Chapter II

Culture has no colour: Cultural Amalgamation of Cosmopolitanism

"By making us stop for a moment, poetry gives us an opportunity to think about ourselves as human beings on this planet and what we mean to each other." – (Rita Dove, Moyers- 110)

The chapter examines that African American poetry and cosmopolitanism impact figures on the cultural mulattoes – the offspring of interracial unions between white and black of African American colonies. Rita Dove is a poet and craftsman, living in Ohio, is culturally intermingled with other ethnic groups. Rita Dove exhibits in her works, the influence of the forerunners of the African American literature and her exceptional contributions that have won a unique place among the writers of the twentieth century and of the new millennium.

Crossing colour possesses cultural space and she focuses on borders and boundaries that decide inclusion and exclusion; secondly, it explores movement and concentrates
on the nature of cultural space. Cultural amalgamation traces not only about race and culture, but also focuses on intsexuality on language and indigenous and international cultures. Cultural amalgamation happened when the two cultures mix to form a new culture.

Cosmopolitanism is a term often used to describe a citizen of the world: an enlightened individual who believes he or she belongs to a common community or world order rather than to set of particular culture and traditions. Hannerz suggests that “The perspective of the cosmopolitan must entail relationships to a plurality of cultures’ and that this entails “first of all an orientation, a willingness to engage with other” (Hannerz 1990:239). It is an intellectual and aesthetic stance of openness towards varying the cultural experiences.

Cosmopolitanism here represents a desire for, and appreciation of, cultural diversity, which is termed as ‘heterophilia’ by Pierre-Andre Tanguieeff. The Language of poetry within the broader context of its ‘parent body’ [literature] has always had as its great themes: Love, Loss and death. As a human we must have the capacity to bring hope to despair that it is uniquely created by our humanity
and our human conditions. As Rita Dove is an African American writer we can’t exclude her in black writer or an African American canonical list. W.E.D Du Bois: “I don’t give a damn for any art that is not propaganda. Poetry like Grace Notes discusses about the Universality, or overall American Aesthetics. (Black American Literature Forum, 574,)”

Rita Dove's first volume, The Yellow House on the Corner was published in 1980. She introduces her cosmopolitan poetry in the figure of the cultural mulatto. It is a collection of poems dealing with an assortment of various terms and experiences such as Cosmopolitanism, adolescence, romantic encounters, as well as sights in slave history. It was well acknowledged by most critics and it compelled the attention of her peers. Cosmopolitanism supposed to create mutuality. The aim of cosmopolitanism is at coming common ground despite differences. Robbins, who speaks about cosmopolitanism says if cosmopolitanism cannot deliver explicitly and it leads directly into a political program.

The Universalism has become conflated with the term cosmopolitanism, according to Gilroy it needs to be retrieved from such schemata. As numerous commentators have
been stated that, "the point of view that makes the improvement of a resentful and unappreciative world by the imperial powers in a matter of morals can call itself cosmopolitanism. That designation is, of course, qualified by a continuing attachments to the idea that the national state should remain the primary institutional guarantor of political" (Gilroy 2005;62). Rita Dove maintains Cosmopolitanism between Nussbaum’s and Putnam’s that is indebted to the local culture and its tradition. Still seeks for an overarching Universalism that informs these localities, different as they may be. What ultimately counts for Rita Dove is to recapture for the united humanity which is explained in her biography as:

One critic insists this as "[S] he speaks with directness and a dramatic intensity that commands attention. . . Rita Dove fashions imaginative constructs that strike the reader as much by their 'rightness' as their originality" (110, Elizabeth H. Oakes).

Using her poetry, Rita Dove recounts the lives of her two grandparents, telling both sides of their story: Thomas first, and then Beulah, which in a sense gives her the last
word. Rita Dove explains her viewpoints regarding each other and life with a simple, yet elegant and realistic prose. Rita Dove has penned many collections of poems; however, *Through the Ivory Gate* was her initial attempt at writing a novel encouraged by her husband and publishers. Her story *Through the Ivory Gate* explains about a young African-American woman and her experiences were she returns back to her hometown (which is coincidentally Akron) to perform and teach children at a local school about puppets and creative arts. Alike in the story's young protagonist, Rita Dove herself is also very much involved with young children. She has appeared on such shows such as "Sesame Street" and NBC's "The Today Show," attempting to draw people who have a little prior interest in poetry. Her declared intention is "to bring poetry into everyday discourse . . . to make it much more of a household world. (American Writers,111)"

After quitting from the domination of the Black Arts Movement, Rita Dove developed her interest towards aesthetical study through the Cultural mulatto persona.

The term “cultural mulatto” is the term first introduced by Trey Ellis in his essay, *The New Black*
Aesthetic (1989). While 'mulatto' typically refers to a person of mixed black and white ancestry, a cultural mulatto is defined by Ellis as a black person who is highly educated and usually a part of the middle or upper-middle class, and therefore assimilates easily into traditionally white environments. Ellis traces that Rita Dove as the New Black Aesthetic artist and a cultural mulatto, who is empowered with talent with experiences of two cultures and races.

Rita Dove has blossomed as a New Black Aesthetic writer with a range and mix of cultural experiences. A cultural mulatto is “a genetic mulatto” of a “black person of mixed parents who can often get along fine with his white grandparents,” and a cultural mulatto is “educated by a multi-racial mix of cultures, can also navigate easily in the white world. And it is by and large this rapidly growing group of cultural mulattoes that fuels the NBA” (Ellis 235).

Cultural mulattos are skillful code-switchers and they may be equally comfortable around blacks as well as around whites. According to Ellis, “the New Black Aesthetic” artists are trans-cultural in their approach and they have
“changed, crossed, and flouted existing genres according to their own eclectic inspirations” (Ellis 234).

In the second place “a telltale sign of the work of the NBA [New Black Aesthetic] is the parodying of the black nationalist movement” (Ellis 236), and “the new, unflinching way NBA artists are looking at black culture is largely responsible for their popularity” (Ellis 237) and finally Ellis calls them “cultural mulatto.” Just as a genetic mulatto is a black person of mixed parents who can often get along fine with his white grandparents, a cultural mulatto, educated by a multiracial mix of cultures, can also navigate easily in the white world. And it is by and large this rapidly growing crop of cultural mulattos that fuels the NBA. We no longer need to deny or suppress any part of our complicated and sometimes contradictory cultural baggage to please either white people or black. (Ellis 235).

Members of the New Black Aesthetic are typically cultural mulattos. Their ability for easy interaction with both blacks and whites is what ultimately allows cultural mulattos opportunities for class and status upward mobility. Rita Dove’s break from the Black Arts Movement is
asserted in the first section of poetry. In the poem *Upon Meeting Don L. Lee* In a dream she delineates,

> Two thin white boys in toilet …
> Among the trees, the blacks trees,
> Women in robes stand, watching. They begin
> To chant, stamping their feet in wooden cadences
> As they stretch their beaded arms to him;
> Moments slip by like worms,
> “seven years ago...” he begins, but
> I cut him off : those years are gone –
> What is there now? He starts to cry; his eyeballs

*(YH, 12)*

The chapter particularly highlights how Dove’s mulatto characters

(i) “get along fine with” their white neighbours,
(ii) are “educated by a multi-racial mix of cultures and navigate easily in the white world,”
(iii) show their identity as cultural mulattos with individualism and Universalism. Dove has ultimately changed the stereotyped term “tragic mulatto” of nineteenth century African American literature to an optimistic hybrid
potential in her fiction, play, and in her short fiction. She has purposefully given a creative and autonomous space for the mulatto identity moving beyond the unfavourable representations of the earliest African American works.

Rita Dove’s focus is very much narrowly associated with or without race, gender and culture in the volume The Yellow House on the Corner. She mainly focuses on Universalization on the human race, which concentrates on the term of cosmopolitanism. She also gives more importance to imagery, structure of the poem. The writing of Rita Dove as African American woman reveals her individual struggles against the problem of Sexism, racism as the universal problem. Rita Dove volumes like Mother Love and Grace Notes balanced both the Universalism and Personal Experience. Grace Notes is about a retired of Life and burden on the home, which symbolizes here everyone is waiting for death.

Melin Perrira articulates regarding the title Cosmopolitanism and possesses that Rita Dove focuses on cultural mulatto in the volume of poetry The Yellow House on the Corner. Rita Dove anticipates about the racial connection and extreme uncertainty. The mulatto theme is expressed in the images of the volume’s Title page and
cover design. The Yellow House on the corner echoes the dialect expression “high yaller” which is used to describe someone black who is light-skinned and racially mixed. Combined with “House” which often represents the self or one’s sense of identity, ”The Yellow House” of the title can be read as depicting Mulatto Persona. The Yellow House on the Corner is the volume of poems was the Yellow House located in the corner of the road. “Yellow” itself symbolically represents the Cultural Mulatto persona.

The Yellow House on the Corner embodies many of the key aesthetic features of the “New Black Aesthetic” (NBA) one contemporary articulation of cosmopolitanism. Rita Dove’s earlier volume The Yellow House on the Corner, Both employ borrowing across race and class lines. A parody relationship to the Black Arts Movement, a new and resolute look on the black culture, and certainly in finding the universal in oneself and one’s experience (Ellis 233-51). Rita Dove’s trauma on a worldwide range of cultures in The Yellow House on the Corner, the poems about the universal experiences of female adolescence, and the Don L. Lee Poem significantly tells of the Black arts movement. Her focus in that volume is elsewhere, however, and intent on
constructing and publicly presenting a poetic persona in the face of some interracial censure. As she has commended in interviews, the volume is very much the product of her Iowa writer’s workshop training, an apprenticeship which, although helpful, had a stultifying effect on her poetry.

Rita Dove took a break from writing poetry between The Yellow House on the Corner and Museum. After Iowa, she starts to write the fiction Through the Ivory Gate, short stories like Fifth Sunday and Verse Drama The Darker Face of the Earth. She left Iowa in 1977 and moved with her husband to Oberlin, Ohio, where he taught German Literature at Oberlin College for two years. They also spent three months in Ireland during that time, lived in Israel for half a year in 1979, and then moved to Germany, living there from 1979 to 1981 (personal communication from Fred Viebahn, Jan. 29, 2002). Rita Dove centered on fiction and took frequent breaks from [poetry after Iowa], it did not sound like me” (Peabody and Johnson 3). Next to this period, she arose to write the poems that restarted with volume Museum, the first major work she believes truly her own.
Rita Dove’s *The Yellow House on the Corner* is considered to be addition to the thematic study regarding Cosmopolitanism which involves in bringing out the two entangled concepts, universality and personal experience, they equally recounts with African American literature and writers.

Universality in Black writing as Marilyn Nelson Waniek observes that it has become a “bugbear” in Black literary Criticism. This tautness has a long history that turns out to be particularly high-pitched during the 1950s and 1960s. African Modernist writers of the 1950’s, such as Robert Hayden were criticized during the 1960s by Black Arts Movement adherents for employing what they viewed as “white” aesthetics and cultural allusions. Many writers often follow the mainstream of universality. The Persona of young Rita Dove in her childhood were she lives in her home, which is located in Akron. Dove always thinks of outer world staying in her domain. Her ideas keep floating around in her works.

The house is represented as our corner of the worlds. The house has always been seen as Universe, a real cosmos of the world which is described in *Poetics of Space*:
A house constitutes a body of images that give mankind proofs or illusions of stability. We are constantly re-imagining its reality: to distinguish all these images would be to describe the soul of the house; it would mean developing a veritable psychology of the house.

To bring order into these images ... we should consider two principal connecting themes: 1) A house is imagined as a concentrated being. It appeals to our consciousness of centrality . . . Verticality is ensured by the polarity of cellar and attic . . . they open up two different perspectives for a phenomenology of the imagination. (Poetics of Space, 17)

The Yellow House is located in corner, which conveys a number of undertones which are related to the title. First, a corner itself stands in connection, as does the cultural amalgamation of Cosmopolitanism, which interconnects cultural references. Second, a corner house stands apart from the rest of the neighborhood. By taking a positive approach, it is marked which shows the directions, in the negative way it stick out and does not fit into the group. Moreover, the idea of a corner denotes, to cross the
street, to turn to the corner, continue ahead, or turn back. The book cover design has too organized various resonances of “Yellow”. So this corner always represents the identity, choices and change and destiny. The poem title itself indicates the advent of a poetic sensibility which is full-fledged at an intersection of cultures. The identity is different and outstanding and the poetry leads into new path but it is not suited in. Here Rita Dove represents the rejection form the black Arts movement where she doesn’t like the male leaders who are still chauvinists. Another meaning of the “yellow” is afraid.

The first and second edition’s cover designs also states various tones of “yellow”. Linda Gregerson stresses out about the photograph, black and white color which is overlaid with yellow that spans the first edition’s front over. In the second edition. The yellow house on the right hand house and front yard tree contrast the gray and white of the rest of the image. As same, on the back, a black and white photograph of Rita Dove is also shadowed in yellow. Through this Rita Dove insists that with her husband Fred Viebahn have had generous input on covers. According to
Rita Dove colour is very important to her. The colour is thematically amalgamating with the Culture.

Rita Dove deeply links the life, speakers of the poem and subject matter with the cultural mixture. This also connects with the term cosmopolitanism. Rita Dove shapes the poetry to meet both audiences’ expectations, enacting a mulatto structure. In some poems Rita Dove does not concentrate on any particular culture, too focuses with non-African American speakers or subjects. Generally poem should be read as universal or global in scope which is always valued by the readers. She doesn’t want to be a cubbyhole as a black poet by part of her audience.

The synchronic and diachronic structural interpretations are applied in this volume. The poems of Rita Dove first seen in the synchronic view which discloses that Rita Dove endeavouring to focus detaily about African American historical core from which the other poems extend. Here, it explains about the racial customs of black social relationships and highlights Rita Dove’s poetic uniqueness as black. The mulatto characters are the central characters in the volume. Diachronic and synchronic way of reading in
a single is short. Thus Rita Dove is aware of synchronic and diachronic way of readings of poetry becomes apparent in her discussion of puzzles and poetry in an interview with Therese Steffern. She comments:

I think my puzzle fetish has something to do with the way poems are constructed. Poems work in temporal sense—that is they proceed from the beginning to the end. But at the same time, there are words that reverberate throughout the poem on a different level—a more vertical axis. Words start to reverberate by virtue of their proximity to one another. That’s a spatial thing as well as a temporal one. Sometimes when I get stuck working on a poem, I lay out words like they are pieces in a jigsaw puzzle and see what happens. It sounds irreverent, but it’s not. I am laying out a cage, an emotional and linguistic grid work. (Darker Face, 107)

The poem The Yellow House on the Corner is divided into five sections. This life is the first poem in the volume which insists about the modern sense of American Identity in which Rita Dove says how Americans are irrelevant in
the way of thinking and feeling. What it is like to be a German, a northern European might seem as strange in relation to American mainstream culture as to live in black urban ghetto. European war has been focused as Rita Dove was studying in Germany and she was the traumatized survivor of the war. Her occupants of these worlds are tentative and perplexing, a deliberate confrontation of a comfy self-confidence:

I realized that during my rather sheltered college years at Miami University, in the rural setting of Southwestern Ohio, I had filled the role of the striving, gifted Black student extremely well, but without much concern for the outside world. And now, suddenly in Germany I was on display in a strange environment where some people pointed with fingers at me and others pitied me as a symbol for centuries of brutality and injustice against Blacks. So I felt simultaneously alienated both from my home country and from the place I was in. On the other hand ... serious travel can heighten the awareness a writer needs to see many sides of a story. (3)
Rita Dove categorizing the cultural stereotypes in her art connects the mythical accounts for human behaviors. The poem is representing racial self-presentation. The first section highlights global scope and in second section continues with the same ideology. In section three Rita Dove focuses on Historical slave narrative. Section four stresses on rejection of cultural or racial frames, finally in the fifth section comes back with the same notion of the first section which focuses on global range. This volume is based on a diachronic study which leads into global extents of Rita Dove’s cosmopolitanism, which can defer and delimiting her presentation of African American racial identification.

**Juxtaposing Two Cultures**

Rita Dove juxtaposes the aspects of two cultures, European and American, in her poems that she posits this as the habitation of taking their respective myths, perceiving them as survival strategies. *The Yellow House on the Corner* has won many prizes. She was very careful in handling her themes and structures of the poem to satisfy her both mulatto and black audiences. The first three poems of the
volume give clear and exact details about the racial and national references, but not particularly about African American culture. This makes her place among her peers to be judged by the readers as a Cosmopolitan writer, seeing the way she has depicted culture in the poems *This Life, The Bird Frau* and *Robert Schumann*.

The poem *This Life* expresses the pressure of expectation that strangers brings to one another. Travel seems to be the pleasure of the life. Her adulthood has been promoted as she was loved as a child. The Japanese woodcut engraved as a model of gendered behavior, of feminine passivity.

The female speaker in the poem is one who loves Japanese woodcut. Rita Dove does not mention the race of the speaker. She universalizes the cultures of the human races as all resemble some unity in following their cultures. It is asserted:

As a child, I fell in love
With a Japanese woodcut
Of a girl gazing at the moon
I waited with her for her lover.
Your face, though I don’t know it
Our lives will be the same—(Sp,11)

The poet captures both the fantasy and the real-life uncertainty of the outsider in a situation charged with potential intimacy.

The next poem The Bird Frau from The Yellow House on the Corner highlights the German Female who is cognitive. The third poem Robert Schumann or Musical Genius which begins with affliction is about the German (Romantic) composer Robert Schumann. Rita Dove, further concentrating in a particular culture, goes beyond the border of culture. Rita Dove is away from her African American Identity highlights her cosmopolitanism.

Sightseeing is the poem written by Rita Dove in the first section that is about a laconic vision of the collateral damage during in the Second World War. Villagers in German came back from the church after finishing their work, later seeing the destructed statue; they left it alike as the symbol of desecration of German Culture. The Speaker in the poem is herself. Rita Dove while living in
Germany, her culture and political issues were apart from her identity.

Historical incidents insist more symbolically insisted in this poem. The poem is like a fairy tale telling connected with the myth. This myth realm is a place of the loss of life which is mentioned as many frozen bodies of sparrows are symbolized and connected with the image of humanity who are the sufferers of the society.

Humanity is constitutionally prone to see sights in signifying ways. The casual sightseer parading observation does not have any particular premium on objectivity. Living in Germany made Rita Dove awake that the wreckages of war were images it was important to “regard” with the meaning of both to look again and to have a respect for. Northern fairy tales shape nationalistic and ethnic consciousness of fire and time which are not culturally natural elements, the dead sparrows constraining the purity of vision. The Snow King poem roams the historical traces of a season of winter.

In the first three sections she margins and detonates her style, moving into outer space suggested by her own
difficult mind. The right to speak, in Rita Dove poems, is
led by her conveyance her right to think ahead of the world
which she lives and the limitations of the dominant
culture. Rita Dove gives more importance to memory of the
family which is mainly focused on the volume The Yellow
House on the Corner. The poem concentrates between the
outside world and tension with domestic space. The poem in
the book is important for the way in which they hold
different spaces in the house, and how the girl growing
up inside imagines herself and the world she will come to
inhabit. In Geometry she works a math problem:

I prove a theorem and the house expands:
the windows jerk free to hover near the ceiling,
the ceiling floats away with a sigh. (SP,12)

The child is an architect and carpenter, inhabiting
physical and mental spaces so that she can build something
else. The parts of the house metamorphose that windows have
hinged into butterflies until headed, like the windows, “to
some point true and unproven.” Once the house has been
cleared away and made a blank slate of space, her mind can
then be “out in the open,” a free and unprecedented
intellect in the making.
In a recent interview Rita Dove declared, "I hate to give people what they expect." Rita Dove does not mention about the people who is represented in her poem. Whether she is telling about solving a math problem of the young girl and making the world that is her disassemble in the process. Architecture is crucial in other frozen moments.

The poem Geometry was published in Rita Dove’s first complete book of poems, The Yellow House on the Corner, in 1980. The other poems like Geometry explore the dynamic relationship between knowledge and imagination. Through the evolving series, it is increasingly surprising and fantastic dramatic images, the poem takes the reader on a swift and a fanciful excursion from indisputable knowledge ("I prove a theorem") to the realm of imagination. The speaker of the poem seems to be suggesting that the idea of attempting to impose intellectual certainty results in the unleashing of a mysterious, and ultimately wonderful, transformative force. The geometrical "house" immediately "expands" from what is known and certain, and suddenly the speaker is no longer protected, but is "out in the open." The windows, those framed devices through which the speaker observes the external world, "jerk free" and hinge "into
butterflies" in a transformation from rational thought to imagination. The poet seems to be saying that where intellect and imagination "intersect" there is "sunlight," or enlightenment, and that, in the end, it is the imagination that is "true and unproven.

The process of learning and learning numbers specifically does not often make a space for freedom without any cost. It is stressed out in the poem "Geometry", Rita Dove hard earned and hard-imagined childhood liberation is discussed with anxiety. All Rita Dove's poems which has been easily made understood to the readers by analyzing the language of various counties which leads to endness in learning many multiple words. Rita Dove affirms:

I wrote the poem in this books between the mid-seventies and mid-eighties a, well after that revelation, but certainly propelled by it I often wonder, had I not gone to that book-signing, if eventually I would have found myself exploring the world through language anyway. This is no moot speculations; each of us would have taken a different
path in our life with little effort on our own if all the road blocks and unmarked junctures we encounter constantly had assumed a slightly different constellation. The misery of destiny boils down to the ultimate — and ultimately unanswerable questions: How does where I come from deterring where I’ve ended up? Why am I what I am not what I thought I’d be? What did I think I’d be? Where do I reside most completely? (Dove, 12)

Rita Dove encounters her past and implemented in her present life. In Yellow house, Rita Dove’s speaker herself becomes the traveler, the one whose quest for cognition of origins and endings demands that she set out to see things for herself. This poetry is about walking towards the fractured world. Rita Dove’s development toward a nomadic mode of writing is absorbing in all her works. Rita Dove was influenced by many young American writers during the period of college days in 1970, she joined in Black arts movement later her first collection was published the poem Upon meeting Don L.Lee from the volume The Yellow House on the Corner, Rita Dove formulate this significant Black arts poet as an ultimately tragic figure, unable to speak and
reduced from rage to silent tears by the end of the encounter. Rita Dove includes literary characters in her poem. Don L. Lee is the Black Arts movement writer. Laura Tanenbaum stresses:

For Rita Dove, the political project of the Black arts movement cannot ultimately speak to contemporary experience, yet Rita Dove herself has noted that she found the stylistic innovation... It would be a mistake to argue that her work moves away from African American experience toward a Universal ideal, as white critics have so often called on African American writers to do... this history along with other histories ,embracing diverse influences, and making the crossing of geographical and cultural boundaries a particular theme. (Multiethnic Literature, 615)

The Germany of the first section of volume tells about the rural peoples and communities narrow, sometimes cruel survivors of war bound up in icy and alien mythology. The focuses of the last poems in first sections are written in US, but not about home. In an African American Idiom, they
express contemporary black urban experiences of the short fuses of racial tension. These two poems are about the two black young males imprisoned in their ill-environed lives. Lee is the writer of Black Arts movement. He was the major representative in this movement during the seventies.

Georgoudaki notes that “through a cluster of surrealistic in ages, Rita Dove suggest the decay of the ideology that Don Lee. L “(4) when his hair falls out in clumps, his speech is stopped by one speaker. Rita Dove represents herself which included:

He come toward me with lash less eyes,
Always moving in the yellow half-shadows.
From his mouth I know he has never made Love
To thin whiter boys in toilet stalls ... (12)

The speaker stops while he starts to speak “Seven years ago...” he begins; but/I cut him off: Those years are gone—/what is there now?” He starts to cry; his eyeballs/Burst into flame. I can see caviar” (SP, 12).

Rita Dove stresses in the poem’s lines as Black arts movement is traditionally masculine. Rita Dove’ witticism brings down against the masculine who behave unnaturally in
order to attract the people. This shows Rita Dove is against the established Black ideology. Rita Dove during her younger days separated herself from the exclusive celebrations of blackness, the homophobic and racist polemics that she speaks. A gender division in the Black arts movement is also expressed:

Among the trees, the black trees,
Women in robes stand, watching. They begin
To chant, stamping their feet in wooden cadeness
As they stretch their beaded arms to him ;( SP,12)

Women’s status in this movement is asserted by Rita Dove. Male dominates this movement against women. So this makes Rita Dove to go into new direction. In a later Interview Rita Dove acclaims it as “a generational poem”
I was terrified that I would be kind of suffocated before I began. That I would be pulled into the whole net of whether I was black enough or whether I was denigrating my own people and all this kind of stuff. This is a pressure, not just from the black arts movement, but this is a pressure
of one's whole life, to be a credit to the Race.

(YH,5)

Rita Dove does not have any personal reason to affect him, but rather a needed killing a father for the emerging poem. She says Black arts and Black power movements have masculine domination in Blackness, which makes to view them as rigid, militant, sexist and totally unproductive. Rita Dove, as a Cosmopolitan poet moving towards the New Black Aesthetic movement, her poems imitating NBA and destroying the black arts movement.

The poem *Nigger Song: An Odyssey* is depicted clearly about the self-definition and African American subject matter. This poem expresses a positive and complex portrait of racial identity then the representation of Black arts movement. She proves herself as a cosmopolitan writer who implemented in the culture and affirmation of Blackness. Understanding Rita Dove's self-presentation of racial and culture associations, it must be read along with the previous poem Lee. The title of the poem place (positions) and joins two traditions. The Nigger Song of African American language of an Odyssey is about the Western
classical tradition, indicating a travel or quest into blackness. This poem asserts the freedom of the black arts movement for the next generation. After reading this poem, many writers rejected to read this poem.

Alice Walker, previous generation writer too neglects her work and criticizes her volume that appeared in the mid 1970’s. In the same book Walker poems were published in the Anthology. She did not want to read during the Book promotion in San Francisco. Walker says she felt Rita Dove as a Racist. As the response to Alice Walker, Rita Dove utters:

Alice objected to the use of the word “nigger”, even by a black writer. I wrote her a letter explaining my philosophy about the word; my concern was to redeem the word, to reimagining it as a black concept. She responded with a polite, dignified letter in which she acknowledged my right to use whatever words I chose but argued we should not use such words in the company of white people. MY immediate reaction was: “No one’s going to put me in that kind of cage – not whites, not blacks, not even myself. I am trying to make the best
poem I possibly can, a poem that will defy whatever nefarious purposes, people may want to use it for." So in spite of my precautions, the very thing I feared — being called to task by the Black Arts Movement — happened early in my career. (DF, 108,112)

The poem “we” insists six young people who were enjoying the ride during Night time. Rita Dove’s imagery underlines blacks and she connects the night with the racial identity as the gray-green nigger night. The youths deflect the boundaries that historically have been forced on African Americans and drives past factories, past graveyards. Many youngsters continuously bring out the African American culture to prevent their traditions which give the path to the next generation. This poem depicts of a group of black adolescents questing into a fertile blackness. It explicitly rewrites the ambivalence of Gwendolyn Brook’s poem We Real Cool (1960), in which she acclaims the style of seven pool players at the Golden Shovel while lamenting their dead-end fate.

The next section is about Rita Dove’s The Series A Suite for Augustus which determines the cultural mulatto
persona in relation to Race, American culture and History. Rita Dove prefers to preserve the tradition of African American Culture. Poem "Augustus" represents Rita Dove as the cosmopolitan poet. Rita Dove links the cultural mulatto with her poetic identity to African American National identity and history. Rita Dove’s self-presentation is the central norm to empathize as a Cosmo poet. The poem traces a relationship "dance" between the persona and a Young black man named Augustus. Baroque music was played and danced by several characters. This person belongs to autobiographical character of Rita Dove.

During the year 1963, the poem pictures the persona’s development in age, leads to puberty, sexual awareness, and about the self-presentation which closely connects to Rita Dove’s life experience at the age of eleven, later visiting to Washington, D.C, and too visited abroad for studies, places like Germany, Europe. In Germany she studied in University of Tublinga and her experience is mentioned in her works with this country after marrying German writer Viebahn. So she emancipates the cultural mulatto notion in her poems. The first poem, 1963 describes the loss of innocence, loss of virginity which she compared
to the assassinated President John. F. Kennedy in 1963. Kennedy’s death is connected to the learning of Augustus insist on the poem:

That winter I stopped loving the President
and loved his dying. He smiled
from his frame on the chiffreobe
and watched as I reined in each day
using buttons for rosary beads.(YH,25)
The two personas and the nation are leading the way as experienced. The relationship between the persona, the nation and figure of bridge seems to be Augustus examines:

...and in tall white buildings

Typed speeches, each word-cluster a satellite,

A stone cherry that arced over the violent bay,

Broadcasting ball games and good will to

Cuba...(YH,25)

In the next stanza the word “cherry” in the poem asserts both the virginity of the person and cherry trees planted in Washington D.C. Augustus is working in federal government who is working in tall white buildings and
speeches prepared by him were sent to Cuba. The poem continuously focuses on authority, leadership, nationalism and about the American government. The person advanced with Augustus in part of engaging and weighing his affiliations. The end line of the poem “an erector set, spilled and unpuzzled” insists about her sexuality which is not revealed. A careful attention of that identity and Sexuality will closely take her into full confrontation with the national, American Identity that Augustus resembles.

A Suite for Augustus is the longest poem in the second section of The Yellow House on the Corner which is in an experiment in form, a rendering of the history of a Love affair in an elliptical narrative form. The poem is similarly autobiographical which also mention in many other poems Thomas and Beulah, Cameos On the Bus with Rosa Parks in narrative style. The poem is written in the form of a diary where a Black woman writing about her middle-class experience proved by the current cultural landmarks of the era. The poem starts with the President's death in 1963. This poem traces Rita Dove’s coming of age as a cultural mulatto and link her poetic identity to American
National Identity and history. This is a modern romance conducted across distances which self-presents her as a cosmopolitan poet.

Augustus rules as a suiting supreme ruler in the heart of the feminine speaker. She overemphasizes Augustus as a spreader airing satellites across the regions but he attains unobtainable omnipresence to feminine speaker. This poem makes her into converse the domestic and home making. Although he always leaves speaker alone when he got some familial work even when they were planning for celebrating their lovers' day.

D.C aims to concentrate on the home that links to the national in surreal, dreamlike rendering of the nation’s capital. Rita Dove through Augustus and the person she focuses on the problems of national identity and cultures, sexuality and racial Union. These poems tracks the notion of verse drama The Darker Face of the Earth. This poem itself divides into 3 stanzas, starts with Smith Sonian who intended as a repository for U.S History and Culture. The End line of the stanza Silver/ brontosaurus bones couched on Smithsonian velvet/ specifically implies an extinct
dimension to the artifacts. This stanza seems to be focus and buried on dead buried Era. Second section portraying how the Washington monument violates the Reflecting pool on the mall. This stanza reveals a historical reality frequently characterized by sexual miscegenation always rape-between white men and black women from the beginning of the nation's history. Historical incidents that represents more in her poem. In second stanza Augustus points out on the Washington Monument:

    A bloodless finger pointing to heaven, you say,

    Is surely no more impossible than this city:

    A no man's land, a capital askew,

    A postcard framed by imported blossoms-

    And now this outrageous cue stick

    Lying, reflected, on a black table. (SP,22)

    Rita Dove portrays the monument as an "outrageous cue stick", outrageous as offensive to morality. Thus the outrage of the white phallic cue stick lying on the explicitly black table represents not only the general violations of slavery but also, and specifically, the role
of black women by white men as a foundation of the nation’s history. Sexual miscegenation is linked to cultural miscegenation. The president had many owned slaves and had a sexual relationship with one of them, Sally Flemming who gives birth to many children, genetic testing has confirmed that any one of her children was fathered by a male Jefferson. Here the slavery takes main issue in African America. Jefferson has been portrayed as a sexual predator. Rita Dove expresses the sort of the miscegenous “marriage” with Jefferson and Hemming’s lies at the core of national culture and identity. It implies the background for and justification of her presentation of a cultural mulatto persona.

Down the lane of clipped trees, a ghost trio
Plays Dixie. His slaves have outlived him
In this life, too. Harmonicas breathe in,
The gray palms clap: “De broomstick’s jumped, the world’s not wide.”(SP,22)

Rita Dove’s the most decisive point which relates to simultaneous action of sexual, racial and cultural
miscegenation in the ghost foundations in the ghost trio’s De broom stick (jumping the broomstick), Rita Dove entails the miscegenous marriage happened with the Jefferson and Hemmings which leads to focus on the national culture and identity. It indicates about the background and the Rationalization of her presentment of a cultural mulattoo persona.

*Planning the Perfect Evening* poem depicts about the theme of sexual maturation. Augustus is in persona’s room in night. They dance in persona home sexually and she deliberates:

Now nothing, not even breath, can come
Between us, not even the aroma of punch
And sneakers as we dance the length
Of the gymnasium and crepe paper streams
Down like cartoon lighting. Ah,
Augustus, where did you learn to samba?
And what is that lump below your cummerbund? (SP, 23)

The poem *Planning the Perfect Evening* comes back to the motif of sexual ripening. This poem describes the person’s
sexual growth which leads enjoyment of Augustus. The dance between them is emotional and sexual which is asserted by Rita Dove:

He stands penguin-stiff in a room
that’s so quiet we forget it is there.
Now nothing, not even breath, can come
Between us, not even the aroma of punch
And sneakers as we dance the length
Of the gymnasium and crepe paper streams
Down like cartoon lightning. Ah,
Augustus, where did you learn to samba?
And what is that lump below your
cummerbund? (SP, 23)

The poetic style is seems to be like a fairy tale, where Augustus is representing as a bear makes a beauty and the beast type of coupling. This indicates the age of adolescence of the talker. The feminine persona stays at night with Augustus points out the age depiction and Rita Dove connects this persona to herself and insists that she did not attend any prom in high school rather than she got selected for presidential scholar. As she is a good student she got the opportunity to meet the president while
she traveled to Washington D.C. In the series Rita Dove engages multiple issues of Identity, such as Americanism, the blackness and feminity which delineates her positions relative to each. Conflating the prom that never happened with the trip to the nation’s capital that did. She charts an important transition into an intellectual identity aware of the national, racial, and gendered implications of her experience and the culture around her. Rita Dove’s cosmopolitan positioning among these frames is first articulated in the series, which becomes the volume’s mulatto core.

Rita Dove’s *Wake* title itself promotes manifold meanings allow several threads to be interwoven. It represents the wake of a ship to move toward eastward. *Wake* too connotes endings, as in a funeral wake and to wake up, as if from a dream. Thus although the persona might follow in his wake, this journey awakens her the limitations of the path. Augustus represents a blind Americanism that is oblivious to its origins. The speaker of the poems begins:

Stranded in the middle of the nation like this,
I turn eastward, following rivers,
My heart, shy mulatto, wanders toward
The salt-edged contours of rock and sand
That stretch ahead into darkness  (Sp,25)

Her journey is in the direction of the east coast, the
nation’s pilgrim origin and it is also advocated to the
darkness yonder Europe.

In the second stanza, the speaker discovers Augustus
"standing in the way "and she finds difficulty in her
journey. Avoiding is perceptibly related to his place in
American government and leadership as he seems that it is
not only placed in Washington, as Potomac and cherry
boughs, but indicates that it is also minted on a coin or
medal that sorts his profile and shirt front. They play on
capitalism as the economic system, the affiliation with the
nation’s capital, and the process of being turned into
capital. His speeches are always low in the society he
lives. The speaker in this poem says “What reaches me is not
his words” but just his breath, which submits that she is
not hearing to his words or politician words because speech
is low in subject matter and high in rhetoric
The final poem of A Suite for Augustus is about Black Culture. This poem portrays clearly about the feminine persona and Augustus is different ways which they have lived, as it highlights the cosmopolitanism of the feminine persona’s cultural identity in contrast to Augustus’ rigid and limited Americanism. The poem starts with the line “Three Years too late, I am scholarshipped / to Europe and back.” Too late, that is, to arise a sophistication that could match the genteeleiness of Augustus, whose International identifications are confirmed by his landing a year later in Kuwait, a political and business chances that outshines mere education. Lovers are now separated individually, only their memories had tried to rejoin them together. Travel has enabled the speaker to emulate Augustus, but even travel seems to be more passive for the woman: “scholarshipped/to Europe and back,” the pun makes her seem like a package. Her thoughts of Augustus on returning to the United States are mingled with the realization that he might not be thinking of her.

Even though the feminine persona and Augustus have international experiences, they are different in character and education. Because hers is more educational, and he
serves in the military. She has to do all the things with
culture, knowledge and self-development. Augustus here is
related to power, warfare, and achievement. He learns the
language of leadership somewhat than part of the process of
intercultural appreciation. The second stanza of the poem
describes the Augustus world and nature where his life
becomes narrowed toward military and military command in a
desert. This makes him comfortable. It is mentioned as:

Of oil fields, You relax at last-
Goat milk and scotch, no women, no
Maple trees. You think how far I’ve come (SP, 26)

Rita Dove divergences this limited result of
Americanist identity with the personas “barnstorming that
led no closer to you,” which leads into itinerant travels.
This type of journey has been quite fruitful, in contrast
to Augustus’ desert descent. Her persona has gone to the
heart of the fertile green world. Traveling she says, “has
stuffed my knees into violets, buried me in the emerald
hearts of heaven”. In the next line twenty mark bills and
dollars represent the American currency. American dollars
are juxtaposed to the German mark, promoting as
intercultural and international standard value.
Rita Dove in her poem *Augustus* observes the sunset particularizes Augustus's dedication towards his country. The word "July" which is the center of the year represents the centrality of American Independence for Augustus. He loves his country very much, he gives more live towards his national flag. The colour of the states which is placed in the flag linked to the food item which is red, white and blue.

In the *Yellow House*, Rita Dove's speaker in the poem herself becomes the traveller, the one whose quest for knowledge of origins and ending the demands that she set out to see things for herself. The result is a peripatetic poem, about a walking tour of the fractured world, during which the speaker ruminates on and then postulates reasons for the unreasonable things she encounters. *Sightseeing* is the best poem, concerns about a speaker who has come upon a European church and also about its inner courtyard of statues damaged during WWII. The villagers have chosen to leave the dismembered statues exactly as they found them after the Allies departed. "Come here," the speaker says to the reader at the poem's beginning, "I want to show you something": What a consort of broken dolls! Look, they were
mounted at the four corners of the third floor terrace and the impact from the cobblestones snapped off wings and other appendages. The heads rolled the farthest.'

Realizing the scene that makes strong, but various reactions, the speaker play upon that uncertainty to establish a dialectic between the mongers of despair and belief, distrusting either extreme. The villagers who locked the gates in the face of this "terrible sign" overlook what the speaker does not: that "good" indeed did prevail over "evil" in the war, that civilization did indeed reestablish order over such chaos. To the speaker, it seems to be an intervention, or a heavenly retribution.

Next to the longest poem A Suite to Augustus follows section three from The yellow house on the corner, Rita Dove writes ten poems. The Speaker of these poems talk about the sixty years of American Slavery. These poems affirm African American culture and history as a core to the cultural mulatto persona which is depicted in the poem. Two features are focused on the poem, one is aside from the contemporary period setting of, these poems move 150 years back in history and second one Is connected to the
autobiography. Poems Adolescence I, Adolescence II, Adolescence III

Rita Dove focuses on American identity through her poetic persona. First eight poems exclusively in the first person point of view, other two are in the third person which contain quotations of first person writings. The shift of I is stressed in her poems. Rita Dove’s ‘I’ and ‘eye’ behind the volume’s cosmopolitanism are pursed toward a historicized and culturally inflected perception of that cosmopolitan identity. The subject matter is handled differently by Rita Dove. The tone which used by Rita Dove is typically pained and depressed. Belinda in the first poem utters to plead her pitiable life as an African American. The second poem “cannot fall asleep” deals with David walker, the man is murdered, and newly freed slave is abducted, waking, alone in darkness and in chains.

Rita Dove sketches the painful experiences and negative tone together in the eighth poem, Cholera in which a cholera outbreak is controlled by separating the slaves who are sick. This poem suggests that the sickness could be
the result of repressed anger about the painful experience of Slavery

Belinda’s Petition establishes the central theme in section three is “freedom”. The majority of these poems detail individual quests for freedom. The democratic gains of the revolutionary era encouraged blacks to seek freedom and in 1781 a Massachusetts court interpreted the state’s constitution as having abolished slavery. The speaker of the poem Belinda is a twelve year old girl. She points out in her petition that although white American leaders ahead recently “severed/the binds of Tyranny” for themselves, they had done so for enslaved Africans. Rita Dove encounters stereotypes of culture ignorance by specifying that the only ignorance of which Belinda might be found guilty is the evil of white imperialism. In her innocence that child asks:

As to the accusation that I am Ignorant:
I received Existence on the Banks
Of the Rio de Valta. All my childhood
I expected nothing, if that be ignorance.
The only travelers were the Dead who returned
From the Ridge each evening. How might
I have known of Men with faces like the Moon,
Who should ride toward me steadily for twelve
years?(YH,32)

Helen Vendler, in discussing this group of poems,
remarks that Rita Dove’s attempts to school herself in
“black historical memory” at this stage of her career,
variable poetic dividends. However, “I would agree that
these poems are as much experiments in narrative form as
historical enquiry, and that the two elements are ,mutually
enhancing”. The desire to register other ways of feeling,
to empathize with an individual consciousness from another
time and place, is the cornerstone of Rita Dove’s
developing poetic strategy. Vendler notes that in these
poems, “history has given a prefabricated plot,” but some
are more successful than she implies.

The central poem in the Fifth section The Transport of
Slaves From Maryland to Mississippi, explains how the black
slaves broke the chains and killed two white men, who
would have escaped, had not a single slave woman helped the
Negro driver mount his horse and ride for help. The voice
is about a slave woman whose empathy with the Negro driver is clear:

    The skin across his cheekbones

    Burst open like baked Yams-

    Deliberate, the eyelids came apart-

    His eyes were my eyes in a yellower face. (SP, 37)

Finally, she helps him because she is not brute, she said that she too has feelings. He might have been a son of mine. Such reasoning refutes slavery stereotypes about blacks being brute animals and yet recognizes that such behavior enslaved escapees. The Negro Driver, "Gordon" rides back to the plantation for help, and slaves are recaptured. He is not the only person with complex faithfulness. He has been attacked by the slaves and left for dead in the middle road. Thus the poem highlights the multiple perspectives riff on competing versions of African American freedom.

    The majority of these poems deals with of the individual quests for freedom. David Walker and Belinda, pleads for freedom for them and for their people, Solomon
Northrup, who enjoys being a freeman, is abducted; a slave girl named Pamela attempts to walk north to freedom; a wagonload of slaves breaks free; and an unnamed speaker lands in Independence, Missouri. In this section Rita Dove continues to focus on identity but through the African American refrain of freedom. The last poem "O" is seen as first Ars Poetica or statements of early poetics.

A cosmopolitan identity wants, then to be free to traverse the globe, migrate between black and white worlds, and engage the slave past yet also write a poem about a Japanese woodcut. As Rampersad remarks, "Rita Dove wishes nothing less than possession of [the] wide world; she longs for the complete freedom of her imagination: (56).

Steffen insists, Rita Dove writes literature that crosses culture, races, Languages, geography, nationalities and genres. Steffen argues that Rita Dove’s poetry with its multiple references to the Italian Renaissance, Germanic Romanticism, ancient Greece, ancient culture, ancient china and modern America to name only a few of the sites her poetry tours is global, cross cultural and Universal. In crossing color, Steffen analyses Rita Dove’s
poetry through its transcultural spaces and thus follows the lead of Rita Dove in The Poet's World.

The subsequent table is the cultural topology inherent in the Rita Dove’s world making as a perspective process.


A diachronic reading makes Rita Dove’s poem as cosmopolitan poems which she universalizes in her presentation. That possibility is underlined by Rita Dove’s interpretation which she proceeds about global topics; in section five especially, she reemphasize the wide range of cultural material. In section three, Rita Dove reemphasizes the blackness in favour of the universal. Poems Like Upon meeting Don. L. Lee, in a Dreams” and Nigger song: An odyssey which are about her African American heritage only rare poems. Early and middle poems are not tentatively racially marked, if they are marked, It is with non-black cultures, France and Mexico. He hides in some poems about the African American identity and ends with a global perspective.
Dove creates a world of characters with “individualism, egalitarianism, and Universalism” beyond the borders of the state who breathe freedom with artistic endowment and specific cultural dominance. According to Dove, a person need not be a cultural mulatto by birth to accept these norms, but if the person accepts any culture and lives with freedom of expression, then he/she is also in the world not only of cultural mulattos, but also has a cosmopolitan outlook. Dove’s poetry is standing invitations to explore her world of individualism, selfhood and an extraordinary uniqueness. We can explore life, joy, love, death, and loss as natural phenomena.

Concluding all the poems of Rita Dove in the volume focused on the issue of dual audience, cultural mulatto imagery, imagery and identity and freedom themes, which help her to announce her mulatto poetic persona and future path as a poet leading the New Black Aesthetic for propelling the culture into her society. Rita Dove insists that the portrait of the cultural mulatto which is also moving into a galleon. The Galleon is a large Spanish ship used for commerce and war in 15th and 16th centuries where the African slaves came to the new world. Thus, in the
volume, Rita Dove highlights the cultural mixing. The poet portrays the cultural adaptation through *The Yellow House*. 