CHAPTER - IV
RACIAL DISCOURSE: THE TEMPLE OF MY FAMILIAR,
THE COLOR PURPLE

Alice Walker has emerged, both nationally and internationally, as one of the most versatile and controversial writers of African-American literature. In her writings, she has explored the themes such as child abuse and women’s sexuality. We find personal transformation in her novels like The Color Purple, and The Temple of My Familiar. These are the core novels of such themes. The Color Purple is an exploration in survival and growth of black women in southern experience. Celie, the protagonist is made brutally aware of gender exploitation in relationships with both her stepfather and her husband. She is emotionally and sexually abused; she lacks self confidence, meek and unassertive. Other characters, Shug Avery and Sofia in particular, represent different responses to the struggle with self identity, self love, and the costs of assertiveness when one is black and female. As these women’s lives touch, each learns a bit from the others.

Alice Walker portrayed the plight of today’s Women after hundreds years of struggle in negotiating position and they do have choices. Even in literature as in any other art, the role of women is no longer to inspire but also to create new literature.
As a feminist, Alice Walker’s literary writing deals with the oppression of black women and men characters. She writes on social and racial issues. Her novels primarily focuses on a new identity for black women, their self awareness. It’s central themes like Violence, Harassment, exploitation, ancestry and civil rights movement are the essence and substance of her work. Through all these aspects, Alice Walker has become the brightest star among the black American women writers. Alice Walker fights against social injustice. Through her writings she always motivates women to open their heart and mind to avoid the sufferings by men. Because women always become the victim of men of their husband. Men try to keep them in trouble. There is a large circle in which people, most of them men, experience influence and power. Far away from it there is a smaller circle, a narrow spare, in which black people, regardless of sex, experience uncertainty, exploitation and powerlessness. Hidden in this second circle is a third, a small, dark enclosure in which black women experience pain, isolation and vulnerability. The black woman faced the reality of double discrimination of both race and sex. Racism and sexism co-exist in a traumatic with in the life of the black woman. The experience of Black women is the relationship between sexism and racism because both are motivated by similar, economic, social, and psychological forces, it is only logical that those who sought to undermine Blacks were also the most virulent anti feminists. The means of oppression differed across race and sex lines, but the well spring of that oppression was the same.
Now a day’s African-American literature has become an important part among the world literature. This literature today opposes several things in the literature of the white Americans. Black person is now not a marginal character and a protagonist in author’s work asserts his racial identity. He opposes even the earlier image of himself as portrayed by the Harlem Renaissance writers. Now a day’s black character in African American literature has become a docile self, conscious, submissive black man is knocking at the door. He is raising his voice against the white people who oppress them.

Through Harlem writers practiced the same religious faith and had similar racial features and appearance, they had brought with them the national identity and ethos which in each case is unique. In this existing heterogeneity added the black race with the Negroid features. Being black/Negro people, they have their own right to raise their voice. There should not be a category of black and white on the basis of color, class and creed. All men were created equal. This was the corner stone of the American Constitution. Unfortunately here, all men did not include black men. The American blacks have to fight long legal battles for their human rights in American courts to get their rights.

America always believes in the dream of freedom, equality and happiness. These are the fundamental rights of citizens of the America. These rights are given by the American Constitution, however many times they are
violated. It remained elusive. American black people preserved those dreams in their eyelids and it held tightly between their thick bleeding lips. But it was snatched by the present social system because of their race. This racial dilemma remained unresolved. The Negro in America was caught between the American dream and dilemma. To resolve these kinds of problems black authors are concerned with this situation and they are emerging voice through their literature/writings.

American Negroes were the sons and daughters of darkness. They were journeying through untold sorrows and sufferings. They were part and parcel of this ancient land but unfortunately they were disallowed and disowned by the white and upper class for long decades. Africa is the land of black’s ancestors. It occupies a special place in Negro’s hearts and souls. Their conscious minds are filled with America but Africa is stuck forever in their psyche. Therefore Negroes call themselves Afro-Americans. Their identity has been changed from colored to Negro, from Negro to Black, from Black to Afro-American and now from Afro-American to African American. They are totally African-American by their psyche and mind. They were thrown out of their own history, faith and culture. They remained in America as a marginal. Their history became themselves as an illusion. They got an identity as a marginal being. They don’t have their own existence. They are suffering from their agony, sorrow and their existence for living life. Authors like Richard Wright, Alex Hally, Alice Walker deals with the essence of black identity and it becomes the central theme of their writings.
Woman writer, Alice Walker’s concern is women’s bare body and naked soul. As Barbara Christian says aptly:

“Sexism and racism are systems of societal and psychological restrictions that have critically affected the lives of Afro-American women”. (Christiana 1984:71)

Race and sex have been much intermingled in the American history. African-American woman novelist, Alice Walker is an entirely stunning expression of various configurations of societal definitions that have been inflicted on the black women. In the contemporary period black novelists have continued to analyze the relationship between class and race. (71) Alice Walker has exposed racism and sexism that affected the black women in America. She is one of the first black woman writers who explore the problems of sexism when most other blacks were declaring that racism was the cause of all ills of African American people. Perhaps the most controversial of her subjects is her insistence on investigating the relationship between black men and women. Black parents and children with unwavering honesty. Her most of novels’ themes are problems of black women, struggle against a racist, sexist, and violent society. But as an African American woman author she is more;

“Committed to exploring the oppressions, the insanities, the loyalties, and the triumphs of black women”(Walker 1973:24)
This is made clear when, in an interview with John O Brian, she unequivocally expresses:

“I am preoccupied with the spiritual survival, the survival of whole of my people. But beyond that, I am committed to exploring the oppressions, the insanities, the loyalties and the triumphs of black women” (26)

Race, gender and class are not separate entities, at least in America, but closely linked with each other. Barbara Christian Observes:

“Like the images of a kaleidoscope, these elements are so organically connected that one must understand their interrelationship in spite of their ever shifting appearance”. (Christiana 1984:79)

There are two important stands in Walker’s fiction under the formally organizing image of the shadow the first being racial violence and the second being black experience. Fourth are interrogated in the sense that they are part and parcel of American life whether white or black. The former originates in the whites and the latter has its roots in the blacks. And both can be cured of removed only by the sources then slaves in a reformist tendency to be adapted by the individuals of races concerned as they learn from their mistakes and try to reform themselves for a latter America. (Kumar 2014:38-45)

Alice Walker’s novel, The Color Purple is a masterpiece literary work. One can examine the form of the novel (Epistolary), its characters, its fable like and mythic qualities, its philosophic stance, its humor, its politics, its intricacies of plot, its symbolism, and more. The Color Purple is classic
because it covers so much territory and resonates on so many levels. It is the uniqueness of *The Color Purple* that what Walker has done for the first time is to create an extended literary work whose subject is the sexual politics of black life as experienced by ordinary black people. No one has ever written a novel which so unequivocally posits that the lives and freedom of black women are of crucial concern and importance.

Alice Walker has explored the theme of sexual oppression in the black community and unmasked it in its many guises. *The Color Purple* is a breakthrough in Black Literature: that black women have several times been oppressed by black men that they have suffered from sexism as well as from racism, and that black women’s love for each other has formed the bottom line of our survival. The quality of our love has made all lives of Black women’s, men’s and children’s worth living period. Walker places Black women at the center of her novel. Celie, protagonist of the novel believes to be her father has begun raping her, when her mother is too ill from numerous pregnancies to have sex with him. Celie has two babies by him, and he quickly disposes them. Celie believes that he has killed her baby daughter and sold her baby son. After the second baby, Celie’s father loses interest in her and starts bothering her younger sister, Nettie. Celie is determined to protect Nettie from her own fate. To get rid of her, her father forces Celie to marry Mr.--, (Celie’s husband) a widower with four unruly children. The arrangements for the marriage are indistinguishable from a transaction for the purchase a farm animal or a slave. Walker shows how little difference there is between two
circumstances of an abused daughter and an abused wife. Walker does not back step from the reality that the mistreatment of women is entrenched in Afro-American culture, that there are indeed shared values in the race about that mistreatment. (Smith 1984:170-176)

_The Color Purple_ is the story of a small girl (fourteen year old), Celie. She is poor and black. She expresses her feelings to God through letters. The novel opens with her letter to God in which she tells about her stepfather, Alphonso, who is brutal by nature. He raped and impregnated Celie. He forced her mother for sex but she rejects him because she was dying on bed. After her avoidance, he moves to Celie to fulfill his sexual desires. In course of time, Celie gave birth to two children but her brutal father sold them to a couple. Celie’s sister, Nettie plays an important role in the novel. She also went away to Africa where she found Celie’s two children. She lives there with a couple and children. She takes care of them and takes responsibility to grow and nourish them. On the other side, Celie is sent to Mr. Albert by his brutal father to take care of his children. Celie was sent to Mr.--- who is also brutal like her father. He did not marry with her instead of it, he exploits her physically and mentally. Albert is living with his son, Harpo. Albert raped Celie several times. Being black and ugly, Celie does not have any importance to her life. She is alone and disturbed by such things. Though she is crowded with Albert’s family, but she feels herself lonely. She does not have any friend, person to share her thoughts, feelings. Her life was confined within four walls.
She was alienated in the crowded world. She was not aware about the outer world. Eric From argues that:

“The alienated person does not experience himself as the centre of this world, as the creator of his acts, but his acts and their consequences have become his masters… the alienated person is out of touch with himself”. (From 1955:120)

Therefore she only writes letters to God in which she shares each and every moment which happens in her daily life. She believes on God lot. Through this, she finds the mental satisfaction. Her every letter starts with Dear God. Celie had lost her identity. Being raped and lynched many times she became a slave. She has not hope to live her life confidently. Geyer and Schweitzer argues that:

“The loss of identity is alienation.. it leads to powerlessness, the lack of control over various aspects of his/her existence”. (Geyer 1981:120)

Celie’s letters make us involve into her private thoughts and emotional state of her trauma, guilt and shame. She had been repeatedly raped and impregnated by Alphonso whom she believes to be her biological father. She becomes the child victim of rape and incest. She still believes that this bad thing has happened to her because she is bad (black and poor) and therefore deserves it. Celie is married to Albert, who is a widower with children. He beats and abuses Celie brutally. Celie’s sister Nettie goes to live with missionaries, Corrine and Samuel to hide herself from her father Alphonso
and Albert. Alphonso rapes Celie and begins to her sexual replacement for his exhausted wife. Depiction of such situations by Walker, her protagonist Celie becomes the representative of those who have experienced “soul murder”. Her husband’s cruel face is also depicted by Walker. When Albert beats her she tells her mind as:

“It all I can do not to cry. I make myself wood. I say to myself, Celie, you are a tree” (Walker 1983:30)

Though Celie is beaten brutally by her husband Alphonso, she has to make her mind strong like wood. Being black race and poor nature, Celie always suffer lot. She is unable to raise her voice as well as go against the men where she is living. This incident shows how racial oppression of Celie is going on. Her beacon of hope throughout is the picture and then the fact of Shug Avery is a successful blues singer. Shug Avery is no doubt a character member of the “wild women don’t get no blues” club. She is wild that is independent, beautiful and magical. She also cares deeply about women. Shug and Mr. have been lovers for many years. When she becomes so sick no one else will take her in, Mr--, much to Celie’s delight, brings Shug home for Celie to tend to. At first Shug is too evil to pay much attention to Celie, but soon they share confidences, become best friends and eventually despite Shug’s occasional flings with men, lifetime lovers. Before they become lovers, Celie admits to Shug that Mr.—beats her because she isn’t Shug. Shug decides then and there not to leave her until she’s positive that he’ll never lay hand on Celie again.
This is only one example of the tremendous loyalty and love Walker shows black women sharing. We have always been each other’s mainstays and when we fail each other, to suffer deeply from the consequences of betrayal. Early in the novel, Celie actually advices Harpo, Mr---’s son, to beat his wonderful strong-willed wife, Sofia. When Harpo follows her advice, Celie is literally unable to sleep until she explains and apologizes to Sofia, thereby opening the way for their friendship. Celie’s other significant emotional tie is to her sister, Nettie. Although they are separated for thirty years, neither of them loses faith that the other is alive and that one day they will see each other again. The sisters’ love provides them with a framework for surviving. Each of them imagines the other’s reactions to whatever she is currently experiencing.

Nettie’s letters are sent from Africa, where by a miracle of fate she has become a missionary. They not only depict colonialism in its baldest forms, but the traditional inequality between African men and women. After Celie discovers that Mr.—has been hiding Nettie’s letters from her for decades, she begins to write Nettie instead of God. Undoubtedly Walker’s most unprecedented depiction of women loving each other is her development of the bond between Celie and Shug. Black lesbians—and black gay men as well—have existed as long as there have been Black people, but few writers and certainly not many with the establishment recognition of Walker have had to acknowledge this fact. (JSTOR)
Arrival of Shug Avery in Albert’s house brings a new hope and happiness in Celie’s life. She is ex girlfriend of Albert. She is from Memphis. At first time, when she met with Celie, her attitude about Celie was very negative. She seems her ugly and black. She treats her as a maid. First, she had not any idea about her life. But very soon she became a true friend of Celie. Celie also get closer to her. She had not seen such a beautiful lady before this in her life. Shug is depicted beautiful and stylish lady. By profession, she is a singer who performs in singing shows. She is fairer than Celie. On the other side, Celie is dark and ugly woman. For Celie, Shug is like a queen. Before her arrival in Albert’s house, Celie even had not known the name of a person with whom she was living. When shug called Albert, Celie remembers his name. Shug’s children are living with their grandma. At every stage Celie takes care of Shug because she was a guest in her house. When Celie saw shug’s naked black body, she got surprised because she was looking it first time. She finds man in Shug’s body. At her very childhood, Celie had departed from her family therefore she was unaware about all these things. She was unaware about her own genitals. She was not looking good in her childhood. But shug was more beautiful than Celie. She expressed about Shug:

“She got the hottiest, shortest, kinkier hair. I never saw, and loves every strand of it. The hair that come out in my comb I kept. May be one day I will get a net, make me a rat to pomp up my own hair” (Walker 1983:35)
Albert beats Celie because he did not accept her as his wife. He wanted to marry with Shug which he could not. After coming Shug in his house he shares bed with Shug which was very shameful for Celie. Celie was pure and kind heart girl. Days passed on, Shug came to know all these happenings and she tries to talk with Celie. She decides to liberate Celie from all these barriers. She becomes sexually intimate to Celie. Albert is very inhuman to Celie. He hides the letters of Nettie from Celie. Nettie had been sending many letters to Celie after her departure from her. Albert not let receive a single letter to Celie. He receives and used to keep in his trunk. With the help of Shug, Celie got all letters of Nettie. Celie becomes happy. Before this, she had thought her sister is died but becomes happy after listening that she is alive and living in Africa with her children, Olivia and Adam.

Celia, to be black and female is to suffer from the twin disadvantages of racial discrimination and pronounced gender bias. Possibly no other social group has been subjected to such an unedifying spectacles of human debasement and depravity. Being Black, Celie suffered from racism; being female she is the victim of sexual atrocities at the hands of the white patriarchs as well as the blacks. She becomes the victim of triple jeopardy- racism, sexism, and classism. Celie was caught in the inner darkness. Her mental and emotional world is different than others. She was unable to express herself freely. In the latter part of novel she is shown as liberated being. Her inner darkness resolves. Over this, Alice Walker Comments that:
“My struggle was always against an inner darkness. I carry with myself the only key to my death”. (Walker 1973:32)

As sources of oppression of blacks, racism and sexism are allied and have parallel existence. They are mutually interdependent and hence they arise from the same set of circumstances. Gloria Wade explains this interesting phenomenon through the imagery of circles. Racism started in America when white masters of the land brought the first Africa in chains and used their coffers. As a result, black people soon ceased to exist as human beings in the white world. In an illuminating study of the origin of racism in U.S.A., Joel Kovel says that,

“The white master first reduced the human self of his black slave to a body to a thing; he dehumanized him quantifiable, and thereby absorbed him into a rising world market of productive exchange”. (Kovel 1984:18)

Suffering at the hands of both black and white men, the African American woman had to fight for survival both inside and outside her house. Thus, her story, even in modern America, is fraught with the perils of navigating between the Scylla of racism and the charybdis of sexism. Impeded from attaining social, political, and economic independence and prosperity, black women have had to fight hard for just the basic with emancipation and induction at the lowest levels of the work force, these women have selected education as their on strong weapon for integration. Despite gradual progress,
they are still far behind black men and white women. Racism and sexism should be blamed for this helpless situation. (Kumar 2014:38-45.)

Men had been cruel to women. In a systematic and organized manner, they went about trying to subjugate women to an inferior position. It became part of almost all cultures that patriarchy and male superiority became the accepted norm. And thus, slowly, through the years, women have continued to be ill treated by males. Calvin Hernton, a well known sociologist pinpoints the plight of the American woman:

“From time to time in America, various individuals, and groups besides Negroes have been victims of prejudice, discrimination, injustice, persecution and outright murder…. But it has been Negro woman more than anyone else, who has born the constant agonies of racial barbarity in America from the very first day she was brought in chains to this soil. The Negro woman through the years has suffered (and endured) every sexual outrage”. (Hernton 1990:123)

At the middle of part novel, Celie starts writing letters to Nettie in which both sisters share their life with each other. Nettie is living with the Corrine and Samuel. Celie’s children are growing in Africa. They were learning to write, read and speak. Hearing this, Celie got the new hope for her life. She becomes confident and optimistic. She decided to leave Albert and his family because she had no more interest to live with inhuman people. Celie tolerated much. Being black and ugly, she was disturbed. Harpo’s wife, Sofía also treated her badly for her black color. Sofía was in love with Harpo. She is
very forwarded and confident lady. She becomes pregnant while she was in love with Harpo. After becoming pregnant, she lives with her sisters without hesitation. Harpo’s father, Albert was not ready to accept her first, in course of time, Sofia gives birth to a child at her sisters’ house. Sofia’s sisters’ husbands stand up with Harpo. After their marriage, things changed from happiness to discomfort. Sofia does not listen to Harpo. She always meets her sisters’s house which Harpo does not like. He tried to tell her, your place is here. Now we are married one. You should see towards our children and family. But Sofia did not care about all these things. Finally she decides to leave Harpo’s house with her children. Over this Harpo and Sofia beat each other lot. They fought like men. Celie tried to support her in a negative way. She tells Harpo to beat Sofia. Her intention was positive. She had thought after beating Sofia, she would give same reaction to Harpo but Sofia did not understand this.

While leaving the house, Sofia meets celie. She asks her, why did you tell Harpo to beat me? She expressed strong words to Celie. She says,

“The lord don’t like ugly, she say. And he aint stuck on pretty” (Walker 1983:39)

Being black, Celie has to listen such bad words many times. Actually Celie had intimate relations with God. Only God was the true friend of Celie. She believes on God much than other people. After listening all these words from Sophia she decides to leave Albert and his family. Therefore she decides to go with Shug. Celie is departing to Memphis. Albert becomes angry over
Celie. Though he hates her but he wants her as a maid in his house. He uses harsh words for Celie. He says:

“You will be back. Nothing up North for nobody like you. Shug got talent, he say. She can sing. She got spunk, he say. She can talk to anybody. Shug got looks, he say. She can stand up and be notice. But what you got? You ugly. You skinny. You shape funny. You too scared to open your mouth to people. All you fit to do in Memphis is Shug’s maid. Take out her slop jar and may be cook her food. You not that good a cook either and this house ain’t been clean good since my first wife died. And nobody crazy or backward enough to want to marry you neither. What you gon do? Hire yourself out to farm? He laugh. May be somebody let you work on they railroad”.(186)

Black women have been abused for their color and darkness by the black and white men. They are used as sex dolls. Here is the apt example of the patriarchal system and the brutal face of male dominance. There are thousand of African American women like Celie who are suffered and have been suffering from long decades. Celie has to tolerate all these abuses because she is a victim of male dominance.

Albert also shouted and insulted Celie because of her color and body appearance. At every level he tries to dismotivate her. Celie was unable to raise her a single word towards Albert because she had not her own identity in Albert’s house. She was living her personal life as a slave. Celie’s curse is quite effective. After she and Shug go, Mr.---, close the death, shuts himself up in his house; he is haunted by a life of meanness. Only when his son,
Harpo, advises him to send the rest of Nettie’s letters to Celie does “he start to
improve”. Years pass and Mr—and Celie actually become friends. She writes,
“He ain’t Shug, but he begin to be somebody than talk to”. Mr—finally learns
the lessons the women around him knew long before. Albert tries to
dismotivate Celie. He does not want to be Celie educated and liberated herself.
She curses him saying, “Aman try to be nice to you, you fly in his face” over
this Albert adds:

“Who you think you is? He say. You can’t curse nobody.
Look at you. You black, you pore, you ugly, you a
woman. Goddam, he say, you nothing at all”. (187)

Celie was ugly. She had attracted towards the Shug for her body
appearance. Shug was most beautiful than her. She says,

“She got a long pointed nose and big fleshy mouth. Lips
look like black plum. Easy big, glossy. Feverish like if a
snake cross her path, she kill it”. (189)

Celie explains her story to Shug, “Mr.—marry me to take care of his
children. I marry him cause my daddy made me. I don’t love Mr.—and he
don’t love me” (61). Albert had married with Celie not for love. He wanted a
maid to take care of his children. On the other hand, Celie had not any proper
idea about Albert. Even she had not known his name. But unfortunately she
has accepted him because situation made her to take such decision. She had
entered the slavish world where she got inhuman and brutal treatment by
Albert. Celie hates Albert much because he had hidden the letters of Nettie
which she had sent many times before. Therefore Celie cursed him. Through her letters Celie understood, she is safe and living in Africa. She also narrates the world of her members with whom she is living. She says, in a word they are like her family members. They are not like Pa and Albert. They are kind heart people. Teachers are from Africa taught her to write, read and speak in a good manner. In every letter Nettie expresses her love to Celie. She is missing Celie lot. Half part of novel is about Nettie’s letters to Celie. Apart from these, Nettie also tells her about racial experiences. She talks about Harlem section of America where black people live. They treat colored people in a human way. Harlem people love Africa. They also treat children in a good manner. She narrates about Harlem beautifully to Celie. On the other hand, she also gave an experience of white people when she was travelling to Malanga with Samuel. She says:

“Celie, these are beds on trains! And a restaurant! And toilets! The beds come down out of the walls, over the tops of the seats, and are called berths. Only white people can ride in the beds and use the restaurant. And they have different toilets from colored”. (121)

While travelling to London in a ship, Malanga, Nettie narrates Celie that how Africans were slaved and being slaves, how they were exploited. She narrates about them that Black people were suffering in earlier days. They had exploited sexually and mentally. Their life was nothing but a slave in past days. Now exploitation is over and they are getting good treatment like a
human being. Harder time was there and almost all people were living in slavery. She tells her:

“Hard times is a phrase the English love to use, when speaking to Africa. And it is easy to forget that Africa’s ‘hard times’ were made harder by them. Millions and millions of Africans were captured and sold into slavery-you and me, Celie and whole cities were destroyed by slave catching wars. Today, the people of Africa- having murdered or sold into slavery. Their strongest folks- and riddled by disease and sunk in spiritual and physical confusion. They believe in the devil and worship the dead. Nor can they read or write. Why they sell us? How could they have done it? And why do we still love them? These were the thoughts I had as we tramped through the chilly streets of London” (124)

Celie was illiterate therefore she was not aware about the outer world and its daily happenings. She was unable to see outer world because she was living as a slave in Albert’s house. His exploitation made her living dead body. Being uneducated Celie was not matured mentally. Her thoughts and thinking capacity was not developed. She had no idea about human rights and slavery. If she had the awareness of tall these phenomena, she could raise her voice against it. Albert and Her fater, Alphonso took the advantage of Celie’s ignorance. Therefore they could exploit her sexually and mentally. But her loving sister, Nettie reveals a world beyond the limited one that Celie knows. She makes Celie conscious about the external world. Nettie’s letters take Celie out of her rural environment and help her to gain an awareness of African life,
of a land where blackness carries multiple images, where women submit silently to male oppression. To her description of her travels, Nettie also adds other stories that become part of a larger text. Not surprisingly, she brings to her letters her own reading about Africa- a black woman’s view. A new reading of the Bible comes to Celie from Nettie too. Nettie discovers for Celie that the Bible is a black text: “All the Ethiopians in the bible were colored….it is perfectly plain if you pay attention only to the words”, she tells Celie (113). Nettie also relates the “story of the roofleaf”, a kind of creation myth which unfolds a spiritual, albeit different, and version of God. Like all creation myths, the telling of the original event-here a violation of ecological sacredness and its consequences- is a ritual act that has become the basis of Olinka’s worship of the roofleaf. Their reverence for this essential vegetation is understood by Nettie, who writes to Celie. (81-93) After knowing the Nettie’s letters, which Albert was hiding from Celie she becomes angry over Albert. She is hating both Albert and God. Because she was honestly writing letters to God. She seems it a true friend. She was unable to express her feelings with other people because they did not have any value for her. She had chosen God because he is almighty. Getting disappointed, Celie uses harsh words to God as:

“He gave me a lynched daddy, a crazy mama, a lowdown dog of a step pa and a sister I probably won’t ever see again. Anyhow, I say, the God I been praying and writing to is a man. And act just like all the other mens I know. Triffling, forgetful and lowdown” (173)
She further adds,

“All my life I never care what people thought bout nothing I did. I say. But deep in my heart I care about God. What he going to think. And come to find put, he don’t think. Just sit up there glorying in being deaf, I reckon. But it ain’t easy, trying to do without God. Even if you know he ain’t there, trying to do without him is a strain” (173)

After leaving Albert’s house Celie came with Shug at Memphis. Shug Avery taught her to sew the pants. Very soon Celie learned the sewing work. She enjoys it by heart. She got love, work, money, friends and time. She got the happiness. Shug transformed Celie’s life. Before this, her life had no meaning. She was living like a slave in four walls. Her life was confined in four walls. It was terrific and brutal world for Celie. She got the new hopes and attitude towards her life. She gained the freedom and peace of mind. Shug motivates Celie to develop her business. Over this, Celie decides to work much and to make money for her self reliance. She came back at her house which she had left before few days ago with Shug. She earns her real father’s house which was transferred her by Alphonso’s wife, Daisy. At the end of the novel, Albert realizes his mistakes and his sin which he had committed with Celie. He does his repentance over his act.

Walker in The Color Purple has given us an account of Celie’s brutal life in which she is suffered and exploited by her stepfather and husband. Though Celie’s voice is mute and that never heard but whatever she writes to
God, we realize the burning pain in her mind which Celie had been suffering tolerating throughout the novel. Isolation and pain makes Celie determined and confident to live and face the life. Being black, though she is abused mentally and sexually, she had the powerful will to gain the happiness and desires to live life happily. Her search for an attainment of a mature, autonomous, and authentic sense of identity that enables her to live an authentic life. Though Walker ended her novel happily with Celie’s liberation, but she has raised so many questions of race, exploitation of African American women on the basis of their color, poverty, illiteracy, and ugliness.

Alice Walker’s major concern is the black women themselves. Throughout her life she was committed to explore the oppressions, the insanities, the loyalties, and the triumph of black women. Her novel, *The Temple of My Familiar* deals with the life of African-Americans with a special emphasis of their race and black women’s life. It is published in 1989. Alice Walker’s novels are basically deals with racism and slavery. Present novel is notable work of racism. This particular novel focuses on the struggle of African Americans, especially women who are the witness against society which is based on racist, sexist, and violence.

The African American literature mainly focuses on racism, slavery, culture and tradition. Racism and slavery are the major central themes in Alice Walker’s novels. The novel has a hundreds of themes and subjects. Alice Walker has portrayed racism and slave trade aspects in present novel. Racism
is one of the hazardous evil of modern age which is the basic reason for superiority over the other ethnic group. It denotes the oppression, prejudice and atrocities against a particular group of section of people by other class people. The major difference is the color of the skin. Whites always dominate blacks and oppress them. African Americans suffered a lot by the Americans. They suffered mentally and physically. They are struggling to get their freedom and want to create their own identity. Alice Walker in her novel, *The Temple of My Familiar* has explored the various incidents of racism. Her characters faced the problems of race. They experienced slavery. They believed that they would get freedom in future. By taking three couples e.g the old man Hal, a painter and his estranged wife, Lissie, Arvedya, a musician, and his wife Carlotta, professor of women’s literature, Suwelo, Professor of history and his wife Fanny, a teacher of women’s studies Mr. Hal and Lissie recollect many things from their past. In this particular novel, blacks are suffering. They do struggle to overcome slavery, sufferings of women and children and few things they recall.

Carlotta’s mother, Zede’s life is fine example for slave trade. The black people were brought as slaves and they compelled to work in the fields of the white’s agro-industry. They have to struggle a lot for centuries to get their freedom. Zede’s account on the slave trade throws light on their suffering. Black women suffered thrice fold when compared to their men. They were ill treated by their own men in the family and as a black suffered in the society and also particularly as black women. Their ill treatment found no bounds.
After much struggle the African Americans got their freedom. When Fanny visits Africa, she feels at home and visit brings her peace. Suwelo too has change of heart after listening to Lissie’s stories. Lissie, the healer is able to bring peace and harmony in their lives. Though they are not completely changed, they were able to bear each other and expect that their children would live in peace in the future. (Ramya and J. Priya 2013:369-70)

Alice Walker’s novel, *The Temple of My Familiar* presents the saga of a black woman called Lissie Lyles who has taken birth in different races and at different times. It is a chronicle not only of the life of a black woman but also of the women of different races. It is the story about the manner in which women were brought under the control of a patriarchal social order and also an analysis of how women lost their joy and bliss.

This is the story of Lissie’s life. It is the story of thousands of lives, each one touched by the double concern of race and gender. The novel opens with an epigraph of Lissie; “If they have lied about me they have lied about everything”. Lissie suspects that the people are wrongly informed about her’. She believes that without knowing the black woman’s story, no study about the world be completed and authentic. Thus her’s is the only true story about the black woman around her. In the beginning, Walker introduces Lissie to her readers in the form of pictures and then through Mr. Hal, a friend of both Lissie and her lover Rafe. Lissie was married to Mr. Hal, painter and artist. Mr. Hal is also a childhood friend of Lissie who used to live on an island off
the coast of Charleston in South Carolina. They were in love. While Mr. Hal’s father hated his paintings, Lissie helped his paintings secretly. But their relationship changes when Mr. Hal is forced to deliver his own child as a result of this traumatic experience he loses interest in Lissie sexually. While giving birth to their child, Lissie’s moans were turning into screams.

Because of Hal’s saintly conviction that there is too much suffering implicit in childbirth, he observes celibacy. As a result Lissie runs off with and married with a photographer. The photographer is not only sexually attracted to Lissie, he is enacted by every picture he takes of her. One seems tall, another dark with eyes like obsidian, one had hair up to her waist, another had hardly enough to cover her skull. Another seems crippled and barely ambulatory. However, after her short affair with the photographer, she comes back with a new baby in her womb. Inspite of the fact, that she has ran away and has come back, Hal never hates her. Lissie, on her part, accepts her husband’s vow of chastity and sets up a ménage a trois to satisfy her physical needs, with a virile porter called Rafe, who happens to be Suwelo’s uncle. Thus, Lissie’s life aquires considerable mystery. Lissie herself has told Suwelo that Lissie means, “the one who remembers everything” and believes that in her life earlier lives she was born in Egypt, Atlantis and Africa. In addition to this she also feels that in all the lives in the recent past up to a few thousand years she was always a black woman. And as a black woman she was forced to undergo the most horrible, painful and dehumanizing experiences. In her life in Africa, when she was two years old, her father dies
due to severe attack. Lissie, her two sisters, a brother and her mother, as per the custom become her uncle’s reasonability. Being pitiess her uncle sells all of them off as slaves. Her mother’s story illustrates the plight of every black mother who has lost her spouse. Once they were sold to white men they were thoroughly inspected to test their physical fitness. Lissie reveals that there were a few other black men, who were also sold out into slavery along with them. They were also sold by the Mohametans’ because these men and women used to carry on the ancient tradition of worship of the mother, and to see mother sold into slavery was a great deal of torture to them. (Ranveer: 239-242) Alice Walker’s writing primarily concentrates on the role of women of color in the history. In her, *Black Women Novelists: The Development of a Tradition*, she says:

> In nature, nothing is perfect and everything is imperfect. Trees can be contorted, bent in weird ways, and they are still beautiful. It’s clear that you have to cherish everyone. I think that’s what I get from these older black women that every soul is cherished, that every flower is to bloom.
>
> (Christian 22)

Whites dominate, discriminate, and suppress to blacks because of their skin color. African Americans who unwillingly brought by the Americans from Africa. They suffered a lot in the hands of Americans. They exploit Africans by giving them the plantation work. They exploit them not only mentally but also physically. Africans struggle lot for their freedom and they want their identity to be recognized as a human being in America.
In *The Temple of My Familiar* Alice Walker has explored various incidents of racism through the various characters and their experiences in their past and present lives. It tells about communion between different aspects of one’s own personality such as between people of different sexes, races, cultures and times between different species or creations. The novel has multiple stories which revolve around four main characters Fanny and Suwelo, Lissie abd Mr Hal. The novel has its hidden center in the character, Miss Lissie stands for the figure of matriarchal goddess. Novel highlights the issues of oppression of any sort.

At the outset of novel, Alice Walker begins with the introduction of various characters like, Zede and her daughter Carlotta, who escapes from terrorism of their country and both of them settle in San Francisco where Zede runs a fashionable boutique. Zede is a traveler in time who knew many generations of her own. She remembers of her ancestors as they were brought from Africa to Latin America and then on to the U.S.A. It is through Zede we come to know about the situation of women in different countries and continents. Zede, in moments, in sadness remembers the memories of her past. She says that mothers used to teach them the history of their civilization and although she also recalls a waterfall where groups of girls used to bathe when they used to have their periods. Then, along with their mothers they used to gather by Ixtaphtaphahex (the traditional goddess) and participate in rituals such as preparing food, collecting wood for fire, and the act of telling the stories about the priests. The task of the priests was to pray for the people.
People used to wear the costumes made by women from feathers. For her mother and it was like praying. Walker comments on the role of men and reveals the true reasons for the plight of women in that community. Women were still infatuated with their relative newness. Zede’s life is an example for slave trade. The black people were brought as slaves for working in the white’s banana plantation. For their freedom, they struggle lot against the whites. Every character experiences the oppression, exploitation throughout the novel. Especially Zede throws light on slave trade and their sufferings.

Amanda Smith, a black missionary points out:

“The poor women of Africa, like those of India have a hard time. As a rule, they have all the hard work to do. They have to cut and carry all the wood, carry all the water on their heads, and plant all the rice. The men and boys cut and burn the bush, and planting the cassava, the women have to do. You will often see a great, big man walking ahead with nothing in his hand but a cutlass, and a woman, his wife, coming on behind with a great big child on her back, and a load on her head. No matter how tired she is, her lord would not think of bringing her a jar of water, to cook his supper with, or of beating the rice, no, she must do that.” (Smith 1936:45)

For centuries black women are suffering from slavery and racism.

Linda Brent comments,

‘Slavery is terrible for men, but it is far more terrible for women; supper added to the burden common to all, they have wrongs, and suffering and mortification particularly their own’ (Brent 1987:405).
The word black is used to the race and feminist. Patriarchal hegemony is the factor of the oppression of women. Therefore the oppression and suppression of black women should be ended. Barbara Christian in *Black Feminist Criticism: Perspective on Black Women Writers* points out:

“Walker’s poetry, fiction, and essays always focus to some extent on the major character’s perceptions of their past as crucial to their personal transformation in the present and the possibility of change in the future”. (Christian 1984:72).

Through this novel, Walker’s soul becomes the leader of the black race. Characters like, Zede and Lissie are priestesses, goddesses, and healers. Walker makes them guide to search for their individual parts. Now a days Black women are becoming self conscious about themselves in the racist white America. They have developed their black feminist consciousness. Maya Angelou says:

It is time for parents to teach young people early on that in diversity there is beauty and there is strength. We all should know that diversity make for a rich tapestry, and we must understand that all the treads of that tapestry are equal in value no matter what their color is. (Angelou 1978:88-89)

Black women from America have been always prejudiced and exploited by racists. As Katie Genera Common said:
"Il African American women share the common experience of being black woman in two “contradictory” worlds simultaneously, one, white, privileged, and oppressive the other black, exploited and oppressed’ (Common 1992:30).

*Temple of My Familiar* is the story of Lissie. Walker has presented the lifespan of Lissie. In this particular novel it is an exploration of Lissie’s life. She suffered throughout her life. She had sexual relationship with Mr. Hal and Mr. Rafe. Suwelo is living in his uncle Rafe’s house. He brings the twist in story. He narrated the story of Lissie through the gift box in which he finds the letters of Lissie. Lissie is suffered throughout her life. She found peace only in Suwelo. She says,

“"In lifetime after lifetime I have known oppression: from parents, siblings, relatives, governments, continents. As well as from my own body and mind. Some part of every life has been spent binding up my wounds from these forces. In the memory, I would have to say, there are only moments - at most – days – of peace, except for the times I have been shame or priest and have lived, for months on end, In kind of trance. But as you probably know, these blessed periods of are a vacation, in a sense, from life, and one screaming infant or barking dog can force me again.” (Walker 1990:82)

Lissie further says,

“"My life with the cousins is the only dream memory of peace that i have. In one of the worst lifetimes, many lifetimes later, I was , by some accident,
permitted to another man I myself actually picked and loved, and there was peace for a time, a beautiful ‘rightness’ about the world, but because I was apparently born without a hymen and therefore there were no bloodstains to show the villagers after our wedding night-during which I had responded to him passionately, or as he later claimed, shamelessly- he denounced me to the village and my parents turned me out. After that I was the lowest sort of prostitute for the man of the village, including the husband I’d loved, until I died of infection and exposure at the age of eighteen”. (87)

Walker has explained the painful story of Lissie. She had become a victim of villagers. Being a black race woman, she suffered many times in her life. Hal described his love with Lissie. She gave birth to Lulu. Lissie had four more children but three of them had died while they were in babyhood. Lissie is very passionate and sexual. She wanted more babies and sex too. When Hal delivered a child himself, he felt ashamed about his past. He felt guilty about whatever he did with Lissie. His urge of sex is died when he saw the painful birth of Lissie. Lissie, her child Lulu and Mr. Hal were living in a house where all neighbors were white. Hal and Lissie were more blacks than them. Hal and his family got bad experiences of living there. He says,

“The house was not too fine for ‘niggers’. I don’t think black people were allowed in that part of town back then. But we never sat or stood on the front lawn, or sat on our stoop; it just didn’t exist for us as part of the house. There
was an alley behind the house and we always went in the back way. We were dark compared to them- but we said to hell with them and began to be able to relax a little bit”.

(111)

Lissie has the power to remember her many past lives in which her race, gender, and species are not fixed. In her personality, there are many women. For instance, an African farmer who has been sold into slavery for crossing Atlantic. She is brutalized and raped. A moorich who is burned by the inquisition. Being lesbian, she is living in a Harlem, a pigmy who is living in a prehistoric forest that covered whole earth etc. Throughout the novel, Walker has depicted Lissie as the living history. She is the source of past lives. She is the example of a womanist spirit. Lissie’s past memories are collective and it shows the history of black womanhood.

In her novel, Walker has presented the various characters who are black. Through them she explored the racism which existed between all sorts of people. Joel Kovel says:

"Racism abstracts the colour of the living body into non-colors of extreme value, black and white. Within this organization, black represents the shade of evil, the devil’s aspect, night, separation, loneliness, sin, dirt, excrement, the inside of the body; and white represents the mark of good, the token of innocence, purity, cleanliness, spirituality, virtue and hope". (Kovel 1984:232)

The novel relates to the various incidents of racism during the different periods. Lissie Lyles, the protagonist remembers her past life in which her father died due to heart attack. She was only two years old. Lissie, her sisters
and brothers were under the control of their uncle. Lissie’s uncle had many wives, children and slaves. Lissie’s mother sends her to Okra Porch but the guard catches and punishes her. After that she has been sold by her own uncle into slavery. Joel Kovel says about the slavery:

"First reduced the human self of his black slave to a body and then reduced the body to a thing; he dehumanized his slave, made him quantifiable, and thereby absorbed him into a rising world market of productive exchange….Thus, in the new culture of the West, the black human was reduced to a black thing, virtually the same in certain key respects as the rest of non-human nature—all of which could become property." (18)

Through the character, Lissie Walker has presented how slavery was carried earlier. She and her brothers and sisters were sold by the Mohametans who carry the ancient tradition of worshipping mother. To see a mother sold into slavery was a great torture for them. As a result of the slave trade in Africa, this realization of mother worship was finally destroyed. During past era, women had to suffer lot because of slavery and they were exploited on the basis of race, class and gender. Talking about racism Bell Hooks opined:

"Racist, sexist socialization had conditioned us to devalue our femaleness and regard race as the only relevant of identification… We clung to the hope that liberation from racial oppression would be all that was necessary for us to be free. We are a new generation of black women who had been taught to submit, to accept sexual inferiority and to be silent". (Hooks 1989:1-2)
Lissie explains the story of her mother. She says that how they were rejected and oppressed by the hands of white people. Being black, they suffered in the name of racism. Her mother’s story represents every single black mother who has lost her husband. Because of these circumstances, the religion of mother worship ended completely in Africa.

Alice Walker has pointed out the terrific truth about the slavery in which women treated inhumanly. Lissie describes that they were pushed into slavery and Lissie herself became the victim of it. Lissie, along with other slaves, dragged into a ship. They were caught and forced into ship, making them bald and naked. Their hips were bounded by cotton strips.

Another incident of racism is narrated by Walker about Mr Hal. His father not allowed him to go with his friend Heath at his house because of his skin color. Lissie defines Suwelo about her lifetime, where she was a white man in a tribe of black people. In present novel, Lissie wonders into her past life where she had experienced different races and sexes, and species. Being black she is suffered lot. Apart from these, another issue of racism is depicted in the novel, when Suwelo decides to sell his uncle’s home and comes to know the reason why his neighbor wants to buy the house. He tells about the house to Hal and Lissie:

‘We sold to another black family, because we knew that one of the reasons our neighbors wanted to buy our house was to keep other black people out’ (Walker 1990:239).
Suwelo and Hal’s uncle, Mr. Rafe were faced the race issue during the war time when, ‘white folks wanted [them] … for the army, to fight in the Great War, or so they said. The truth was, they wanted [them] to be servants for the white men who fought. … They wanted [them] to fight some people none of [ them] had heard of, and they were white folks, too’ (97). Alice Walker explains about racism and how it works by giving the example of Hal and Fanny. Lissie and Suwelo discuss for long time of her past experience. While discussing with him, she talks about Hal, who fears the white man. Fanny also fears white men. Her fear goes further and changed into extreme hate. She says:

"I grew up believing that white people, collectively speaking, cannot bear to witness wholeness and health in others, just as they can’t bear to have people different from themselves live among them. It seemed to me that nothing, no other people certainly, could live and be healthy in their midst. They seemed to need to have other people look bad – poor, ragged, dirty, illiterate." (298-299)

The black women oppressed and suffered from the issue of racism. Because of their gender role, they became the victims of sexual attacks of white people. As per the White people’s view, their identity is as a slave. The white patriarch people forced them to live as marginal. They are living in America as a non-native and became the victims of racism, sexism, and classism. Walker believes that, her characters from novel can live as human beings because they have the ability to connect the past and through the
guidance of their past experiences, they can be accessible to others to the ancestors.

Fanny is the daughter of Olivia and the granddaughter of Celie who is the protagonist in Walker’s *The Color Purple* (1982). Fanny believes on humanity and non-violence. She does not want to see the racial oppression before her. She becomes disappointed about the racism and white people. She wants her mind to be free from all these things. By surrounding situation, in her mind various thoughts were coming. She wants to be free from such thinking:

"… she was seeing a therapist, but … essentially she was one of those victims of racism who is extremely sensitive and who grows too conscious of it. It had become like a scale or a web over her eyes. Everywhere she looked, she saw it. Racism turned her thoughts to violence. Violence made her sick. She was operational on it". (294)

Fanny says to her therapist: I won’t be a racist. She tells the therapist, “I won’t be a murderer. I won’t do to them what they have done to black people. I’ll be die first. (300) Suwelo was aware about racist, white people and violence. He knows very well that though Fanny was thinking about to free from such thinking, it will not have any effect on white people. He says:

"Racist oppression and nuclear terrorism are two things your magic won’t be enough to stop … but fantasizing opening the doors of Pollsmore prison will not bring Mandela out" (303).
Fanny is in love with Suwelo, but she is not in love with marriage and for her, marriage means slavery. Fanny is shown by Alice Walker as a pure womanist and wants to put an end to the enslavement of black women at the hands of the black men. She wants to live with Suwelo not as a wife but as an autonomous being.

The African women are not better to live in America because of their race and sex. They have to face so many restrictions regarding their color line. These women are considered as an underclass. They are separated from the society by their sex. They faced the problems from all side of racial and sexual discrimination and many societal restrictions.

"There are three major circles of reality in American society, which reflected degrees of power and powerlessness. There is a large circle in which white people, most of them men, experience influence and power. Far away from it there is a smaller circle and a narrow space, in which black people, regardless of sex, experience, uncertainly, exploitation and powerlessness exists. Hidden in this second circle is a third, small, dark enclosure in white black women experience pain, isolation and vulnerability. These are the distinguishing of black womanhood in white America." (Gayle 1984:3-4)

As said earlier, Fanny struggles the racism and sexism which she observes and experiences everywhere. She became mentally disturb and also became horrified of the future which she has confronted and exhausted by her life for being an activist: ‘I’ve marched so much by now and been arrested so
many times, I am really quite weary’ (Walker 1990:302). Through the eyes of Suwelo Fanny became the victim of racism for her horrified nature about racism which she sees everywhere. Barbara Smith observes:

"I believed that the worst results of racism in this country have been to subvert the most basic human relationships among black men, women and children and to destroy their individual psyche. It is on the level of interpersonal experience that Walker succeeds in illuminating black women’s lives”. (Smith 1983:55)

Fanny sees horrific dream of a feast in which she is being treated by white. Therefore she always used to say about her friend Tanya who is impacted by the Civil Rights Movement and married a black man who allowed her to feel that she was doing something about racism without changing society. Through her friend, Tanya’s experiences, Fanny realizes the memories of growing up black in a racist world. Being hurt by the violence of Civil Rights Movement, Fanny recalls the violence in her life and the issues of this violence affects on her mind. She says:

“In high school I watched the integration of the university of Georgia on television... the night the whole campus seemed to go up in flames, and white people raged… I saw the freedom riders, black and white, beaten up in Mississipi… I saw a lot of black people and their white allies humiliated, brutally beaten, or murdered” (Walker 1990:298)

Being an activist, Fanny always hates white people. She shows her anger to the white people. She tries to recover from these thinking of angerness
which affects and irritates her mind. This racism is related to a childhood friendship between Fanny and the White Tanya. Tanya’s grandmother was not ready to accept her friendship with Fanny. She does not want to continue this friendship. Midg L. Wilson and Angela M. Neal pointed out the general attitude about the color in a rhyme. They say:

“If you’re white, you’re all right If you’re yellow, you’re mellow If you’re brown, stick around If you’re black, get back.”(Neale 1989:16)

Fanny faces dual roles of victim of racism and sexism. When Olivia’s fears getting too much, she takes Fanny to Africa to meet her biological father whose name is Abajerasezeola and his nickname is Ola, a native of Olinka. He is widely known as a playwright and is working as a culture minister. Through his writing, he views against the abuses of all kinds of people. He tells Fanny about the race issues:

“This frustration with the whites,’ Ola said, thoughtfully, and not responding to [Fanny’s] smile, ‘is a natural reaction on to what they have, collectively, done to you, not simply as an individual, but as a people, a culture, a race… I have been responsible for the deaths of whites,’ said Ola. ‘it did not “liberate” me psychologically, as Fanon suggested it might. It did not oppress me further, either. You must harmonize with your own heart,’ said Ola. ‘Only you will know how you can do that; for each of us it is different. Then harmonize, as much as this is ever possible, your surroundings.” (Walker 1990:316)
Ola and Fanny discuss about the people in Africa. How American whites came in Africa and made everything wrong. Black people have been oppressed in their own land. They behaved badly to them and destroyed everything. While discussing about racial issues, Fanny and Ola discuss other scenes also. The Africans show a profound race pride themselves. Kenneth B. Clark says:

“The basic myth of racism is that white skin colour brings with it superiority-that the white is more intelligent, more virtuous, more sexually controlled by the mere fact of being white” (Clark 1971:108).

Ola points out the similar factors/things of color of black to sun and portrays the white man in which the white man is seen as the prodigal son of Africa. The novel, The Temple of My Familiar presents that how black community itself learned from the awful, painful experiences of slavery, white domination, oppression, and racism. Through Ola’s artistic work, Fanny gives the insights of racism into the oppression of women, black women by black men, who should have had more understanding-having criticized the white man’s ignorance in dealing with black people for so long. Black people feel guilty of sexual harrassment and other forms of oppression. When someone asks, country and government in a more favourable light, Ola, who does not want to write plays replied to them in following words:
“The white man is still here, even when he leaves, he is not gone. (...) everyone all over the world knows everything there is to know about the white man. that’s the essential meaning of television. but they know next to nothing about themselves. (...) when my people stop acting like the white man, i can write plays that show them at their best!” (Walker 1990:181-182)

In *The Temple of My Familiar*, Walker has presented the secret plans which deals with racism. Africa is the native land of black people which belongs to them, therefore the white Americans come and exploit the blacks. As Olivia observes:

“The Africa we encountered had already been raped of much of its sustenance. Its people had been sold into slavery. Considering both internal and external “markets,” this “trade” had been going on for well over a thousand years; and had no doubt begun as the early civilizations of Africa were falling into decline, around the six-hundreds millions of its trees had been shipped to England and Spain and other European countries to make benches and altars in those grand European cathedrals one heard so much about; its minerals and metals mined and its land planted in rubber and cocoa and pineapples and all sorts of crops for the benefit of foreign invaders.” (148)

Suwelo taught American history while Fanny taught women’s studies. Further she got frustrated and moved to administration. She walked around with a look of such unmistakable distress and it was almost comical. She quit the college altogether and enrolled in the San-Francisco school of massage.
She opened her own little parlor down the street from the college, and many of her former colleagues, labouring under the stress she’d left, became the clients. She was in the search of a therapist, but essentially she was one of those victims of racism who is extremely sensitive and who grows too conscious of it. It had become like a scale or a web over her eyes. Every where she looked, and saw it. Racism turned her thought to violence. Violence made her sick. She was working on it. Fanny says on racism,

“I think white people paid black people barely enough to keep body and soul together was because they were afraid that if they ever had the slightest excess of funds they would paint their houses. They already knew how black people love color and how good we look in it. As it was, black people made paint out of bluing and white mud, and with this mixture they painted their fireplaces a billiard blue. There were only two houses in the country inhabited by colored of them belonged to my grandmother”. (298)

Fanny told all this to Robin, because white people suppose to uplift the white people. They seem that black people are oppressing them. Fanny was not permitted in the house of Tanya because Fanny’s mother and two grandmothers were talented, creative women. Fanny who spent her childhood at Shug’s home, where she did not see any white person ever. Fanny is the grandchild of Celie and Shug. In their life they were sick from the struggle with white people. Whenever Fanny would go into town she has to face the same problems which her grandmother faced earlier. She has to run in it seemed inevitable- with same red-neckcausing up a storm. But at the same
time, Fanny was trying to, as she liked to phrase it, to keep her feet on the Goddam path. As her grandmother Fanny wanted to get out from such situations. She is a modern girl who want to be free from the traditional rules and customs of African society. She wants the freedom of mind that should not be clitched in the race, gender, and class systems. Therefore she expresses her anger. To be free from such customs and traditions, her grandmothers had decided to choose their own way of life. They had formed their own church; a tradition of long standing among black women. Only, they didn’t call it a ‘church’. They called it a ‘band’. Sometimes a band of angels, sometimes a band of devils. Band was that renegade black women’s churches were called traditionally; it means a group of people who share a common bond of purpose and whose notion of spiritual in reality is radically at odds with mainstream of prevailing ones. (299)

Fanny’s thoughts and mind becomes violated. She is an activist and being an activist, she has keen relations and affection towards black people. She has sympathy about them. She becomes angry over the present scenario of society because she witnesses herself in the faces of weeping, screaming, completely mad women shown every day on T.V. a bomb has fallen through their roof; there are bleeding to death; there is no ambulance for them. She hates white people. She visualize them sliding off the planet and the planet saying, ah, can breath again! (301) While people attacking on black people means they are breaking the rules of nature. They are demolishing the chain of nature. After all this planet is a place to survive every single living being. No
one can harm them. If they are trying to harm then white people are really sliding off the planet. Apart from these, Fanny frustrated because white people don’t let share black people this planet; they don’t even want to share villages, towns, rivers, beaches and bus stops. (302)

After long days Fanny had come to visit Ola. They were talking about Ola’s play and other aspects. They were also talking about how white people oppress black people. While talking with Ola on various issues and aspects about wretched condition of blacks, she discusses with him that, the whites had done terrible things with black people. They did not attempt to do any kind thing for blacks. They exploited them and took the advantage of their ignorance and illiteracy. Blacks were far away from the education and current existed social system of law and regulations. Slavery and racism had kept them away from it because of their ignorance, they became the victim of rape and race of white people. Whites were destroying black children who were starving to their bodies, their minds, their dreams-right before their parents’ eyes. Fanny says, ‘They fought the white man as they fought pestilence’. (305) Fanny also discussed with Ola about the U.S.A. Though America is developed with weapons and power, though it is recognized a powerful country among the world countries but there is the maddening illusion of freedom without the substance. It’s never no lid, unequivocal, irrevocable. So much depends on the horrid politicians the white majority elects. Black people have the oddest feeling that, I think, or forever running in place. But actually it is not.
The last decades of the nineteenth century in America, the lynching of Black people in the Southern and Border States became an institutionalized method used by whites to terrorize Blacks and maintain white supremacy. In the decades of World War I, a pattern of racial violence began to emerge in which white mob assaults were directed against entire Black communities. These race riots were the product of white society. White society’s desire is to maintain its superiority over Blacks, and attack those least able to defend themselves. (http://www.yale.edu/ynhti/curriculum/units/1979/2/79.02.04.x.html)

Conventional wisdom says that while some disparities remain, things have generally advanced for Black people in America and today they are advancing still. But things have really changed at all. This society actually is becoming racial. In employment, Black people remain crowded into the lowest range as compare to upper class. Many industrialists employed Black people. In housing, Black people face the highest levels of racial residential segregation in the world—shunted into neglected neighborhoods lacking decent parks and grocery stores and often with no hospitals at all. Black people, as well as Latinos, who had achieved home-ownership had their roofs snatched from them. They were the ones hit hardest by the supreme mortgage crisis after having been targeted disproportionately by predatory lenders resulting in the greatest loss of wealth to people of color in modern U.S. history.
In healthcare, Black infants face mortality rates comparable to those in the Third World country of Malaysia, and African-Americans generally are infected by HIV. In education: Today the schools are more segregated than they have been since the 1960s with urban, predominantly Black and Latino schools receiving fewer resources and set up to fail. In imprisonment, the Black population in prison is 900,000 a tenfold increase since 1954 and the proportion of Black prisoners incarcerated relative to whites has more than doubled in that same period. A recent study pointed out that “a young Black male without a high school degree has a 59 percent chance of being imprisoned before his thirty-fifth birthday. On top of all that, and reinforcing it, is an endlessly spouting sewer of racism in the media, culture and politics of this society. Racism that takes deadly aim at the dreams and spirit of every African-American child. And who can forget the wave of nooses that sprung up around the country. For reasons directly related to the oppression of Black people throughout the history of this country, and continuing today, African-Americans were disproportionately the ones without the resources to get out of the way of that storm, as well as the ones concentrated in the neighborhoods whose levees had gone unrepai red for years. Far from ‘mere’ incompetence, the government responded with a combination of gun-in-your-face repression and wanton, murderous neglect. People were stuck on rooftops in 100-degree heat for days on end, with nothing to eat or drink. Prisoners were left locked in cells as waters rose to their necks. The protection of private property and social control was placed above human life. The governor of the
state ordered cops and soldiers to shoot on sight “looters” that is, people trying to survive and to help others. On at least one occasion, people trying to escape the worst-hit areas were stopped by police at gunpoint from crossing over to a safer area. When evacuations finally were carried out, they were done with the heartlessness of a cruel plantation owner. Families were separated, with children ripped away from parents. Tens of thousands were scattered all over the country with one-way tickets, sometimes not even told their destinations. Back home, bodies were left floating in water, or lying on sidewalks, underneath debris, decomposing and mangled, for months. Through it all, politicians and commentators spewed out unrelenting racism.

When Black people have fought to stay in the projects which are still habitable, they have been driven out and when they have protested at City Council, they have been pepper-sprayed and beaten. Oil rigs and tourist areas are long since back up and humming, while rebuilding schools, hospitals, and childcare centers are pushed off the list. Through it all, cops and national guards continue to occupy poor neighborhoods like enemy territory.

While more Black people than ever before have been allowed to “make it” into the middle class, two things must be said. First, even for these people their situation is still tenuous. To take one stark example: In opposition to the widespread notions of the “American dream,” where each successive generation “does better” than the previous one, the majority of the children of middle-class Black families have been cast, by the workings of this system,
onto a downwardly mobile path. And every Black person no matter how high they rise still faces the insults and the dangers concentrated in the all-too-familiar experience of being stopped for “driving while Black.” As Malcolm X said over 40 years ago, and as is still true today: What do they call somebody Black with a Ph.D.? A “nigger.” Second, and even more profoundly, for millions and millions of Black people things have gotten worse.

There Would Be No United States as We Now Know It Today Without Slavery. Slavery fueled the foundation and rise of not just capitalism in general, but the U.S. in particular. This is not just a “stain” that can eventually be washed, or even scrubbed, away within the confines of this system; it is embedded in the very fabric of this society indeed, the U.S. Constitution itself legally institutionalized slavery and deemed African-Americans to count as only 3/5 of a white person for census purposes. There is a semi-official narrative about the history and the “greatness” of America, which says that this greatness of America lies in the freedom and ingenuity of its people, and above all in a system that gives encouragement and reward to these qualities. Now, in opposition to this semi-official narrative about the greatness of America, the reality is that to return to one fundamental aspect of all this slavery has been an indispensable part of the foundation for the “freedom and prosperity” of the USA. The combination of freedom and prosperity is, as we know, still today, and in some ways today more than ever, proclaimed as the unique quality and the special destiny and mission of the United States and its
role in the world. And this stands in stark contradiction to the fact that without slavery, none of this not even the bourgeois-democratic freedoms, let alone the prosperity would have been possible, not only in the southern United States but in the North as well, in the country as a whole and in its development and emergence as a world economic and military power. Obviously, the way in which agriculture in the South developed was directly related to, indeed founded on, the system of slavery. But, beyond that, the way in which the U.S. related to the world market, and built up its prosperity and economic base in that way, was to a very large degree dependent on slave-based production.

In short, There is still the exploitation of blacks is going on. They are exploited at every stage of their life. Their living is not easy. It is made difficult by the U.S. government.

(http://revcom.us/a/144/BNQ-en.html)

Over this all situation, Fanny Adds:

“To me, we seem be losing who we are. We don’t understand white people; that’s the crux of matter. Not that we really want to anymore; its too frightening. We can’t comprehend them at all. We pretend we do from time to time, but that’s just to reassure ourselves. If we ever confront our fear at being surrounded by so many people whose ways are incomprehensible to us, I don’t know what will happen. They don’t do anything the way we would do it. Making those tall buildings that deaden the earth underneath them, for instance or digging out and
claiming everything that’s buried in the ground. People’s bones and funerary objects, gold, diamonds, silver and God only knows what else-uranium, plutonium. Most of what’s buried in the earth, people of color would never have bothered to look for it” (306)

While arguing over black and white, Fanny says to Suwelo,

“We are the people and not some other people. We are not white people, for instance. This is the message not simply from my parents, but it is the message from the beginning. We can trace this message from our earlier contact with the sun…… (p. 319,320)

At the end of the novel, Suwelo succeeds in solving his problems with the help of Hal and Lissie. Fanny and Suwelo decide to marry in a traditional sense and live in a house which is the symbol of new view.

At the end, we can sum up that, by focusing on different black women like, Fanny, Carlotta, and Mary Jane, Walker describes and gives the message about women who have a duty to bond with each other. She further wants to show that women should go beyond the limits of race, class, and nationality to liberate them from the patriarchal system. Walker believes on the liberation of women because past era women were the sexual atrocities of white men. Being African American woman, Alice Walker highlighted the issues of racism and the life of helpless women. Primarily her works project and explore the issues of race and racism.
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