CHAPTER 4

TO BE BLACK AND FEMALE: BLACK ARCHETYPALISM AND BLACK MYTHOPOESIS IN KENNEDY

4.1 INTRODUCTION: CONTEMPORARY CRITICAL STUDIES

Twentieth century literary criticism in America offers a bewildering variety of critical theories relating to psychology, anthropology, sociology, biology, theology, economics, comparative religion and other sciences, which have brought about a revolution in critical methods and practices. The archetypal approach is one of the most important approaches in modern literary criticism. It has provided entirely new interpretations to literary works and it has become an indispensable concept in contemporary critical studies. The phenomenon of archetypes has cultural affinity with various schools of thought such as Structuralism, Functionalism, Diffusionism, Euhemerism and Freudian and Jungian theories. The archetypal approach involves, as Wilbur Scott (1962) says in his Five Approaches of Literary Criticism,

a demonstration of some basic cultural pattern of great meaning and appeal to humanity in a work of art.

An archetype refers to a story or myth, which embodies moral or psychological values that are very important for human beings. The followers of the archetypal approach try to establish the presence of some basic cultural pattern or myth, the common heritage of humankind, in a work of art. The myth of any culture or of any hero of a race throws light on distinct attributes that are seen as the good, the beautiful, and the true, and thereby teaches us culturally valued aspirations (Carol S. Pearson, 1944).
4.2 ARCHETYPES

4.2.1 Definition

What is an archetype? Etymologically speaking, the Greek word 'arche' refers to 'original model', or 'first instance', or 'primitive' or 'prototype' or 'typical specimen', and the word 'typos' means 'form' or 'stamp'. It implies the original form of a series of variations: but it is different from stereotypes. In other words, this approach is used to pick out some fundamental patterns that have been followed unconsciously or consciously in all works of literature. The followers of the archetypal approach try to establish the presence of some basic cultural patterns or myths that the civilized man preserves either consciously or unconsciously. He, the civilized man, articulates the pre-historical areas of knowledge indirectly through myths (Scott, 1962). The temptation of Eve by the snake, the temptation of Adam by Eve, the important stories in the Bible and other religious books, the Oedipus story, Plato's Allegory of the Cave and the search for self and knowledge are a few examples of common archetypes. Some of the archetypes have symbolic meanings too. Water, for example, stands for the mystery of creation, birth, death, resurrection, purification and redemption, fertility and growth. The sun symbolises creative energy and the law of nature, and stands for a patriarchal set-up. Archetypes are seen in the use of colours like red and white and also in the symbolism of the seasons. They are all universal symbols. In the words of Jung (1968),

an archetype is not meant to denote an inherited idea, but rather an inherited mode of functioning, corresponding to the inborn way in which the chick emerges out of the egg.

We inherit the capacity for making such archetypal images.
4.2.2 Archetypal patterns

An archetype in a work of art may be an idea or a character, an object or an institution, or society itself with the basic characteristics that are primitive, general and universal. Death, birth, love, guilt, incest and redemption are a few archetypal subjects. The conflict between reason and imagination, freewill and destiny, appearance and reality as well as that between an individual and society are some of the popular archetypal themes. The man-woman relationship, the problem of incest, the search for a father or mother figure, the tension between parents and children and the rivalry among brothers are some of the archetypal situations portrayed in literature. All stages in the growth of the human being such as birth, puberty, sexual initiation, betrothal, marriage, pregnancy, blood, paternity and death are archetypes. All these stages occur during the passage in a man’s life from his newly born state to his end. Any of these elements may appear in a work of art and bring out universal archetypal patterns.

This chapter attempts to examine the various archetypal patterns, themes, situations that operate systematically in Adrienne Kennedy’s plays. It provides a brief but comprehensive account of the origin of myths and archetypes and the use of archetypal subjects, themes and patterns, admitting that it is not easy to do an exhaustive study of all the possible interpretations. This approach aims at analysing these patterns by concentrating on the archetypal themes, situations, characters, images and symbols. Select plays of Adrienne Kennedy serve as very good examples for the study of archetypal patterns.

4.3 COLLECTIVE UNCONSCIOUS: COLLECTION OF ARCHETYPES

The term ‘Archetype’ takes its full meaning and development from the Swiss psychologist, Carl Gustav Jung. His name will be associated with archetypes as long as the phenomenon of archetypes is studied. Archetypes, as Jung postulated them are deep and abiding patterns in the human psyche that remain powerful through the ages. These
may exist, to use Jung’s terminology, in the ‘collective unconscious’ or the ‘objective psyche’, or may even be coded into the make-up of the human brain (Carol S. Pearson, 1944). Jung (1970) states that archetypes are embedded in

the unconscious, where they exist inchoate and indescribable until given form, in consciousness.

However, in Lacan’s theory, the conscious and the unconscious cannot be separated. According to Jung (1974), the collective unconscious refers to a class of ideas that people first find strange but soon come to possess and use as familiar concepts. The idea of the collective unconscious is identified with the state of repressed or forgotten emotions. Quoting Freud, Jung (1974) says, “the unconscious is of an exclusively personal nature”, although Freud was aware of its archaic and mythological thought forms. Jung (1974) calls this superficial layer of the unconscious ‘personal unconscious’, which is inherent in every individual. Nevertheless, this personal unconscious rests upon a deeper layer, which does not derive from any personal experience. Besides, it is not a personal acquisition but is inborn. He calls this deeper layer ‘collective unconscious’. He (Strelka, 1976) explains the term thus:

the contents of the personal unconscious are chiefly the feeling-toned complexes, as they are called; they constitute the personal and private side of psychic life. The contents of the collective unconscious, on the other hand, are known as archetypes...We mean by collective unconscious a psychic disposition shaped by the forces of heredity; from it consciousness developed...

Jung named the contents of the collective unconscious archetypes in 1919. He also called them dominants, imagos, and mythological or primordial images. An archetype is an unlearned tendency to experience things in a certain way. Jung decided to name it collective unconscious because it was universal in nature. According to him (1974), it is identical in all men and thus constitutes
scapegoats serve as chisels to give proper shape and sharpness to the life that is portrayed in art forms.

It is interesting to study the effective use of myths and archetypes from the classical period; for example, one finds that both myths and archetypes have been fused in an excellent manner in Sophocles' Oedipus. The plot is not his own; it has been taken from the well-known myth which has been immortalized in literature. Many literary works when interpreted with insights provided by the study of myths and archetypes have an added value. Maud Bodkin's Archetypal Patterns in Poetry (1934) focuses on poetry in relation to archetype. A systematic study (1934) has been conducted by this archetypalist, and in the book cited, an attempt is made to bring psychological analysis and reflection to bear upon the imaginative experience communicated by great poetry, and to examine those forms or patterns in which the universal forces of our nature there find objectification.

Bodkin dwells on the archetypal pattern of rebirth in Coleridge’s 'Rime of the Ancient Mariner' and the concept of heaven-hell in 'Kubla Khan', Dante's Divine Comedy and Milton’s Paradise Lost. James Hillman is one of the pioneer archetypalists, noted for redesigning the structure and shape of the archetypal theory in the history of the archetypal approach. He has developed the archetypal theory as a multi-disciplinary field and he has discovered the close link between the archetypal theory and Neoplatonism. He (Groden and Kreiswirth, 1994) argues that archetypes lie neither in the physiology of the brain, the structure of language, the organization of society, nor in the analysis of behavior, but in the processes of imagination.

He (1970) states in his Spring: An Annual of Archetypal Psychology and Jungian Thought that archetypal psychology recognizes that psychic reality is inextricably involved with rhetoric.
the primordial image or archetype is a figure - be it a demon, a human being, or a process - that constantly recurs in the course of history and appears wherever creative fantasy is freely expressed...When we examine these images more closely, we find that they give form to countless typical experiences of our ancestors. They are, so to speak, the psychic residues of innumerable experiences of the same type.

This racial memory mode deals with materials drawn from the realm of human consciousness, with the lessons of life, with the emotional shocks, the experiences of passion and the cries of human destiny. All these together make up the conscious life of man. Jung (1974) states:

when an archetypal situation occurs we suddenly feel an extraordinary sense of release, as though transported, or caught by an overwhelming power. At such moments we are no longer individuals, but the race, the voice of all mankind resounds in us.

W.B.Yeats, in an essay on ‘Magic’ (1901) calls it the ‘Great Memory’. Thus, the origin of archetypes and the archetypal theory are derived from the general human or racial history.

4.5 SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENTS

Archetypal theory and criticism flourished in two independent streams in the 1960s and 1970s and the practitioners and theorists have been chronicled in Van Meur's Bibliography. C.G.Jung, J.G.Frazer and M.Hinkle are the leading practitioners whose works have postulated the archetypal theories. The development and shaping of archetypes and myths in contemporary literature owe directly to the modern anthropological studies and Jungian psychology, called ‘myth criticism’ or ‘archetypal criticism’. Frazer's *The Golden Bough* has influenced twentieth century literary criticism and also the creative works of Joyce, Thomas Mann and T.S.Eliot. The archetypal motifs and rituals such as resurrection, quest, initiation and sacrificial
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It is highly interesting to examine Geoffrey Gorer’s study entitled The Myth in Jane Austen in which he analyses the major novels of Jane Austen using the tenets of psychology and archetypes. He makes an impressive attempt to trace the story of the author’s life through the characters she has created. The heroines of her novels are rejected by their young lovers and are married to father surrogates in the climax. Austen has followed this theme in her major novels and Gorer calls this theme Austen’s myth. Gilbert Murray in Hamlet and Orestes makes a detailed study of the two tragic heroes, Hamlet and Orestes, placing them in an archetypal frame. He also makes clear the significant parallels between the mythic elements of Shakespeare’s Hamlet and those in Oedipus and The Agamemnon of Aeschylus. Though there are slight differences in the various versions, the general situations in the plays have striking similarities. Murray concludes that despite the possibilities of alternations and transformations according to age and culture, some inherent quality continues and the significant details are repeated quite unconsciously by one generation after another. On the contrary, Northrop Frye’s The Archetypes of Literature published in 1957 postulates that myth is the central informing power that gives archetypal significance to rituals and inner visions. He has given the central pattern of the tragic and comic vision of myth and also of the solar cycle, seasonal cycle and organic cycle of human life.

More recently, James Baird has analysed the use of symbols in Moby Dick and discussed the archetypes of primitivism in Ishmael. John J. White’s Mythology in the Modern Novel and Robert Richardson’s Myth and Literature in the American Renaissance attempt to show how nineteenth century writers made conscious use of myths in their works. Mark Twain’s The Adventures of Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn are mythically interpreted. Tom and Huck are the allegorical characters of American writing. Thus, an archetype is recognized as a tendency to form and reform images in relation to certain kinds of repeated experiences which may vary in individual cultures. The archetypal approach is linked with certain distinct schools of thought, which are discussed in the following section.
4.6 VARIOUS LINKS

Archetypal criticism is in fact a branch of psychological criticism because it deals with the unconscious, not of the writer or his imagined characters but of the human race itself. It is also called totemic or mythological or ritualistic criticism. Myths have been studied painstakingly by writers like James Joyce, Frazer and Jessie Webster, who have tried to prove that human behaviour and culture follow the same archetypal patterns in all ages and places. Thus, the approach makes mythical parallels and contrasts between the past and present, and examines literary masterpieces with the hope of discovering the underlying mythical or archetypal patterns. It becomes a formalistic approach when it requires close textual readings and expresses a humanistic concern along with aesthetic values. It is linked to the sociological approach because of its stress on basic cultural patterns as being central to the life in the chosen society. It is historical in its approach because of the investigation of a cultural or social past and it is non-historical in its demonstration of literature's timeless value, independent of particular periods. In an archetypal approach, the writer should direct his effort to showing how the work embodies a major historical myth or story. Archetypal theory and criticism are always associated with myth theory and criticism. Myths are the means by which archetypes, essentially unconscious forms, become manifest and articulate in the conscious mind.

4.7 MYTHS

4.7.1 Stories of the remote past

The concept of myths varies according to the sentiments of the people. Some have accepted them as fables or as fiction, opposed to reality. Ancient people regarded them as tales of supernatural beings and as sacred historical stories. Critics posit that myths might have originated in a particular place and time and would have been widely spread to all ages. In the words of Bronislaw Malinowski (1960),
these stories...are to the natives a statement of a primeval, greater, and more relevant reality, by which the present life, fates and activities of mankind are determined, the knowledge of which supplies man with the motive for ritual and moral actions.

Levi-Strauss (1978) moves a step further and points out that

myth always refers to events alleged to have taken place in time; before the world was created, or during its first stages. But what gives the myth an operative value is that the specific pattern described is everlasting: it explains the present and the past as well as the future.

Alan Watt (1981) concludes the argument thus:

myth is to be defined as a complex of stories - some no doubt fact, and some fantasy - which, for various reasons, human beings regard as demonstrations of the inner meaning of the universe and of human life.

Thus, a myth refers to an event that has happened in the remote past in a particular time and place or narration of a recurrent phenomenon. It is linked with Gods, deeds of virtue, divinity or supernatural beings.

4.7.2 Definition

As has already been mentioned, the Oxford Dictionary defines myth as a 'traditional story, usually involving supernatural or imaginary persons and embodying popular ideas on natural or social phenomena etc. that is held widely'. According to Joseph Campbell (1983),

a mythology is a system of images that incorporates a concept of the universe as a divinely energized and energizing ambience within which we live. A myth, then, is a single story or a single element of the whole mythology, and the various stories of the mythology
interlock - they interlock to be consistent within this great world’s image.

Myth forms the essence of every culture. Usually myths are stories of chivalry, bravery and heroic deeds explaining the significance of incidents or events. Myths have their origin from these stories and they form the patterns of behaviours, beliefs and perceptions that particular communities, groups or sects of people have in common. They relate to both destructive and positive or constructive events. To analyse the meaning of the term etymologically, ‘mythos’, a Greek term, means a word, thing said, or speech and it signifies Gods, Goddesses and extraordinary and supernatural beings. It has gradually developed to mean a tale, fiction, or plot of a play. Therefore, myths can be extensively defined as a systematic study of tales in the recent years.

4.7.3 Myths and dreams

Myths are closely associated with archetypes and are interlocked within this great world of myriad images. Archetypes are connected with the universal aspect of myths. Myths are not invented stories but inspired ones. Jung believes that myths and archetypes form a part of the universal unconscious. Both are derived from the realm of the unconscious just like our dreams. Jung is preoccupied with dreams and fantasies as he categorizes them as products of the unconscious. Dreams, as Jung (Jacobi, 1953) explains,

are impartial, spontaneous products of the unconscious psyche, outside the control of the will.

Jung is against Freud’s view that the dream is essentially a wish fulfilment. On the contrary, the dream

is a spontaneous self-portrayal, in symbolic form, of the actual situation in the unconscious (Jacobi, 1953).
He believes that dreams are personalised myths and myths are depersonalised dreams. A dream is a personal experience while a myth is the dream of a society and they both draw their material from the vast realm of human experience, the collective unconscious (Joseph Campbell, 1983). It is said that a literary work like a poet is born and not made. Each writer has his/her own private myths or peculiar formation of dreams in his or her unconscious. Sometimes, the writers are not aware of using those mythical situations in their works, which exist at the unconscious level. All these submerged human experiences form the archetypal patterns in a work of art.

4.7.4 Myths and archetypes

Jung as Michael Gordon (1994) points out, distinguishes archetypes from myths:

Jung most frequently used ‘myth’ or ‘mythologem’ for the narrative expression, ‘on the ethnological level’ of the ‘archetypes’, which he described as patterns of psychic energy originating in the collective unconscious and finding their ‘most common and most normal’ manifestation in dreams. Thus criticism evolving from his work is more accurately named ‘archetypal’ and is quite distinct from ‘myth’ criticism.

Archetypal criticism aims to discover and decode the secret language in literature so that it may have for us a more rational meaning. These archetypal images occupy the familiar myths and dreams in art and literature. Myths like archetypes cover a wide range of topics such as cosmology, interpersonal and intrapersonal relationships, man/woman and parent/child relationships, the individuation process, sexual initiation, war, death, incest, sin, guilt, rape, cultural heroes and so on.
4.7.5 Myth and literature

Myth has always been an integral element of literature and mythic stories are interwoven into many of the literary works. Richard Chase (1949) points out that writers are attracted by myths mainly because myth is literature itself and it is the essential sub-structure of all human activity. This is a part of a broader twentieth century tendency, shared by anthropologists and scholars in other allied fields of learning. Richard Slotkin (1973) affirms the nature of myth in literature, as true myths. They are generated on a sub-literary level by the historical experiences of the people and thus constitute a part of that inner reality. They convey the fundamental perceptions, sometimes metaphysical and transcendental meanings of life through literature. Northrop Frye (1974) classifies myth as fall, exile, creation and redemption. T.S. Eliot, James Joyce and Lowell have talked about the significance of myths in a man’s life and experience. Critics have different views regarding this, though there is substantial agreement on certain aspects of myth in their interpretation. Mark Schorer (1946) comments that myth is the indispensable sub-structure of poetry, while Richard Chase (1949) says that poetry is the indispensable sub-structure of myth. Schlegal (1976) agrees with Schorer and Chase, “Mythology and poetry are one and inseparable”. Vickery (1976) moves a step further and says,

myth is the matrix out of which literature emerges both historically and psychologically.

4.7.6 Significant works on myth

The development and exposition of mythical studies in contemporary literature owe directly to modern anthropological studies and Jungian psychology-called ‘myth criticism’ or ‘archetypal criticism’. The major influence on the study of myth criticism is Carl Jung, psychologist, philosopher, and student of Freud. Jung deviates from his master Freud since he cannot agree with his master’s narrow opinion
that libido and myths are sex-ridden. Examples of the wide use of myth in literature can be found in several modern writers. O'Neil's play *Mourning Becomes Electra* is a retelling of the tragic tale of Agamemnon and Clytemnestra, Orestes and Electra. The myth of Eumenides of Aeschylus forms the background of T. S. Eliot's *The Family Reunion*. The *Cocktail Party* is based on the Alcestis of Euripides. *The Waste Land* is also a mythical piece. *The Elder Statesman* follows the myth of Sophocles's *Oedipus at Coloneus*. James Joyce uses the Ulysses myth in his literary masterpiece, *Ulysses*. Joseph Campbell (1983) observes four basic functions of myth in his interview with Bill Moyers. The first function is mystical, that is, realizing what a wonder the universe is and feeling awe before this mystery. The second is a cosmological function in which science is concerned. The major focus of this dimension is to show the shape of the universe and how mystery comes through it. The third dimension is the sociological function, which validates and supports certain social and cultural orders and the final one is the pedagogical function. It guides an individual to pass through crises in his lifetime honourably and harmoniously. In Indian writing, the Savithri story in *Mahabharatha* has been retold in the mighty writings of Sri Aurobindo. Nietzsche, Marx, Frazer and Bergson have also influenced the mythical theories.

4.8 ARCHETYPAL APPROACH TO KENNEDY'S PLAYS

4.8.1 Kennedy: an archetypalist

It is obvious that archetypes and myths have never failed to capture the imagination of readers even in this modern, technologically oriented world where science, rationality and logic are the governing factors. Hence it may not be incorrect to say that myths and archetypes have impressed the modern industry, sculpture, music and literature. It is true that archetypes and myths have an extensive influence upon human life and human thinking. A specific, distinct ideal of womanhood has been built up by mythology. African writers have sensed an incompatibility with the White-centred, Euro-centric mythology. The Black women have created an alternative myth that has been widely accepted and appreciated. They have created new avenues for
African-American theatrical exploration of the human plight. Adrienne Kennedy, one of the most provocative and subjective among African-American playwrights, has created a theatrical world full of nightmarish experiences. Kennedy has developed a dramatic inner life, as she has had to overcome the impact of racial and gender discriminations. She was in the habit of watching the people around her, particularly her family and relatives, as if they were enacting a play. This imagination has helped her create composite archetypal characters in her plays.

4.8.2 Obsession with dreams and unconscious realms

Kennedy is always obsessed or preoccupied with unconscious realms and dreams as typified in Jung's concept of the collective unconscious. She carefully recorded her dreams, fantasies, and visions, and drew, painted, and sculpted them as well. She finds that her own experiences tended to find expression in her characters. As she (Paul Carter, 1972) says while discussing her play, A Beast Story.

I believe in the connection too of dreams, of dark winter nights. I believe in the joining of nightmares and visions.

She delineates the experiences stored in her unconscious. She herself states in an interview with Lehman (1977),

you try to struggle with the material that is lodged in your unconscious, and try to bring it to the conscious level. You try to remain as honest about that as possible, without fear. I don't believe you intentionally set out to write the things you write. For instance, I would like to write mystery stories like Agatha Christie. Or much lighter things, which are far less torturous, but I feel you must be honest by letting the material come to the surface.
This is one way of saying that some of the inborn or buried mythical images will rise to the surface, whatever the writer's intention or desire may be. Jung's (Jacobi, 1953) words are relevant in this context-

the artist seizes on the primordial image and in raising it from deepest unconscious he brings it into relation with conscious values, thereby transforming it until it can be accepted by the minds of his contemporaries according to their powers.

Kennedy (Lehman, 1977) admits with ease that all her plays come out of her intense personal dreams.

I played around with images for a long period of time to try to get to the most powerful dreams.

She (Betsko, 1987) explains further:

and my dreams were very strong. I used to write them down in a few sentences...It appeared to me that those sentences had a certain power. I began to feel that my diaries had much more life than my work. I began to examine them...Realizing that my dreams had a vitality that my other writing did not was another breakthrough.

A writer can interpret a dream in the right way, if he or she has a thorough knowledge of the conscious situation at that moment, because the dream contains its unconscious complement (Jung, 1953). It is impossible to interpret a dream without this knowledge. Kennedy has succeeded in interpreting her dream material in which the conscious situation has constellated in the unconscious. If a dream is not understood properly, it remains a mere occurrence, and if understood, it becomes a living experience (Jung, 1953). For an example, Kennedy's A Rat's Mass is based on one of her powerful dreams, which becomes a lively proof for 'living experience'. She tries to find some solace in these haunting images that she (Lehman, 1977) has delineated in her plays,
I try to take these images and try to find what the sources for them are. All this is unconscious; all this takes a long time...I did *Funnyhouse* on having people in my room with conflicts...I finally came up with this one character, Sarah, who, rather than talk to her father or mother, talked with these people she created about her problems. It's very easy for me to fall into fantasy.

Therefore, it is apparent that most of the themes of her plays have their genesis in her unconscious self and her dreams.

4.9 COMMON ARCHETYPAL PATTERNS

4.9.1 Personal struggle

An archetypal pattern of the fragmented, frustrated and shattered psyche of the Black woman is discerned in Kennedy's plays. Kennedy is very conscious of her country's political turmoil as well as the torment and the misery the Blacks underwent because of racial discrimination, miscegenation and exploitation. She is also aware of the racial bigotry against coloured women. She invokes the intimacies, ecstasies and anguish experienced by a Black woman's soul by portraying the different layers of her consciousness. Her Black women protagonists are always in a never-ending process of a struggle for survival and a search for the meaning of their existence. The sufferings of Kennedy during her childhood, particularly her struggle to establish herself as a writer, make her empathize with Black women's woes. It is nothing but her intense personal experiences in the multi-ethnic community which are typical of Black women's life that have enabled her to resort to the archetypal mode in her choice of themes, situations, subjects, characters and images. Paul Carter (1974) describes her characters thus:

the characters - most times archetypes - usually appear as forces charged with manipulating the context they may be in so as to create the appropriate visual images that reinforce the meaning of her very often illusory metaphors.
4.9.2 Fragmented psyche
4.9.2.1 Split psyche of Sarah and Clara

The split psyche of Black women and their problem of self-identity are very well brought out in Funnyhouse of a Negro, The Owl Answers, A Rat’s Mass and A Movie Star has to Star in Black and White. In the first two plays, as has already been pointed out in the second chapter, Kennedy explores the minds and emotions of the heroines Sarah and Clara, who struggle for an identity against the double jeopardy of race and gender. The tension between the parents is the reason for the heroines making a search for a father or mother figure and for genuine love that can be a source of comfort in their world of untold misery. In order to escape from the mental agony, they create ‘selves’ of great personalities like Queen Victoria, Jesus, the Duchess, Lumumba, Chaucer, Shakespeare and Anne Boleyn. The self-hatred, loss of self-esteem and the fear of sexual assault they experience goad them either to commit suicide as in the case of Sarah or transform into a non-human being, an owl as in that of Clara. History provides enormous instances to prove that the African-American woman’s life is full of similar trials and tribulations. The archetypal myth of a Black woman’s life is exemplified in the lives of Clara and Sarah who hate and despise their light-skinned father or mother figure and either commit suicide or undergo metamorphosis.

As has already been brought out in the preceding chapters, Funnyhouse of a Negro and The Owl Answers resemble each other in their approaches. They speak of the intense personal anguish Sarah and Clara experience, as their identity is split into stereotyped roles or alter egos. The effort to discover their soul and the search for a meaning to their life constitutes the pivotal dramatic action of both the plays. Both the heroines are mulattoes and they are the products of rape. Sarah and Clara are graduates and associate themselves with a White heritage by quoting passages from the poems of famous literary figures like Edgar Allan Poe, Edith Sitwell and Chaucer. They claim their White ancestry to escape from their oppressive sense of being Blacks. Tortured by an identity crisis, they are lost in a nightmarish world where their souls are broken up
into various personalities. The major action takes place in the minds of the protagonists and the conflict is between reason and imagination, and appearance and reality. Within a violent universe, they are haunted by their collective unconscious. It is as though the audience has gained access into the minds of Clara and Sarah, and watches the action from within.

4.9.2.2 Blackness: a disease

Kennedy has been criticised for treating Blackness as sickness, despite creating forceful and assertive characters capable of articulating revolutionary attitudes. Kennedy's female characters hate their Blackness and their Black heritage. Their hatred for Blackness forms an important archetypal subject. It is embedded in the unconscious minds of the oppressed Blacks because of the sufferings they have borne for centuries. The unconscious is the unwritten history of mankind from time unrecorded (Jung 1953). It becomes a universal pattern, which crushes their dignity and self-identity. The female protagonist's hatred for her own Blackness finds expression throughout the plays, either when the women characters talk as Black women or when they assume different selves. A Black man is not different from other Americans just because he has a different hairstyle or colour. Colour is the continuing reminder of inferiority and shame for them. Through the self of the Duchess, Sarah says in Funnyhouse of a Negro,

my father is a nigger who drives me into misery. Anytime spent with him evolves itself into suffering. He is a blackman and the wilderness (Kennedy, 1988:11).

When Clara claims her consanguineous relation with the White heritage, her selves say, "If you are his ancestor why are you a Negro?" (Kennedy, 1988:28). They cannot accept the fact that they are Black men: they blame the Black parents for their fate. Sarah calls her rapacious father a "wild beast" and idealizes her White mother. Clara prefers to be with her White and rich father rather than her mother who is a cook.
and a whore. Sarah blames her coloured father for “returning” to her his Blackness. She laments over her plight, “I am the Black shadow that haunted my mother’s conception” (Kennedy, 1988: 12). They quote lines from English literary personalities to identify themselves with them. When they disguise themselves using the masks, Sarah’s friend Raymond and Clara’s picked-up Black man remind them of their Blackness. Thus their Black skin is an ever-haunting inescapable obsession with them and is the cause for both the physical and mental conflict from which they always suffer.

4.9.2.3 Mental conflicts and cultural conflicts

The conflict in Kennedy’s characters is metaphorical and is a symptom of the ambiguous state of people who are created out of the clash of two cultures. It is also the anguish of the mulatto woman ruined with self-hatred leading to the loss of identity. Sarah and Clara are the victims of two mighty continents engaged in a deadly racial war that seems never to an end. Unable to establish an identity, they voluntarily become victims to racial and gender discrimination. They are mentally and emotionally torn between the two mighty continents. The real Black selves of Clara and Sarah clash with their glorious dream of White selfhood. They are products of a White educational and cultural heritage as they long to live in rooms with European antiques and photos:

...a room filled my dark old volumes...on the wall old photographs of castles and monarchs of England. It is also Queen Victoria’s chamber (Kennedy, 1988:5).

They need the White ancestry as a preventive wall to protect themselves from the threats, which invade into their lives and minds. As Sarah says,

Victoria always wants me to tell her of whiteness. She wants me to tell her of a royal world where everything and everyone is white and there are no unfortunate black ones (Kennedy, 1988:5).
The myths and images clash with each other over the issues of race, gender, class and culture, which result in metamorphosing aspects. Their selves are Black and White, male and female, ruler and martyr, passive and revolutionary and so on. When all these external forces are vigorously at work their own inner spirit resists realities. Self-hatred, fear of rape and the inability to attain an identity lead them on to commit suicide and transmogrify into a non-human being. This is the archetypal experience that is peculiar to mulattoes and that which Kennedy effectively portrays in her plays using innovative techniques.

4.9.3 Clara: an alienated soul

*A Movie Star has to Star in Black and White* is different from Kennedy’s two earlier plays. Kennedy presents this play with implicit autobiographical elements and probes into the mental make-up of a writer, named Clara. The heroine Clara, an alter ego of Kennedy, is an intellectual Black woman. The play deals with her ambition to become a writer and the opposition she faces from her husband. The situation is aggravated because of her brother’s fatal accident. Unlike the protagonists of Kennedy’s earlier plays, Clara does not give up her writing career in spite of all her traumatic experiences. Her determination to become a writer shows the tremendous will power of the Black women in American society and fits well into the general pattern of the African-American woman’s brave struggle for survival against all odds.

The marital relations of Clara’s parents, her brother’s and even her own are not harmonious. Clara’s mother is saddened over the infidelity of her husband, “I did everything to make you happy and still you left me for another woman” (Kennedy, 1988:95). Eddie, Clara’s husband, leaves for Korea to serve in the army. Clara had a miscarriage and is in despair. Her loneliness and dejected mind provoke her to think of divorce. Eddie does not encourage her to become a writer even after he returns from the war. He considers her writing a hindrance, which prevents them from finding harmony in their marriage. While Clara is not ready to give up her writing for the sake
of the family’s happiness, Sarah and Clara long for love and harmony through matrimony. While Kennedy’s earlier heroines long to have a family, Clara wants to stay away from married life. She thinks, “Each day I wonder with what or with whom can I coexist in a true union?” (Kennedy, 1988:82).

Clara is not only unable to unite her parents but is also unable to harmonize her own life with that of Eddie. Clara’s futile attempts to reunite her parents and her own family are revealed through her words. She feels,

I used to hope when I was a little girl that one day I would rise above them, an angel with glowing wings and cover them with peace. But failed...I did not bring them peace...but made them more disconsolate (Kennedy, 1988:83).

The fatal accident of Clara’s brother, and Clara’s unhappy life make her mother schizophrenic. As Kintz Linda (1992) states:

the hostile, almost violently fragmented, obsessive family discussions, which throughout the play continue to increase the tension, have all circled around not only birth and miscarriage, accidents and injuries but the raging animosities, the near hatreds among the members of the family as the veneer of family gets peeled away.

Clara and her mother fail to maintain peace and happiness in the family. Clara’s ambition to become a successful writer results in alienation and an unhappy married life. Kennedy makes use of the archetypal themes and situations to reveal explicitly the conflict between individual and society and freewill and destiny. The complexity of the relationship between a man and a woman, and the generation gap between parents and children form the archetypal situations of the play. Thus, Kennedy’s female characters become victims of alienation and their shattered selves form the basis of the mythic life that has been expressed consciously in Kennedy’s plays.
The fractured psyche of the rat siblings is portrayed in a different style in A Rat's Mass. The rat siblings commit the sin of incest in order to claim White ancestry through gaining the love of Rosemary, a descendant of White heritage. She scorns them: "Coloured people are not Catholics" (Kennedy, 1988:58) and the siblings are affected by it. They equate their love for each other with the modern Medusa, Rosemary, who wears a Holy Communion dress and has worms in her hair. After the incestuous act, Kay undergoes a mental breakdown and is put up in an asylum. Their innocence is disarmed because of the sordid mind of Rosemary. The psychic collapse is not to Kay alone, but to the history of the whole Black race itself. Therefore, what is suffered by a single soul brings mayhem to the whole race. She says, "Every sister bleeds and every brother made her bleed" (Kennedy, 1988:58). They appeal to Rosemary, the avatar of the White religion for atonement. They pray to her,

Rosemary atone us, take us beyond the Nazis. We must sail to the Capitol. Atone us. Deliver us unto your descendants (Kennedy, 1988:6).

However, they cannot get her mercy. She retorts,

I will never atone you. Perhaps you can put a bullet in your head with your father's shotgun, then your holy battle will be done (Kennedy, 1988:61).

He cries, "God is hanging and shooting us" (Kennedy, 1988:64). After the Nazi squad drives out rats in the final moment of the play, only Rosemary remains with worms in her hair. Thus Kay's life typifies the run for redemption, eternal and never ending, and thus embodies an archetypal pattern.
Another recurring archetypal image has to do with the fact that the heroines are all born out of rape and that the mother keeps strict vigilance on the children born of rape. The Black man rapes Sarah’s mother in *Funnyhouse of a Negro*:

he is black of skin with dark eyes and a great dark square brow...came home drunk one night and raped my mother. The child from the union is me (Kennedy, 1988:14).

Clara in *The Owl Answers* is born to the richest White man in the town and a Black cook,

...you were conceived by your Goddam Father who was The Richest White Man in the Town and somebody that cooked for him. That’s why you’re an owl (Kennedy, 1988:30).

In *A Beast Story*, the Beast Man rapes his wife and she keeps an ax to safeguard the virginity of her daughter. Her mother safeguards her from being accosted and assaulted by the male invaders. Clara’s adopted mother, the Reverend’s wife, is always in fear and terror of sexual violation. They all consider it as an unwanted intrusion into their lives, both physically and morally. Philip Wheelwright (1981) describes the rape trauma thus:

...rape symbolizes one of the most important and emotionally arresting ‘passages’ in human experience...the passage from the pure state of virginity through the shock of violation...

The fear of rape as exemplified in the lives of Sarah’s mother, Clara’s mother and Beast Woman, is an archetypal human experience.
4.10.2 Eros: desire for sex

Eros, the desire for sex, is another persistent image attached to the theme of the institution of marriage. Kennedy's characters are sexually repressed. They characters search for spiritual love and they cry out to be loved and cherished. They want to be emotionally fulfilled. Sarah's sexual life with her Jewish boyfriend in Funnyhouse of a Negro is not a complete one. She clings to him in order to be content with the feeling that she is a White. But Clara in The Owl Answers cannot yield herself to the Negro man in the Harlem hotel room, as she is completely preoccupied with the quest for spirituality and self-identity. She attacks him with a butcher's knife while he tries to undress her. Kay in A Rat's Mass suffers neurosis because of the incestuous act she commits with her brother who is determined to claim Whiteness. In A Beast Story, the mother prevents her daughter from a healthy sexual act with her husband. So, all the characters in Kennedy's plays are sexually repressed and don't lead healthy normal lives. This is the state of affairs prevalent in the archetypal life of the African-Americans, which is very well brought out in the sexual life of the characters in the plays.

4.10.3 Fear of death

The obsession with death and the fear of death is another mentally disturbing factor in Kennedy's plays. Like Sarah and Clara, Clara in A Movie Star has to Star in Black and White has a sense of guilt that her parents have broken up because of her birth. She wishes that she were not born at all. This creates a sense of fear in her. She says,

when I have the baby I wonder will I turn into a river of blood and die? My mother almost died when I was born. I've always felt sad that I couldn't have been an angel of mercy to my father and mother and saved them from their torment (Kennedy, 1988:83).
This pattern finds an echo in her other plays too. In *A Rat's Mass*, the rat siblings are afraid of death after their fall from innocence. Kay perceives symbols of death when she is hospitalised for her psychotic problem. "Our father gives out the Communion wine and it turns to blood, a red aisle of blood" (Kennedy, 1988:58). That the seven pupils in *A Lesson in Dead Language* associate bleeding with the vision of death is significant in this context.

4.10.4 Obsession with blood

4.10.4.1 Menstruation: a taboo

The prominent subjects of Kennedy's plays are birth, death, guilt, incest and fear of rape and, as has already been discussed early in the chapter, these are general and universal and lend themselves to archetypal interpretation. But they are also highly intensified features that are peculiar to African-American society in certain aspects. Kennedy's obsession with blood and guilt is the underlying theme of the play *A Lesson in Dead Language*. It is a mysterious and ambiguous play which is open to various interpretations. The play deals with the trauma of menstruation, sexual repression and issues of gender. As in the earlier plays, the seven girls, the principal characters of the play, are the poor victims of sexual encounters.

The menstrual taboo is universal. The rite of passage for women is regarded as impure worldwide and the discharge is seen as a volatile fluid capable of destruction. It is a fatal poison to women which corrupts and decomposes them. It is not something that brings bliss. Pliny (Paula Weidegar, 1978) says,

> if the menstrual discharge coincides with an eclipse of the moon or sun, the evils resulting from it are irremediable: and no less so then it happened while the moon is in conjunction with sun...

A woman in her periods was considered noxious, a bearer of evil to man. Menstruation is considered as a punishment rather than the purification of blood inside the body. The
women are isolated during those four days in separate rooms. Ancient people have the habit of lashing women who menstruate for more than four days and they have to be sent back to their separate rooms for five more days. The lashing continues if she continues to bleed, as if an evil spirit has possessed her. Australian Blacks believe that if they set eyes on a menstruating women, their hair will turn grey and they will lose their potence prematurely. The women are ordered not to touch anything that the men use in their daily lives. Illinois Indians executed women who failed to disclose that they were menstruating. Kennedy has effectively externalised the fear, the suffering, shame, anxiety and trauma of menstruation, breaking through the conventional attitudes of other playwrights. Every girl has to bleed in order to become a woman. It marks the transition from girlhood to womanhood, innocence to the adolescent state. Annis Pratt (1981) describes this metamorphosis thus:

...a state of innocence that becomes most poignant as one is initiated into experience.

As every one knows, blood is involved in the three experiences of a woman’s life, menstruation, sexual initiation and childbirth and they are really terrifying and painful to the girl who undergoes these three phases. Kennedy (Betsko, 1987) states:

I wanted to write about the fear, the fear you will get blood on your clothes...

Fear affects the girl psychologically and she feels that she is dying gradually. The pupils lament:

and it started when I became a woman. My mother says it is because I am a woman that I bleed (Kennedy, 1988:49).

Menstruation thus becomes a ‘curse’ and bleeding is something, which ought to be hidden from the outside world. The adolescent girls find this situation embarrassing and difficult. Bleeding becomes the symbol of the inherited guilt from the time of Eve and is symbolic of the loss of innocence. But it is a double curse in the case of adolescent girls
also. On the one hand, the girls feel physical discomfiture while bleeding and on the other; they are alienated from their family and peers and face parental disapproval. They develop fear of unwanted pregnancy, a proof of premarital sex. Bleeding is associated with the death of Caesar, the White Dog, who is the teacher and with the statues that feature in the play. Instead of teaching and guiding the students to overcome the psychological fear of menstruation, the White Dog, the mother as well as teacher punishes the pupils by asking them to write on the blackboard a hundred times. Large circles of bloodstains are visible on the backs of the pupils' White organdy dresses when they stand near the blackboard. The bloodstains become the symbol of their guilt: so they are asked to write one hundred times:

who killed the White dog and why do I bleed? I killed the White dog and this is why I must bleed (Kennedy, 1988:49).

Menstruation is linked with the death of Julius Caesar, which is highly symbolic. The vision of Calpurnia foretells the death of Caesar but she fails to take preventive steps to save him from the assassination. Pupils share the same guilt as they belong to the same society-

Calpurnia dreamed a pinnacle was tumbling down. Like Caesar, will I bleed away and die? Since I became a woman blood comes out of me. I am a pinnacle tumbled down (Kennedy, 1988:52).

The underlying theme of this play is rabid, that is, it is more psychic than physical. The confusion and the fear have lain submerged inside the author since her childhood. The guilt and anxiety are an outcome of Kennedy's personal traumatic fear of blood. She (Lehman, 1977) points out,

I feel overwhelmed by family problems and family realities, I see my writing as being an outlet for inner psychological confusion and questions stemming from childhood. I don't know any other way. It's really figuring out the 'why' of things, that is, if that is even possible. I am not sure you can figure out the 'why' of anything more.
4.10.4.2 Bleeding and the fear of death

The theme of bleeding, which also embodies the fear of death, emerges quite conspicuously in *A Movie Star has to Star in Black and White* in the scene where Clara is admitted in the hospital for delivery. The process of bleeding signifies the fear of death. The continuous ‘changing of blood stained sheets’ in the hospital is indicative of Kennedy’s preoccupation with the mental change that takes place in the protagonist. Clara reminds her of her miscarriage when Eddie was in Korea, “When I lost the baby he was thousands of miles away. All that bleeding I’ll never forgive him” (Kennedy, 1988:87). Clara and her movie stars speak repetitively of death and blood and even the movies accentuate each scene with the same theme. The themes of guilt, fear of rape and disintegration, are treated effectively in *A Rat’s Mass*. Kennedy also repeats the techniques of merging personalities in this play and the world on stage is depicted as the subjective world of the mind. Blood is also an ambivalent symbol denoting religious sacrament and guilt in this play. The rite of passage to womanhood is very painful and Sister Rat, Kay is not ready to accept this passage quietly. Bleeding is dreadful and it culminates in death. It projects the decay and fall from innocence although the prompt may have come from outside. The role of the outsider, Rosemary, is to cause a moral annihilation. The outsider succeeds because of the unconscious complicity of the rat siblings.

4.10.5 Violence: a recurrent motif

The recurrent motif in the issue of racism is violence. The sufferings and pent-up emotions of centuries finally burst out in a violent war. They, the coloured people, have ultimately concluded that violence is the only weapon of combat in order to regain their rights. Disappointed by the failure of positive approaches, the Blacks too break into violence as a means of protest and resistance against slavery, injustice.
to overcome the oppression. So they attempt to free themselves from this conflict through various agencies. Kennedy's characters are not like Baraka's militant groups. Yet, the act of violence is potent and is directed towards the inner realms of her protagonists. They are no longer militants but pathetic and low creatures, attempting to find the meaning of their life and means of survival, but in vain. The inability to cope with the hostile environment, the racist world, results in psychosis or neurosis. Because of their tragic predicament and their hapless bewilderment, violence has its profound effect upon their psyche. They either commit suicide or descend into eventual madness as they are unable to find a way of survival in the patriarchal and racial miasmic construction. Kennedy's plays thus are an amalgam of grotesque and burlesque elements as Bryant Jackson (1992) points out,

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everything raised to paroxysm, where the source of tragedy lies. A theatre of violence; violently comic, violently dramatic...
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In plays, such as *Funnyhouse of a Negro*, *The Owl Answers*, *A Rat's Mass*, *A Lesson in Dead Language* and *A Beast story*, the protagonists are in the pathological dread of rape or sexual assault. They resist the male invasion and 'body politics' form the main subject of her early plays. Body politics is expressed as an icon of violence. Linda Kintz (1992) says that Kennedy's plays are a unified model of character or subjectivity that

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proves to be abnormal, rather than the resistance to that artificial unity. Kennedy's kaleidoscopic characters deconstruct the stage, the character, the author and a social contract based on the privilege of purity that sacrifices feminized others, both male and female. She brings into the discussion a much more specific way of investigating gender and the problems of psychological colonization in a culture organized around white supremacy.
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4.10.6 Conflict between Life and death

The conflict between life and death forms the next element in a discussion of the issue of racism. Necrophilia is a death-wish, love of death or destruction whereas biophilia means a desire to live life to its fullest extent. Necrophilic tendencies dominate Kennedy’s plays while her contemporary playwrights like Hansberry, Childress and Shange desire for biophilic tendencies and speak of regeneration, hope and survival. The necrophilic attitude is apparently revealed through the characters of Sarah, Kay, and Clara. Sarah says, “My white friends, like myself, will be shrewd, intellectual and anxious for death” (Kennedy, 1988:6). The consequence of this tragic nostalgia for death would be the violence and despair that lead the heroine to commit suicide. Kennedy’s psychodramas present a nostalgia for the wholeness of an authentic identity. Suicide exposes how the multicultural society does not accept the African culture one that deserves recognition. Kintz Linda (1992) remarks,

in Kennedy’s works, it is not a mixture that leads to death but its phobic devaluation by groups with the power to enforce their own meaning through violence, shame and humiliation.

4.11 COMMON ARCHETYPAL SITUATIONS
4.11.1 Quest for an authentic identity: a construction of self

The quest for an authentic identity is another archetypal feature discernible in Kennedy’s plays. To achieve self-actualisation or to get affirmed of one’s identity is an arduous task. The quest for identity occurs in all myths, religious stories and literature down the centuries. Racism and racial identity, which permeate African-American writings, are a tragic legacy of the nation’s history. Racism continues to be embedded in the sign systems, discourses, and institutions of U.S culture, as assumptions about race inform language, perception and conceptual frameworks of Western culture (Betty Ann Bergland, 1995).
Racial identity is the construction of a self since race is a cultural construction. Emphasis is given to the construction of Blackness, which gradually moves from external reality to the internal psychic pain as the Black American writers attempt to claim racial identity through their writings. The quest for racial identity is inevitably connected with sexual identity in the African-American writings. Since Blackness is equated with non-being, affirming their presence through writing becomes more important to the Blacks. Nevertheless, this image plays a significant part especially in the African-American writers' works as their Black identity is pushed into the shadow by the White imperialist society. In Kennedy's plays, the protagonist-heroines undertake the hard trek to anchor their authentic self-identity and dignity. But they are being victimized by a maleficent world. Sarah in *Funnyhouse of a Negro*, Clara in *The Owl Answers*, Clara in *A Movie Star has to Star in Black and White* and Kay and Blake in *A Rat's Mass* all indulge in their search for selfhood in the tyrannical White imperialist society. This is a recurrent idea in all her plays.

### 4.11.2 Marital conflicts

Marriage, especially unhappy marital life is an oft-repeated image, which receives archetypal treatment in Kennedy's dramatic works. Marriage affects a woman's freedom and she is constrained to live within bounds in the patriarchal miasmatic structure. The idea of marriage as a golden apple of bliss and joy has completely changed. It is a threatening and terrifying cage now. Thus, marriage becomes a prison where the women are overwhelmed with the sense of claustrophobia. They are torn asunder by the dualism of good/bad and spiritual/sensuaL. Kennedy's portrayal of family life is not one of golden bliss and robust health. Hers is not a success story either, as she has divorced her husband just to establish herself as a successful writer. This personal experience is reflected in *A Movie Star has to Star in Black and White*. As Clara's mother refuses to accompany her father to the south, he returns to Georgia and lives with a girl, "who talked to willow trees" (Kennedy,
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1988:83). Her mother has been brought up like a White girl. She always dominates her husband. He tells Clara,

your mother has always thought she was better than me. You know Mr. Harrison (her father) raised her like a white girl, and your mother, mark my word, thinks she's better than me (Kennedy, 1988:101).

Hence, he leaves her mother because she has not accompanied him back to Georgia and she considers herself superior to him. He says,

you yellow bastard. You're a yellow bastard. That's why you didn't want to go back (Kennedy, 1988:96).

Her father's effort to escape the racial oppression of Georgia, Clara's attempts to reconstruct her family and Bette Davis's efforts to maintain her transformed self in front of her mother's mental break-up (in the film) are all futile leading only to great despair. Clara's mother persuades her daughter to go back to her husband, Eddie as she is pregnant, "Shouldn't you go back to Eddie especially since you're pregnant"(Kennedy, 1988:93). Her mother is worried about Clara's happiness,

Mother. Your family's not together and you don't seem happy. Clara, I'm very happy mother. Very, I've just won an award and I'm going to have a play produced. I'm very happy (Kennedy, 1988:93).

Clara is not only unsuccessful in uniting her parents but also fails to redeem her life as it is identified with Shelly Winter's character. Winters neither makes herself happy nor allows her lover to lead a happy life. Moreover, she meets her end accidentally, but the irony is Clift is arrested and sentenced to death for the same reason. Hence, the isolated lives of both the daughter and the mother are expressed in the final lines which Clara says,
we were standing on the steps, and she shook so that I thought both of us were going to fall headlong down the steps (Kennedy, 1988:103).

The relationship is not a consistent one. Their marital life is eroded by psychotic factors and they are stifled in their bondage.

4.12 COMMON ARCHETYPAL THEMES
4.12.1 Miscegenation

Racial discrimination has led the Black writers to dwell on a multitude of themes. Interracial relations, oppression, injustice and ethnic identity are boldly and pitilessly analyzed, using the most daring experimental devices. Characters in traditional drama are delineated in new dimensions as victims, prisoners, brutes and inmates, non-living and inanimate objects. The important, often discussed cross-cultural conflict in African-American plays is the problem of miscegenation. The mulattoes are a product of shame, guilt or sin. They have to survive without lineage or ancestry as they have been treated as bastards. Mulatto bastards were exploited and considered as breeder slaves of their race. They were marked and remembered as harlots, whores, unscrupulous persons and immoral beings even now in the racist America. They were voiceless and they were lacerated physically, emotionally and psychologically. Some writers regard miscegenation as something that helps to eliminate the cross-cultural conflict that prevails in the society. However, miscegenation has a disastrous effect upon the Blacks, as it denies them the authentic self-dignity or heritage or lineage or ancestry. They have been tossed between the two cultures. Kennedy has given voice to the despair of the mulatto bastards. In the plays of Kennedy, the trauma of the racial oppression shapes the Black woman’s psyche. Her plays attempt to locate them in the large worlds of the Blacks and the Whites. But the consequence is a rootless survival in a neurotic state. She straddles between the two worlds as Sarah in Funnyhouse of a Negro but is not accepted by either. Bryant Jackson’s (1992) words are striking:
blackness, as constructed by the dominant group, is literally determined, one might say, by 'figures' in the blood. Claiming whiteness is impossible with even one 'drop of black blood…

It should be noted that in The Owl Answers, racial and psychological conflicts arise only because of miscegenation.

4.12.2 Recurrent racist images

Another significant racist image that surfaces in Black writings is the portrayal of the Blacks using two disturbing figures: Black man as a rapist and a brute and Black woman as a whore. The idea of White men marrying Black women is accepted to an extent and tolerated, while a White woman marrying a Black man is vehemently opposed by the White imperialist society. The Black man has been portrayed as a rapist who deserved to be punished, lynched and castrated for the act. Sarah’s dark-skinned father rapes her light-skinned mother in Funnyhouse of a Negro. He comes back to Sarah for forgiveness, “Forgiveness, Sarah, I know you were a child of torment” (Kennedy, 1988:18). But she is not ready to forgive him, “Why did you rape my mother? Black beast, Christ would not rape anyone” (Kennedy, 1988:21). In the next play The Owl Answers, Clara’s Black mother is portrayed as a Black whore and Clara’s identity is mixed with her mother’s heritage. So, tormented by such humiliation they are on the brink of a mental collapse.

4.12.3 Fear of racism

Kennedy speaks of the dichotomy between the poor and the rich and the Black and the White. Kennedy herself (Betsko, 1987) has stated,

my plays were filled with the intricacies of race in my life. I had explored racial identity through my heroine Sarah. She had been torn
enough about the question of race to kill herself. And Clara in The Owl Answers had been led to madness by a summer trip to England.

Hence, it is interesting to analyse her schizophrenic plays in terms of racism and racial issues, which explore new levels of self-knowledge and identity.

Racial discrimination that prevailed in the 1930s is explicitly revealed through the words of Clara’s mother. The Blacks are segregated even in the soda fountain and are not allowed to sit with the Whites in the movies. Clara’s mother says,

a Negro couldn’t sit down at the soda fountain in the drug store but had to take his drink out. In the movies at Montefore you (Blacks) had to go in the side and up the stairs and sit in the last four rows. (Kennedy, 1988:84).

Injustice has been done to Blacks in transportation too:

when you arrived in the train...the first thing you saw was the WHITE AND COLORED signs at the depot. White people had one waiting room and we Negroes had another. We sat in only two cars and white people had the rest of the train (Kennedy, 1988:84).

The Father, who is a social worker, dreams of living in a land of his own. He compels his wife to move to Cleveland where the racial discrimination is comparatively less. Cleveland is populated by the Blacks and

is a place for opportunity, leadership, a progressive city, a place for education, a chance to come out of the back woods of Georgia. We Negro leaders dream of leading our people out of the wilderness (Kennedy, 1988: 85).

Suzanne Alexander in The Ohio State Murders recollected her school days in Cleveland amidst the mixed background of immigrants and Blacks, where students were given grades according to their merits. She compared that period to the time of
her college days at Ohio State University where racism reigned supreme. When she studied at the University, there were only twelve Black students in a total of six hundred girls in the dorm and Black girls shared six places. The White girls had to stay in the dorm during their freshman year and shifted to the House on the Road, where they had better accommodation. The Black girls remained in the dorm throughout their studies. Suzanne as a student had to suffer a lot. Even in the dining rooms the White girls did not want to mingle with the Blacks and they sat separately. The Whites refused to talk to Suzanne and they wanted to assert their superiority. She was deeply offended and lamented saying “Their way of laughing had devastated me”(Kennedy, 1992:33). She hid herself in her room in order to avoid them. They seemed to her to be a threat to her life, and later in her life she suspected that they would have murdered her twin daughters, as she knew that the Whites had killed many Negroes. Suzanne’s experiences were not exaggerated and her fears were genuine.

The Black students were allowed to do only two introductory courses in English and they were not allowed to do the English major course. Students were not judged on grades but on race.

the schools I attended in Cleveland were an even mixture of immigrant and black. You were judged on grades. But here race was foremost (Kennedy, 1992:31).

Though Suzanne received an 'A' grade for all her assignments, she was denied English major course and was advised to take “a trial course on Shaw, Wilde and Molière”(Kennedy, 1992:41). She was deliberately given low grades and was not allowed to take any more English courses. She was prohibited even from writing poems in her personal diary. Miss. Dawson, the head of the dorm, made her vacate the dorm because of her writings. Thus she was expelled from the dorm and this resulted in a break in her studies. Even Suzanne’s friend Iris, another Black girl, discontinued her studies on music major as she was given only theoretical courses on the violin.
Kennedy hints at the sheer inability of Black girls to continue their education in an atmosphere where racism suppresses the merits of the students, especially Blacks.

4.12.4 The feeling of nothingness

The feeling of nothingness in an individual at some important juncture is a common experience with sensitive people. The overwhelming feeling of emptiness or vacuousness that weighs down one's soul is always associated with a feeling of dread, anguish, and anxiety over the meaning and purpose of one's existence. This feeling of emptiness leads an individual to make a search for his spiritual soul in the Cosmic world. It is a period of purgation when the tormented, tortured and fragmented soul of an individual is purified. This is experienced in various ways by men and women. A man views himself as a powerful person. He considers himself a power-wielding member of the society. So he experiences a feeling of might after a full enjoyment of life. The condition of women is quite contrary, as they are subjected to derisive treatment right from her birth. The present cloistered state of Kennedy's women is similar to the condition of nothingness since their whole life is an act of self-denial. It is an obvious fact that they are submerged in a world which is deprived of human values and morality. The woman is not given an opportunity to realise herself through a process of self-definition and self-examination by which she can learn to evaluate herself, her strength, power, morality, victories and failures. Such evaluation is the expression of her soul. Only by this articulation, she is able to experience herself as a new soul, and she expungs the pathological threats and other dreadful elements from herself to establish her own self-image or identity- a sense of complete wholeness.

4.13 COMMON MYTHS: ARCHETYPAL PATTERNS

4.13.1 Being pursued

The essential content of all mythologies and all religions and all 'isms' is broadly archetypal. Archetypal themes, situations and patterns find their various
manifestations in the plots and structures of many literary works even today. One of the most significant and oft-repeated archetypal images is the rape-trauma factor. It is incorporated in the writings of women and this image has its origin from the mythic stories of Apollo and Daphne, Pan and Syrinx, Zeus and Lede, Alphous and Arethusa, and so on. Apollo pursues Daphne determining to own her, but the frightened damsel Daphne transforms herself into a laurel tree with her magical powers. Thus, she maintains her innocence and remains unavowed forever. This myth reveals the motif of the rape trauma and in order to escape the traumatic experience, the damsels transmogrify or dehumanise themselves. It is noted in mythological stories that the pursued girls are forced to transform into inhuman or inanimate objects or desex themselves to escape from their pursuers. As Daphne was metamorphosed into a tree, Syrinx became a reed to escape from the lusting spirit of Pan. Arethusa changed into a spring to evade Alphous' attempt to ravish her. Therefore, the Gods like Apollo, Pan and Zeus embody the patriarchal set up and are branded as conquerors of the terrified damsels.

Being pursued is an important feature to be noted in Kennedy’s plays. She has often been pursued by red-bloodied rats in her dreams and there are many other strange images in her dreams. This myth has formed the recurrent pattern in the writings of Black writers, especially women dramatists. In Kennedy’s plays, this myth plays a vital part and forms the core of her plays. This motif occurs in Funnyhouse of a Negro, The Owl Answers and A Beast Story and acts as a deterrent to the formation of a harmonious bond between a man and a woman. In all these plays, the women characters, Sarah, Clara and Beast Girl, are traumatized and pursued by the father or husband figure or the Black figure and they live in a dreadful world ridden by the fear of being raped by them. In Funnyhouse of a Negro, the Queen and the Duchess are in a hysterical state, being pursued by the Black figure, the father.

it is my father. He is arriving for the night. He comes through the jungle to find me. He never tires of his journey (Kennedy, 1988:3).
Night symbolically represents the physical activities, which the heroines are scared to encounter.

In order to escape from the mental torture, Clara in *The Owl Answers* dehumanises herself into an owl in the Harlem hotel room when she is harassed by the Black man in the play. She transforms herself into an animal as in the mythology to parry the attack of the dark reality. In *A Beast Story*, the protagonist is afraid of sexual violation, but in her case, it is her mother who has transmitted the fear and the traumatic experience to her. The Beast Girl is always watched by her parents. Her mother says, “I keep ax to maintain her innocence“ (Kennedy, 1974:193). Though she does not transform herself into a non-human object, she exists as a mutant form in the play itself. The Nazi squad pursues the rat siblings in *A Rat’s Mass* to execute them—"Now the Germans and Caesar’s army are after us" (Kennedy, 1988:4). This pursuit is slightly altered as they are attacked for being Black and not for being sexually exploited.

4.13.2 The mother myth: empowering and debilitating

The mother archetype is identified with the primordial mother or "earth mother" of mythology, or Eve and Mary in Western traditions. The mother and daughter relation is the next archetypal pattern found in Kennedy’s plays that deserves to be examined. All of our ancestors had mothers. We, the human beings dwell in an environment that includes a mother or mother-substitute. We would never survive without our connection with one who nurtures us during the times of helpless dependence. It stands to reason that this relationship is built such in a way that it reflects that evolutionary environment. Hence, every one wants a mother, to nurture and to recognize him. So the mother archetype is our built-in ability to recognize a certain relationship, that of mothering. Jung (1972) says that this is rather abstract as human beings are likely to project the archetype out into the world and onto a
particular person, usually their own mothers. The mother figure is nurturing as well as devouring. This pattern takes its origin from the Demeter and Persephone myth. This myth narrates the cycle of birth, death and rebirth and is symbolically associated with the strong bond between mother and daughter. The power of the mother is empowering as well as debilitating. In European classical mythology, Demeter is the Goddess of fertility and patron of the crops. Her divine role is to nurture the crops thereby nourishing the mortals. Persephone is abducted and seduced by the king of the nether world, Pluto. Demeter neglects to nurture the lands as she keeps bereaving over the loss of her daughter for sometime. This brings misery and famine upon the mortal beings. While Persephone stands for innocence and purity and represents her mother’s lost girlhood, Demeter stands for power and courage and is an epitome of the nourisher. Demeter challenges the patriarchal society on behalf of her daughter and represents the matriarchal set up. Kennedy highlights this relationship in the Black culture. Her portrayal of the mother character is of one who is submissive and is submerged in the patriarchal miasmic construction. The mother characters are not in a situation to act powerfully. They draw their daughters into a pathological state of psychosis. Therefore, the mother figures in Kennedy’s plays are not the ones who are nurturing but the ones who are devouring the lives of their daughters.

4.13.3 Edenic world

Some archetypal images and myths have a common operation within the limits of the Black culture. The Edenic or green world archetype is an important image to be analysed in this context. The innocent lives in the green Edenic world are sweet and the atmosphere is one of love and care. This myth represents the ideal way in which things should be in real life. This image is relevant to the present plight, their displacement from their roots both geographically and psychologically. The nostalgic idealization of a motherland marks most of the writings of Black writers. To them, Africa is the lost Eden, as America could not offer a permanent home to them. The rat siblings repent for the loss of the green world where they lived harmoniously with God.
Innocence is the pivotal state for children. It is lost with the invasion of adulthood and it requires great care to conserve it. As Pearson (1986) observes,

Eden, after all, is not a matter of getting all one's narcissistic whims satisfied; it is a state of walking in grace that requires a deep acknowledgement of and reverence for oneself and for others.

The loss of Eden starts with the fall of Adam and Eve, denoting the fall of humankind. According to Pearson (1986), it is categorized thus: the fall results from human sin, the sin is more the woman's fault than the man's and the penalty for sin is suffering. Man can make his entry into Paradise only after passing through hard suffering and sacrifice. Kennedy's characters fail in their efforts to make their survival meaningful and this results in a nostalgic longing for home. This image pervades the works of the African-American writers, and as Bells Hooks (1990) observes:

Despite the brutal reality of racial apartheid, of domination, one's homeplace was the one site where one could freely confront the issue of humanization, where one could resist. Black women resisted by making homes where all black people could strive to be subjects, not objects, where we could be affirmed in our minds and hearts despite poverty, hardship and deprivation, where we could restore to ourselves the dignity denied us on the outside in the public world.

In Kennedy's *Funnysthouse of a Negro*, this cry is echoed:

I know no place. That is, I cannot believe in places. To believe in places is to know hope and to know the emotion of hope (Kennedy, 1988:7).

She longs for the green world that is not an easy world for her to claim. In *The Owl Answers*, Clara dreams about her motherland:
we came this morning. We were visiting the place of our ancestors...
We had a lovely morning, we rose in darkness, took a taxi past Hyde
Park through the Marble Arch to Buckingham Palace (Kennedy,

4.13.4 The American dream

The myth of the Messiah stands for hope, the inspiration of life. In
Kennedy’s plays, readers could find the absence of the messianic figure. This makes the
heroines move in a realm of bewilderment. In Funnyhouse of a Negro, Sarah’s Black
father has been sent by his mother on an assignment to an African jungle to start a
He is considered as the Messiah, the hope for Sarah in her state of mental derangement.
However, he fails to revive his daughter’s life as she rejects him for being Black. The
popular myth of the American dream is also reduced to a slowly vanishing dream.

It is America’s greatest cultural myth, but it remains illusory as far as
characters in Kennedy’s plays are concerned. The American dream can never be
realized by Black women as long as the apartheid exists. Primordial wholeness is the
oft-repeated image in the writings of African-Americans. Every man has a feeling of
incompleteness and there exists a void in every individual in the modern world.
However, it is more acute with the Blacks. They are pursuing their dream of peace,
fulfilment and contentment. In Kennedy’s plays, they are not even aware of what they
are searching for. In A Rat’s Mass, Blake laments,

our father (God) said everything was getting hung and shot in
Europe. America wouldn’t be safe long (Kennedy, 1988: 56).

In The Owl Answers, Clara says,

I want what I think everyone wants...I don’t know. Love or
something, I guess (Kennedy, 1988:36).
But she doesn’t know where it is to come from. The Black Mother asks, “Is this love to come from out there?” (Kennedy, 1988:37) to which she ironically implies that Clara cannot attain fulfilment through love. She has to find it within herself, love for her self first. The alternative is total annihilation, which is the only remedy for Kennedy’s characters to be saved from all these struggles.

4.14 BIOGRAPHY: AN ARCHETYPAL PATTERN

What are the factors that have influenced Kennedy to write in such a non-linear fashion? It is interesting to trace her personal life and experiences as it is explicitly revealed in her memoir. Kennedy’s personal experiences, along with her interest in creating myths from historical figures, European personalities and literary figures portrayed in her plays, are described in her autobiography People who led to my plays. She is deeply interested in England and in White culture. She is an anglophile like the characters, whom she has created in her art gallery. She says,

my mother often said that most of the white people of Montezuma’s families came from England. I realized dimly that this meant some of our ancestors too had come from England, since, like most ‘Negro’ families in the town, we had white relations as well as ‘Negro’. I became very much interested in England (Kennedy, 1987:22).

Kennedy has been fascinated by Queen Victoria since her childhood. Queen Victoria stands for the culmination of her long-lasting interest in English descent. Her interest becomes active during a stay in London. She remarks,

the statue we saw of Victoria...most dramatic, startling statue I'd seen...In my play, I would soon have the heroine, Sarah, talk to a replica of this statue. Finally the dialogue with a statue would be explicit and concrete. And the statue would reply; the statue would inform my character of her inner thoughts. The statue would reveal my character’s secrets to herself (Kennedy, 1987:118).
Kennedy's fascination for the Duchess, is explicitly stated in her memoir, in which she states,

one day the Duchess of Hapsburg would become one of my characters most sympathetic alter egos and selves (Kennedy, 1987: 96).

Kennedy has also stated,

...soon my Duchess would exist in an alien persona, that of the character of the Negro writer (Kennedy, 1987:97).

Kennedy and her characters are more comfortable when they view their selves in relation to one of the historical or literary figures. She makes her female selves European, in the guise of Victoria and the Duchess in *Funnyhouse of a Negro* and Anne Boleyn in *The Owl Answers*. Kennedy's multiple personalities try to live up to their belief that White European culture is superior to Black culture. By calling herself Queen Victoria, Monarch of England, Sarah affirms the need for female power to be acknowledged.

The figure of Jesus Christ seems to evoke childhood memories in Kennedy. She had the Jesus figure in her memory as a patron, "a Christian pageant or a child-loving saviour"(Kennedy, 1987:11). Our consciousness, as Jung (Jacobi, 1953) says,

does not create itself- it wells up from unknown depths. In childhood it awakens gradually, and all through life it wakes each morning out of the depths of sleep from an unconscious condition.

Nevertheless, this submerged conscious 'saviour' image of the Jesus figuring in Kennedy's unconsciousness becomes "a punishing Jesus, berserk, evil, sinister"
(Kennedy, 1987:123) in the play *Funnyhouse of a Negro* when she hears about the divorce of her parents. She (Koenig, 1987) says,

> I cried when I read the letter...So Jesus (who I had always mixed with my social worker father) and the landscape and memories of Georgia and my grandparents became intertwined with the paragraphs on the Ghanian savannahs and Lumumba and his murder.

Kennedy finds the gentle Jesus turning into a 'cruel' man in her play, projecting the pain underlying her violent imagery. Sarah associates Black with evil,

> for as we of royal blood know, black is evil and has been from the beginning (Kennedy, 1988:9).

Lumumba is associated with Kennedy's father and her African patrimony-

> just when I had discovered the place of my ancestors, just when I had discovered this African hero, he had been murdered. Even though I had known of him so briefly, I felt I had been struck a blow. He became a character in my play ... a man with a shattered head (Kennedy, 1987: 119).

Her son is named Adam Patrice and this act reveals her adoration for this assassinated African leader who sacrificed his life for the cause of Black liberation. The portrayal of these characters is from the recesses of her collective unconscious:

> Queen Victoria, Chaucer, Shakespeare, William, the Conqueror and Anne Boleyn: they would all one day become characters in my plays (Kennedy, 1987:24).

The stage directions of the play *Funnyhouse of a Negro* are given in these words:

> a sitting figure, a replica...a thing of astonishing whiteness...it is a thing of terror, possessing the quality of nightmares, suggesting large and probable deaths (Kennedy, 1988:6).
The Queen, an image of White power, strength, and arrogance also evokes a myth of royal origins that is extended to Africa when Kennedy sees the Ethiopian Princess in a hotel:

royalty was not only Queen Victoria or even Antigone. Perhaps I myself and my heroines were descended from royal African blood (Kennedy, 1987:103).

Kennedy derives her source for *The Owl Answers* from her own terrible experience with owls. She says,

the owls in the trees outside...were close and at night...I felt enclosed in their sound...the owls sounded as if they were in the centre of the room. I listened to the owl sounds, afraid. In a few months, I would create a character who would turn into an owl (Kennedy, 1987:122).

Kennedy has mentioned the idea of metamorphosis in her autobiography:

metamorphosis and the change of identity would twenty years later, become a theme that would dominate my writing. The characters in my plays would also change personae at an alarming rate (Kennedy, 1987: 17).

Thus her own ideas and experience later rise to the surface as myths or archetypal images. Hence, an archetype of her own ideas and experiences as portrayed in the plays becomes a part of the sufferings of the Blacks themselves. Her experiences were preserved by her consciously or unconsciously, becoming primordial images. Thus, she explains her use of archetypes:

I secretly yearned that my mother would talk more about people she had dreamed about. There is no doubt that a person talking about the people in his or her dreams became an archetype for people in my monologues, plays and stories (Kennedy, 1987:33).
Kennedy's personal feelings and suppressed emotions made her reveal the different layers of the coloured woman's consciousness through archetypal behavioural patterns.

Clara is the alter ego of Kennedy herself as is revealed through the incidents narrated in the play. Kennedy's fascination for Hollywood movies is thus revealed through the setting of her plays. Hollywood films of the 1950s contained promises of female power and fulfillment. Kennedy's autobiography attests repeatedly to her fascination in which she writes of Bette Davis, "In this avid dream of transformation, I still also daydreamed of myself as this character" (Kennedy, 1988:68). Kennedy's memoir is sprinkled with reflections of this kind. She had even been named for a movie actress Adrienne Ames. There is a strong resemblance between Bette Davis' identity as a White woman and Kennedy's Afro-American identity in her desire to banish the dark thoughts and feelings that she associates with her Blackness.

The play A Movie Star has to Star in Black and White portrays Kennedy's struggle to become a recognized playwright. Clara is Kennedy herself since all the events in Clara's life and her family background resemble those of Kennedy, and she has this in mind when she states in an interview with Lehman (1977),

"I was not prepared for this shock. I could not envision my parents' separation."

Like Eddie, Kennedy's husband also leaves for Korea while Kennedy is pregnant and then she started writing her plays.

"It was while my husband was in Korea that I sometimes began to daydream of being a writer, perhaps a famous writer (Kennedy, 1987:79)."

Like Clara, she experienced great mental agony. The facts regarding her struggle to maintain herself as a successful writer and the problems that she faced especially as a
Black woman in America are revealed through Clara’s life. She finds in divorce an alternative choice to writing. She (Betsko, 1987) says,

there were so many tensions and writing was a comfort...I think my husband and I had a typical marriage of that time. He was ever busy and on his way ‘up’ and tensions built between us.

A Movie Star has to Star in Black and White is a logical sequel to her earlier plays. A reader will have a clear understanding of her earlier psycho-plays if he reads this play. The heroine Clara is Kennedy herself, an alter ego of Kennedy. Clara starts writing her plays as if Kennedy is writing her first play. There are several references in the play to substantiate this view. Clara is very much haunted by the vision of Jesus, “When I am wide awake I see Jesus a lot” (Kennedy, 1988:86), as it has taken an evil shape in Sarah’s unconscious realm as a hunch-backed man. Clara describes her father thus, “He seemed smaller and hunched over” (Kennedy, 1988:91), which is the picture of Jesus delineated in Funnyhouse of a Negro. Kennedy is not an atheist, though she portrays religious symbols in a bizarre style. Though Kennedy associates her social worker father with the image of Jesus, but his separation with her mother leads to her thinking of him as an evil creature. She remembers her father through Clara,

when I was young he seemed energetic, speaking before civic groups and rallying people to give money to the Negro settlement (Kennedy, 1988:91).

It is narrated through Clara that she is occupied with the writing of The Owl Answers and A Lesson in Dead Language. She writes,

I’m writing on my play. It’s about a girl who turns into an Owl. Ow (Kennedy, 1988:95).
The separation with her husband leads her to write a page on a play, 

A Lesson in Dead Language. The main image is a girl in a White organdy dress covered with menstrual blood (Kennedy, 1988:94).

This reveals her obsession with blood. Her preoccupation with Blackness, darkness and strange imagery is exemplified in this play. Clara says, 

out there in the black taxi my cold hands were colder than ever...and passed down a gray walk through a dark gate and into a garden where there were black ravens on the grass, when I broke down. Oww...oww (Kennedy, 1987:101).

Ultimately, Clara, like Clara Passmore in The Owl Answers, also belongs to the kingdom of owls as the play ends with the final writings of Clara, 

he told me you are an owl, ow, oww, I am your beginning, ow. You belong here with us owls in the fig tree (Kennedy, 1988:101).

The character Clara has been the mouthpiece of Kennedy in her writings; she reveals the mental tortures and tribulations she has undergone in her life. The unhappy relationship between Clara and her husband Eddie and the tension between Clara and her parents represent archetypal situations in Black society as Kennedy portrays it.

In the case of A Rat’s Mass, there is a connection with Kennedy’s brother who dies in an automobile accident. She (Lehman, 1977) says,

this evoked an almost unreal memory of when we were children we used to play in the attic and there used to be a closet in the floor of the attic.
This attic captures an indelible impression in the play where the rat siblings hide during the invasion of Nazi squad after their incest. The figure of Rosemary with her book on catechism originates from Kennedy’s childhood memories. She (Koenig, 1987) says,

I did see people going to catechism in their white dresses (an image from a rat’s mass, 1967).

It would be more appropriate to quote by Jung’s (Jacobi, 1953) words-

...along with archetypes the artist emerges as a powerful being, because whoever speaks in primordial images speaks with a thousand voices, he enthralls and overpowers...He transmutes our personal destiny to the destiny of mankind.

Thus, Kennedy was able to draw archetypal images from historical figures she admired and events that had deeply moved her, images that touched the innermost spaces of her character’s psyche.

4.15 CONCLUSION

Archetypes, according to Jung (Jacobi, 1953), are factors and motifs that arrange the psychic realms of human beings into certain images and are characterized as archetypal in such a way that they can be recognized only from the effects they produce. Kennedy has effectively made use of archetypal themes and situations to reveal the inner tension of her characters. She has exploited her varied yet bitter personal experiences to trace the collective conscious of the women members of the Black race.