by new men and with it a new language and a new humanity. Decolonization is the veritable creation of new men…the thing which has become colonized becomes man during the same process by which it frees itself.

Placed in the context of colonialism and slavery, the experiential discourse includes not only the deconstruction of one’s own self through positive outlooks and wisdom.

It is this theme that becomes the central concern for contemporary Black women novelists such as Zora Neale Hurston and Alice Walker. Ideas reflected in their novels are many but, as the present study suggests, their major concern is essentially folklore of black women which helps to understand their agony and the recovery of self and reclamation of cultural past, the two integral part aspects of black women’s being which were devastated and nearly erased through horrendous impingement of racism, slavery, colonialism and phallocratic order. For instance, in all their works, they dramatizes black women’s journey from loss of self to the recovery of that self, from a fractured psyche to spiritual wholeness, from a psychological chaos to a cosmos, and from a DuBoisian veil to a more radiant vision.

Their writings are grounded in history for it is this history that wrested black African queens and Yoruba children from the Edenic heights of Mother Africa and hurled them headlong into the dismal abyss of American chattel slavery, it is this history that dehumanized them, denuded them of self, and finally, transformed them into self-oblivious creatures by rupturing their psyche profusely. Their reference obviously is to the historical underpinnings which created pathology of black existence in white America, that robbed black people of their self-identity producing Uncle Toms and Avery Johnsons who cannot even call their “nation.”
The introductory chapter therefore explores origin of African American literature, and the cause for origin from where its roots developed in the oral traditions of African slavery in America. The slaves used stories and fables in much the same way as they used music. These stories influenced the earliest African American writers and poets in the 18th contrary. Also this, expounds various socio-historical contexts that dehistoricized and decontextualized black women’s lives by causing erosion of their consciousness in the new world. An attempt is made to know how racist, sexist and patriarchal forces converged on the black-eyed Susans to lull them into a false sense or no sense of self and also to experience the “abyss of non-being.” History evidences that these ebony Yoruba daughters were not only stripped off of their African frame of reference but even depersonalized and dehistoricized through socialization and psychic conditioning which were orchestrated through different forces.

The economics of slavery embedded in the capitalistic ideals, that exploited black women for productive and reproductive ends, depersonalized them to the extent that they could lay claim either to their human dignity or their true self. The external forces which operated through branding, lynching, raping and commodification of sorts came to have unmistakable relationship to the internal fears, worries, anxieties, and feelings of inadequacy, leading black women “to repress their awareness of themselves as free people and to adopt the slave identity imposed on them” (Hooks, 1981: 19). The peculiar institution forced them to survive by any means, no matter even if it amounted to “self-defacement, self-negation and allowance of powerlessness” (Canaan, 1981: 236). Socialization through violence, commodification and surivalism, drained black women of all creative and intellectual energy transforming them into near zombies who “work ferociously and tirelessly without consciousness of their surroundings and conditions and without memory of their former state” (Hurston, 179)

If there is anything that took a heavy toll of black women’s personality more than anything else, it is the weapon of ideology or what Frantz Fanon (Fanon, 60) calls “neurotic orientation.” Caught in the crossfire of “geometric oppression” of race, gender, and class, being”slave of a slave” or, what Jacques Lacan calls, “the other of the other”, black women were socialized by both the racist and phallocratic groups with a view to
effecting abolition of one zone, its burial in depth of the earth and replacing with that of the colonizer. The indoctrination process that was perpetuated for centuries together through degrading, dehumanizing, distorting myths, stereotypes, images, aimed at seducing, pressuring and forcing black women to somehow replace individual and cultural ways of knowing and living with those of white thought system.

American chattel slavery operated through socialization, violence and objectification which in their unified effect damaged black women’s self-identity and consciousness. Under the sheer force of devastating circumstances, black women became oblivious of her past and future. Survival in the present moment became her sole obsession. The economics of slavery drained her of all creative and intellectual activities. Leo Kuper describes slavery and colonization as the “process of zombification” (14). Zora Neale Hurston in her *Tell My Horse* defines zombies as “the bodies without souls, the living dead… and one who will work ferociously and tirelessly without consciousness of his surroundings and conditions and without memory of his former state. They can move and act but cannot formulate thought.”

The history of black women under America’s slavery, racism, colonialism, materialism and phallocratic order, thus, is the history of vision blinded, psyche fractured, perceptual faculty blurred, and the innate self conditioned, and finally muted through brain washing. It is a saga of black collective history and cultural past either distorted, and defaced by white society order or forfeited and surrendered by black women lies, secrets, myths, stereotypes and images.

The women must be regenerated, reborn, made respectable for social acceptance only through men. Basic to this machoism is the black man’s sexual politics based on a phallocratic ideology that;

> Black men…are primary and sacred and women are secondary and profane…that they, not oppressive system (Hernton, 47)

Through this sexual politics, black men dehumanized black women both in real life and literature and it was through this device that they excluded women from equal
participation in various liberation movements. Nikki Giovanni aptly remarks: “All the men heard was the agony of the men. That’s valid…They brought the drums for sure but they did not bring the hum (of black women).” Blinded by the phallic ideology, the black male writers dug the same hole for black women which the white society had dug for the black people. The myths images and stereotypes which black men held about black women were as degrading and dehumanizing as the images and misconception perpetuated by the white people.

The entire account of various social, political, and historical aspects of black women’s existential conditions in America from slavery to the present times reflects how they were conditioned psychologically and how they were transformed into self-oblivious persons. Black women’s monoism resulting in the single-minded obsession for race upliftment, their thrust for assimilation, and their flight from their own cultural milieu, their subscription to the racist, sexist groups’ ideology through silence and self-censorship along with many other factors are reflected not only in their actual lives but in their literature as well.

Feminist scholars have moved rapidly forward in addressing theories of subjectivity, questions of difference, the construction of social relations as relations of power, the conceptual implications of binary oppositions such as male versus female or equality versus difference—all issues defined with relevance to gender and with potential for intellectual and social transformations. Notwithstanding a few notable exceptions, this new wave of feminist theorists finds little to say about race. The general trend has been to mention black and Third World feminists who first called attention to the glaring fallacies in essentialist analysis and to claims of a homogeneous "womanhood", “woman’s culture," and "patriarchal oppression of women."

In second chapter both writers’ novels, *Jonah’s Gourd Vine* and *The Third Life Grange Copeland* are discussed. It is this black feminine self, and this black collective history and black cultural past that Zora Neale Hurston and Alice Walker want to make recovery and reclamation of their fictional canon. One of the basic and most essential factors involved in this process is Image –making, which serves as a corrective measure
against all distortions deliberately perpetuated to depersonalize and dehumanize black women. Walker, since she found for the first time Zora’s novels and astonishing for the brilliancy in using black people’s folklore and native dialect, she became her follower and imitated Zora in her writings too. Therefore their novels bear similar theme and almost no contrast in their novel’s content.

Both, Zora Neale Hurston and Alice Walker essentially maintained some standards. They used their skills to bring out the best for the advancement of black women.

As they share common bond, even similarities can be understood in their novels, *Jonah’s Gourd Vine*, by Zora Neale Hurston and *The Third Life of Grange Copeland*, by Walker, are analyzed. A serious study finds resemblance in various aspects i.e. father-son relation, the impact of slavery and poverty, husband-wife relation, women’s responsibility, and moving in search of fortunate from south to north.

John seeks work at his mother’s former home, the Pearson plantation on the other side of the creek. While living there, he discovers his unusual susceptibility to the charms of women. He actually loves only Lucy Potts, the smartest girl in his class at school but later he continues to venture from one affair to another which even Lucy cannot control his promiscuity. Soon, to escape imprisonment for stealing a hog and for attacking Lucy’s brother, John is forced to leave town. So he wanders south to Eatonville, Florida, where his carpentry and ministry earn him a position of respect. Though he comes to high position, he cannot curb his sexual urges. After Lucy’s death, he again marries Hattie Tyson who knows hoodoo and later to a wealthy women but he becomes blind with the guilty of prostitution and he drives his car into the path of an oncoming train and is immediately killed.

The plot of Alice Walker’s first novel, *Third Life of Grange Copeland*, exposes the pattern of terror over a span of sixty years in the lives of one black family of sharecroppers. It describes sharecropping as an efficient system of exploitation by manipulation of debt and wage cutting. In a satiric vein, Robert Coles comments on how slavery affects Grange through this system:
Equally vivid is Grange Copeland, who is more than a representative of George’s black field hands, more than someone scarred by what has been called the mark of oppression. Grange Copeland abuses and beats his wife, Margaret, and neglects his son, Brownfield like Ned, John’s stepfather, in *Jonah’s Gourd Vine* who uses to beat his wife. Ned “uncoiled the whip and standing tiptoe to give himself more force, brought the whip down across Amy’s back”(22), because Grange feels himself less than a man in a land where his entire life is indebted to the white boss. As he grows older, he feels trapped by his family, for they hold him to this life. Increasingly he feels guilty because he can neither protect his wife from the white hairy arms of Shipley nor make possible a better life for his son. As he drinks solace from the overflowing breasts and bar of Josie, the local whore, Margaret takes on lovers, reacting to Grange’s abuse by abusing herself. When her husband leaves his life of indebtedness for the North, Margaret poisons herself and her young, illegitimate baby.

Deserted by his parents, Brownfield, a young man of sixteen, follows his father’s path only to end up working for and sleeping with Josie, which is very similar to John’s life in *Jonah’s Gourd Vine* who runs after different women for his physical lust. While Brownfield is employed at the Dew Drop Inn, Brownfield meets and falls in love with Mem, Josie’s schoolteacher niece. In love and passion they marry-only to repeat the pattern of depression and abuse Grange and Margaret had already drawn. In spite of Mem’s efforts to better her life and the lives of her daughters, Brownfield drags her down. Feeling less than a man, he, too, buries himself in Josie only to lose even her to the father that deserted him.

Thus, both *Jonah’s Gourd Vine*, by Zora Neale Hurston and *The Third Life of Grange Copeland*, by Alice Walker though run differently, they bear some common perspectives. Both Margaret and Amy are victims for the frustration of Grange and Ned Crittenden who get it from whites. In both novels the black people are represent from south where sharecropping is main profession for blacks. Mary Helen Washington comments on how the system of slavery in the South was responsible for shadowing the lives of blacks: “Rannae Toomer, in “Strong Horse Tea”, for example, struggling to get a doctor for her dying child, is handicapped by poverty and ignorance as well as by the
racism of the southern rural area she lives in.” Both John Buddy Pearson and Brownfield are neglected sons by their fathers in two novels whose consequences affect in their family life. Both writers mentioned the travel of blacks from south to north in finding of fortune. Women in both novels in spite of their husbands’ cruel treatment they give importance to familial relation, obey to husbands and take care of the children.

Thus, both writers gave vivid description of Sharecropping and its impact on African American black people especially women’s physical as well as psychological sufferings by white racists and men in their own community. Zora explained the conflict between physical and spiritual desires in her novel, *Jonah’s Gourd Vine*, in a clear picture.

Using their writing and their language as a spring board, Hurston, Walker and their female protagonists develop individuals’ techniques of resistance towards the power that gets inflicted up on them. These techniques of resistance after the starting point for the investigation. How do Hurston and Walker succeeded in producing a discourse that resists both gender and social stereotypes, and how is a female writer of African American origin to address and rewrite a body politic that has been part of a male dominated and Eurocentric literary discourse for centuries. Also Huston and Walker resist dominant tottery discourse by deconstructing its stereotypical black female bodies and, therefore, free them of their normalizing functional. It further should that the novels succeed in providing a powerful alternative discourse because they use notifies of female African American culture, as techniques of resistance. These two novels can be read as African American version of *écriture feminine*, since their dominant motifs bisexuality, rape, motherhood, and spirituality which seem especially apt material for this analysis, as they not only offer and insight into the psyche and everyday life of African American women, but also provide with a social kaleidoscope of twentieth century Black America.

Before she married Killicks she had little time to frame the significant questions of the future which stretched before her, and none to learn the answers in “Did marriage end the cosmic comeliness of the unmated? Did marriage compel love like the sun the day?” by the time she left him, however, she know that the marriage did not make love,
and in this death of her fast dream Hurston remarks, Janie became a women. In the years of her marriage to Joe, he wanted her submission but she would not give in and struggled against him. After a while the spirit of the marriage left the bedroom and took to living in the parlour to shake hands when ever company came to visit what followed were years of profound psychological growth for Janie. She discovered that she had an inside and an outside and she could keep that separate from each other. She know that Joe with whom she run off with had been a youth illusion not the flesh and bold figure of her dreams but something she had grabbed up to drape her dreams over buried deep inside her she packed and stored away the thoughts and emotions she never expressed to him. In time she hoped to find someone to share them with. Mean while she had two lives. In one she carried out her wifely tasks and as much as possible avoided confrontations with Joe. In the other she loped a self hidden from everyone else.

Significantly, *The Color Purple* is a narrative of “sexual confession.” Statements like; “First he put his thing up against my hip and sort of wiggle if around then he graphs hold my tittles. Then he put his thing inside my pussy,” refer solely to sexual encounters. Throughout the novel, sexuality is graphically and explicitly discussed.

*The Color Purple* is a novel that emerges out of Alice Walker’s central concern with defining the existence, experience and culture of African American women and the brutally complex system of oppression that shape for identity and independence. It shows how women are oppressed and manicured by and refers option, showing women oppressed to a growth in consciousness that allows them to control their own lives. It celebrates the courage and of the indomitable female spirit.

*The Color Purple* is a women’s novel in which it carries an identifiable tradition of women’s writing is terms of theme and narrative strategies, chiefly that of lesbian writing. Lesbianism, suggests Adrienne Rich, “rejects the values and structure that assumes heterosexuality that women have only natural form of sexual and emotional expression, the old lie, insisting that women have only sought emotional and sexual fulfillment through men or not at all. *The Color Purple* can be called a lesbian cause women are positioned as central, are positively portrayed and shown as sharing a rich, inner life, bonding against male tyranny and giving and receiving and political support.
The themes in the novel have much in common with those in Their Eyes Were Watching God by Zara Neale Hurston, who an important influence on Walker, the rise above sexual and racial oppression for self fulfillment and one’s own self and voice, the unity of women whose nurturing relationships with each other help them survives and struggle. The crippled protagonists in the novels of these writers gradually re-kindle self-trust and vein habit their neglected bodies by integrating certain approach to healing. For example they remember and relive traumatic events. They learn to repute their personal experience to cross-cultural and historical frame work and they embrace a women centered, celebratory sexuality, finally inspiring sensitivity and a desire for justice in their abusers.

The Color Purple is foremost the story of Celie, a poor, barely literate southern black woman who struggles to escape the brutality and degradation of her treatment by men. The tale is told primarily through her own letters, which, out of isolation and despair, she initially addresses to God. As a teenager she is repeatedly raped and beaten by her stepfather, then forced by him into loveless marriage to Albert, a widower with four children. To Albert, who is in love with a vivacious and determinedly independent blue singer named Shug Avery, Celie is merely a servant and an occasional sexual convenience.

The story that emerges in The Color Purple is mediated entirely through the intensely subjective form of personal letters. Almost half are writer in Celie’s voice over a thirty-year period and are addressed not to a person living within history, but to wholly extra-historical external entity, God.

While the theme of Oppression has been one of the great concerns of Blank fiction since the novel form was first employed by Williams Walls Brown and Harriet E. Wilson, the oppression of Blanks by Blocks does not have a long history as a subject for pre-presentation---white racism, with a notable exception, does not take center stage, male over female, Black male over Black-females, these are the axes of domination that structure The Color Purple.
The act of voicing the hither to unnoticed voice of the Celie-type black woman was an important step in re-evaluating the role of women in black communities. Just as the acquisition of literacy marks a step towards spiritual and political freedom on the part of the slave narrators, the act of writing or articulating certain experiences brings understanding and spiritual independence to Alice Walker’s Celie, and makes possible the great leap from the incidental and particular to general and universal.

Thus, both in *Their Eyes Were Watching God* and *The Color Purple* dealt with black women’s quest for freedom and self identity for which they silently fight with dominated husbands and white racists and ultimately do win the struggle come out of the agony.

In the next chapter, *Moses, Man of the Mountain* by Zora and *Meridian* by Walker are studied. These two novels dealt with the leadership who sacrifice their life for the deliverance of their community people from the clutches of the slave bondage.

The Biblical tale recounts the story of a Hebrew baby whose parents, Jochebed and Amram, seek to circumvent Pharaoh’s death decree for new born Hebrew sons by hiding him in an ark among Nile bulrushes, stationing his sister Miriam nearby as a sentry. She watches as the bathing princess discovers the baby and takes him to the palace; Jochebed then secures a position as his wet nurse. Raised as a prince of Egypt, he grows to sympathize with the Hebrew slaves and finally kills an Egyptian overseer who abuses them. This forces him to flee to Midian, where he settles down with Jethro’s tribe, marrying his host’s daughter, Zipporah. Years later, God calls him to go back to Egypt and demand the freedom of his people, which he secures by the aid of his brother Aaron and plagues sent by God.

Central drama in Hurston’s retelling, however, involves Moses’ ethnic dilemma. His growing interest in the plight of the oppressed Hebrews pushes him closer to choosing between a privileged life as Egyptian royalty and a sacrificing life of exile and deprivation. By killing the Egyptian overseer Moses puts an end to his own life of royalty as he is forced to flee to Midian toward a fulfilling pastoral life with Jethro’s family. Jethro’s pressure on Moses to employ his gift for leadership and hoodoo heroically forces
him to choose again, this time between the pleasures of a quiet personal life and troubled racial leadership like Meridian Hill in *Meridian*. For the sake of her folks, she abandons her tenderly life with her mother at home, as a mother to her child, in the church and even at the school. Walker follows Hurston in writings by creating main character, Meridian in her novel *Meridian*. She became rebel to the president of Saxon College and stands in favour of Wild Child.

*Meridian*, published in 1976, is about the female protagonist who gradually awakens from her subordinate status as a black female, daughter, wife and mother to her own self and tries to become the maternal provider of the larger black community. The novel signals a radical departure from earlier work in its representations of history and its narrative strategies. Alice Walker’s *Meridian* directly concerns the conflict between personal needs and public commitments of young civil rights activists. Here it is like in Hurston’s *Moses, Man of the Mountain*, which shows Moses’ growing interest in the plight of the oppressed Hebrews pushes him closer to choosing between a privileged life as Egyptian royalty and a sacrificing life of exile and deprivation.

Although they experience considerable ambivalence about how to deal with their conflicting demands and desires and while the novel explores the consequence of their inevitably inconsistent choices, the book is unequivocal in its presentation of young activists paying an enormous personal price for their public actions. Scene after scene dramatizes their physical and emotional exhaustion, rending breaks with family and the devastating consequences of the sexual politics that invaded the movement in its last years. As one who lived through the movement and experienced many of its battles, Walker presents a firsthand picture. She transcends the boundaries of the female gender to embrace more universal concerns about individual autonomy, self-reliance, and self-realization.

Meridian the protagonist of the novel shows courageous behaviour in her life to achieve a meaningful life. She gets rid of her own child to seek new way like Moses’ in Hurston’s novel which a privileged life as Egyptian royalty. This new way and identity enables Meridian to attain, the highest point of power, prosperity, splendidour, health, vigor, etc. As a result, she develops “a completeness of being.” Hers is a journey from the
most ordinary position as a high school dropout to a self-illuminated person who has attained selfhood and knows what is the purpose and mission of one’s own life. To begin as an ordinary black female and to end as a self-assured person is not an easy development. To gain the glimpse of her which is in full bloom she has had to undergo innumerable trials and tests. As a result, she is evolved “from a woman raped by racial and sexual oppression to a revolutionary figure effecting action and strategy to bring freedom to her and other poor disenfranchised blacks in the south”. In fact Meridian’s “quest for wholeness and her involvement in the civil rights movement is initiated by her motherhood.”

Thus, both Moses, Man of the Mountain and Meridian bear common theme. Both the writers focused mainly on black folks who face suffering, injustice, violation, domination, sexual harassment, and segregation from whites. But their stories narrated in different style and Hurston has taken her source from the Holy Bible and Walker from incidents happened in their family. Though taken from different sources, their concern is on black people mainly women folks. They tried to bring the alienation and suppression of the black women in to the light; from white racists and men from their race ultimately they have shown male domination over female at the home, and in the society.

In the fifth chapter both Zora and Walker deviated as Zora dealt with whites in her novel, Seraph on the Suwanee and Walker with the origins of the human race. But both off them ultimately concentrated on the sufferings of the women folks. Thus the two novels are discussed differently but finally come to the similar theme.

Seraph on the Suwanee, by Hurston explores contemporary problems of race, class, and gender while providing a Freudian case study of the consequences of rejection. Hurston’s diagnostic and therapeutic role in dealing with all these issues do indeed get expressed as “competing energies “that are” restored to harmony” of a sort in the final chapter. May be Hurston tried to remove race from her central field of interest made possible a more intense focus on gender but particularly class. There are many possible reasons Hurston decided to write about lower-class but upwardly mobile white characters and their black retainers. Writing a book about white characters enables Hurston to explore some deeply personal feelings behind her most deceptive mask. The
internalization of Arvay’s hurt and anger and a resultant inferiority complex that damages her relations with others for years, especially her husband offers a divergence from the facts of Hurston’s life, but the overall pattern of rejection that she suffers matches them.

The plots operates on two basic levels; on the one hand we share the tortured psychological struggles of Arvay Henson, a troubled Cracker mystic who withdraws into a private realm for years after her sister Larraine steals her preacher beau, Carl Middleton. A new man in town, the poor but well-born and energetic Jim Meserve, breaks through Arvay’s resistance, marries her, and takes her away to orange country, where he starts a grove. When she gives birth to Earl, a retarded and deformed son, Arvay feels God still blames her for loving Lorraine’s husband all those years, and her inner gloom only darkens when Jim’s attempt to use humour to bring her out of it seems merely mocking and based in his sense of social superiority. The devotion of her two subsequent children to Jim makes matters worse. Eventually, however, the tragic death of Earl forces Arvay to rethink things, and when Jim leaves her and her mother dies, Arvay finally breaks through to a personal sense of worth, symbolized when she torches her mother’s rat-infested house, the scene of Arvay’s psychological fixations during childhood and adolescence. She joins Jim at the coast, where his new shrimping fleet is about to set sail.

Walker’s novel, *The Temple of My Familiar* is eminently illustrative of the lamp image. This novel leads us to three new insights. First of all, the novel establishes the primacy of the female principle. Walker takes us back to the origins of the human race when men and women were subjugated and brought down to their present position of inferiority below males. All the religious and cultural rituals began to be titled heavily against women and were aimed at depriving them of their freedom and superior status. Women were robbed of their freedom, especially sexual freedom, and were thus reduced to the level of property that is brought and sold. The third insight Walker grants is about the oneness of all races. Lissie in her several lives take on the roles of a white man and a Muslim lady apart from that of a black woman. It should be noted that *The Temple of My Familiar* is concerned with the whole of mankind and not only America. Therefore, it has the broadest scope among all works of Walker’s fiction. The novel is in the form of a
discovery or revelation. The main purpose of the novel is to reveal certain values of human life that have stood the test of time and become universal and permanent.

Walker explains in her novel that anger and violence will not change the world, but an appreciation of each other will improve our lot here. It is very much considerable as Luci Tapahonso’s comment quoted in Volume 58 of Contemporary Literary Criticism is relevant in suggesting the preponderance of the lamp image in *The Temple of My Familiar*:

*The Temple of My Familiar* is a novel about love, in all its forms; love for spirits and spirituality, love for the land and plants, love for all people-regardless of color, sexual preference or age- and love for all living things. It is about compassion for the oppressed, the grief of the oppressors, acceptance of the unchangeable and hope for everyone and everything (Martz, 413).

Thus, both novels written by Zora and Walker gave the account of African American women. These two novels deal with sexuality, love affair, slavery, exploitation and male dominance. In *Seraph on the Suwanee*, It explores contemporary problems of race, class, and gender and especially explores at some length the feminine psyche. It is about lower-class but upwardly mobile white characters and their black retainers. In *The Temple of My Familiar*, It is a chronicle not only of the life of a black woman but also of the woman of different races. It is the story about the manner in which women were brought under the control of patriarchal social order. It is also an analysis of how women lost their happiness and were pushed in to an unhappy life style.

These novels highlight the problem of black women in their day-to-day life. They are led to self-discovery and self-knowledge and ultimately attain regeneration. These stories present a kind of gallery of black women and their move toward self-discovery, to tentative, uncompleted exploration; to disillusionment; to recognition of their own worth, to rage, peace, death, and life (Metuchen, 154). African American black women
sometimes even they ignore to have children for the task of liberation as mentioned in Toni Morrison’s, novel *Sula*. In this novel the protagonist Sula declares: “I don’t want to make somebody else (babies) but I want to make myself” (*Sula*, 85). Even in *Meridian* by Alice Walker, the protagonist Meridian though experiences motherhood in the initial stages of her life and then decides to get rid of her own baby Eddie Jr. to seek admission in a college to find out her own path and identity. This new way and identity enables her to attain, “the highest point of power, prosperity, splendour, health, vigor, etc. As a result, she develops “a completeness of being.” Hurston and Walker’s weapon for their novels’ success is women. They did not deviate from their basic theme. Since there is a literary link between them their novels run parallel.

It has been the aim of these chapters to establish links between novels in order to articulate the collective experience of African American women throughout time as revealing a shared and communal past. Many of the experiences female characters undergo in these novels are voiced. Janie, Celie and Sethe go through a process of maturation from their literal, or figurative, enslavement under the yoke of male partners towards their emancipation as mature females. Similarly, weak women depend on their promiscuous and lazy partners, who emerge as sexually-aroused women who reject their males if they fail to fulfill their desire. These ambivalent feelings are also present through the novels discussed. They are all women exchanging and sharing experiences. In *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, Janie unveils her life story to Phoeby as an oral tale at the porch. In *The Color Purple*, Celie and Nettie write letters to each other. In *Beloved*, Sethe’s ghost child compels her mother to remember her past memories. Oral tales, letters and memories necessarily have a folk component that interweaves with songs.

Despite their written form, all together present a chorus of experiences shared by African American women. Past and present merge in order to form a communal experience. Songs and texts are sung and written, listened to and read by a community of women who contribute with their voices to the formation of African American women’s life experience. The thematic links outlined through these novels such as love and women’s expectations, men’s economic power and women’s dependence, men’s meanness and women’s desertion, men’s violence and mistreatment of women, women’s
sexual desire and lesbianism, women’s retaliation and reversal of gender roles, sexuality, gothic imagery, women’s loneliness and men’s impotence, and a shared grievous past of ownership can be identified and are actually presented in and these novels analyzed. These shared experiences contribute to constructing a politics of sexuality within the new trends of Black Feminism, underlining the awareness of the historical evolution in African American Studies, the recovery of often neglected and forgotten artists, and the identification of common themes through multi-faceted artistic manifestations.

In African American Literature, both Zora and Walker are different from others. They examine the innate humanity of black female characters. In creating characters like Janie, Lucy, Arvay Henson, Margaret, Mem, Celie, Shug Avery, Sofia and others, reveal the part of the two writers to conceal the pain and the flaws, and still have a great deal to reveal how these fictional incarnations incorporate the negative and positive aspects of self and external reality into an identity that enables them to meet the challenges of the world they must live in. With the two writers, one spirit arises across black women’s coming of age in moulds of female characters not in relation to the dominant society as did other writers. All female characters of Zora and Walker, therefore, are psychologically connected to their culture and community, although they remain strongly critical about them both, they celebrate them so as to give meaning of their lives back to their community and culture. Thus, their female protagonists, not only become the metaphor for black people, but even the transmitters of Afrocentric cultural aesthetic.

Basically Walker is a womanist and prefers to write about women. Zora also favours women especially black folks and therefore they think that inherent in the process of recovery of self is also the creation of feminine aesthetic which involves twofold responsibility: to break the patriarchal imperialism of representation and to celebrate womanhood. They, therefore, challenge the phallocratic concept of canonicity that attempts to universalize women’s text and hegemonize or totalize “female culture.”

By granting centrality to the triply oppressed members of black community in the narrative discourse, by voicing out their triumphs, aspirations, idiosyncrasies, by
incorporating in their texts feminine themes such as motherhood, marriage, sexuality, mother-children relationship, and black sisterhood, these two writers grant authenticity to black feminine self and establish themselves as writers in difference. Their heroines-Janie, Celie, Meridian, Margaret, Arvay Henson and Lissie come to wholeness by comprehending the problems related to their womanhood. They try to resolve their ambiguities and intricacies of their sexuality through their blood mothers and other mothers. The bond of black sisterhood provides road-maps and helps these women to their identity as they move from “mirror stage” to maturity.