4.0 Preliminaries

In the last chapter, the researcher has mainly tried to apply C.G.Jung’s theory of ‘Mother Archetype’ while studying the mother characters portrayed by Noble Laureate Toni Morrison. In this chapter, the same theory of Jung is being applied in order to study the mother characters portrayed in Alice Walker’s four select novels – *The Third Life of Grange Copeland* (1970), *Meridian* (1976), *The Color Purple* (1982) and *The Temple of My Familiar* (1989). Walker, being the contemporary of Toni Morrison, too writes about the exploitation of black women on both the levels; physical as well as psychological. Carolyn Ann Wayne traces the similarity in the portrayals of Black mother in the works of both the writers. She writes:

In the fiction of Toni Morrison and Alice Walker portrayals of Black family life center around the multidimensional character of the Black mother. She is presented as loving, hateful, strong, weak, raging, comforting – a devil, and an angel. It is this versatility and adaptability that set the Black mother apart from the other mothers in the world of fiction as well as in reality [http://etd.ohiolink.edu/view.cgi/wayne%20carolyn.pdf?osu1130780485 (03.03.2011)].

4.1 The Third Life of Grange Copeland: Story of Black Patriarchy

Alice Walker’s debut novel *The Third Life of Grange Copeland* is the story of Black patriarchy. In fact, African people (of course, pre-conquered African) were not patriarchs. Both the sexes were considered equal. Neena Arora summarizes the status of woman in Africa, she says:

A glance through the history of African ancestors reveal that there was no rigid compartmentalization based on sexual taboos like she often accompanied men on hunts and on to the battlefield during pre-slavery days. A black woman in Africa enjoyed
many privileges and equality with men prior to the chains of slavery [Arora quoted in Dhawan 2001:25].

But the African American slaves became purely patriarchal. Due to their negative socialization at the hands of white racist masters, they first of all, forgot their original (native) identity and started to follow blindly their white masters. The processes of Black people’s negative socialization and its dire consequences have already been discussed earlier. The following view of W. Lawrence Hogue underlines the above discussion that how the Black man was negatively socialized in white America:

The American social structure turns the black man into a beast – suppressing his human qualities and accenting his animal tendencies. The black man, in turn, reflects his violent relation with his white land owner in his relations with his wife and son. He takes his anger and frustration out, not on the social system or the people who exercise its power but on his children and the black woman, who, as he does in the master-servant relation, remains loyal and submissive [1986: 49-50].

It is the woeful tale of four women Margaret Copeland, Mem Copeland, Josie and Mrs. Mamie Lou Banks. It opens in 1920 and ends around 1960. Though, the novel is entitled after the name of Grange Copeland, but the four female characters dominate the stage. Grange Copeland is one of the major characters. He is a typical black sharecropper. He actually wants to marry Josie, but is destined to marry Margaret. He has a son named Brownfield. In the existing system of sharecropping, Grange does not get a single chance of becoming happy and rich in life. In spite of doing hard work in Mr. Shipley’s fields, he sinks into debts every year. The unending back-breaking labor and consistent failure makes him hard-hearted and hopeless. Like all black
people, he also passes the blames to his wife. The narrator describes his uncontrolled and unhappy married life, which is dependent on his own moods and shrugs. The life of week-ends described in the novel is sufficient to understand how Grange becomes patriarchal and moody. The narrator presents:

On Saturday afternoon Grange shaved, bathed, put on clean overalls and a shirt and took the wagon into town to buy groceries … Late Saturday night Grange would come home lurching drunk, threatening to kill his wife and Brownfield, stumbling and shooting off his shotgun. He threatened Margaret and she ran and hid in the woods with Brownfield huddled at her feet. Then Grange would roll out the door and into the yard, crying like a child in big wrenching sobs and rubbing his whole head in the dirt. He would lie there until Sunday morning … and neither his wife nor Brownfield went near him [TLGC: 14].

On the other hand, his wife Margaret is very simple, stoic and submissive. He once tries to sell her for paying his debts. It is because of her husband that she becomes a whore. The birth of Star is the proof of her debauchery. Brownfield holds Grange responsible for her changed behavior. The narrator says:

It was Grange who led her (Margaret) to the rituals of song and dance and drink, which he had always rushed to at the end of the week, every Saturday night. It was Grange who had first turned to someone else (Josie) … It was on weekends only that she became a huntress of soft touches, gentle voices and sex without the arguments over the constant and compelling pressures of everyday life [TLGC: 24].

In short, it is Grange who is responsible for the suicide of Margaret.

Like Margaret, Mem Copeland also becomes a victim of Black patriarchy. Brownfield Copeland is lucky that he wins Mem as his wife.
She is superior to him in every sense of the term. The most important thing is that Brownfield has good knowledge of sharecropping. He has also experienced and lived a sorrowful life with his mother because of his father who is debaucherous and a drunkard. In spite of it, he repeats the history. He also finds himself in the same critical situation, where once his father was. The narrator tells: “That was the year he (Brownfield) first saw how his own life was becoming a repetition of his father’s. He could not save his children from slavery; they did not even belong to him” [TLGC: 72].

Brownfield is an uneducated man. His wife is a school-teacher and she tries to teach him how to read and write. Till the birth of the first two children, he leads a happy married life with Mem. But as the eating mouths and debts increase, it becomes unbearable for him. He then loses control over his life. Like his father he starts troubling his wife and children. He always tries to insult her before the neighbors, makes her stop speaking correct English, doubts her character, passes the blame of his failure on her, and makes her purposefully pregnant every year. The narrator narrates:

Brownfield beat his once lovely wife now, regularly, because it made him feel, briefly, good. Every Saturday night he beat her, trying to pin the blame for his failure on her by imprinting it on her face; and she, inevitably, repaid him by becoming a haggard automatous witch, beside whom even Josie looked well-preserved [TLGC: 74].

Mem, being a good, cultured and educated woman, bears all the brutal treatment only for her children. She is much concerned about her children’s education. For the purpose, she finds out a job and a house on rent in the town. Brownfield is not ready to shift to town but wants to shift his family in J.L’s shabby shack. Out of mere helplessness, Mem
The first time in her life, puts a gun on his head and makes him shift in the town. Brownfield makes a secret plan of making her physically weak by impregnating her every year. He succeeds in his plan. Mem reaches the death-bed. But when he discloses his strategy to Mem, Mem once again determines to live for her children. She again gets cured and starts her job in the town. He finally decides to kill her and kills her with his shotgun. In this way, the simple, educated, cultured and submissive woman gets murdered by patriarchy.

The third victim of the novel is Josie. At an early age, she gets raped. Her becoming a maiden mother puts her in the profession of prostitution. Unlike Margaret and Mem, she is not dependent on man, but the patriarchy plays havoc in her life too. The next victim of patriarchy is Mrs. Mamie Lou Banks. In her conversation with Brownfield she reveals how she has been wronged by other black women and used by various men around her.

4.1.1 Margaret and Others: Good Mothers

There are totally six, major and minor mother characters ably portrayed by Alice Walker in *The Third Life of Grange Copeland*. Almost all the mothers with exception of Josie and Lorene interact with the positive manifestation of maternal archetype.

**4.1.1.1 Margaret Copeland**

Margaret Copeland is the wife of Grange Copeland. She is the mother of two sons – Brownfield and Star. Brownfield is her legitimate child while Star is illicit child. Her infidelity is itself a strong proof that definitely puts her in the group of bad mothers, who interact with negative manifestation of maternal archetype: “anything secret, hidden, dark; the abyss, the world of the dead, anything that devours, seduces, and poisons, that is terrifying and inescapable like fate” [Jung 1967:81].
When her husband abandons her, she poisons herself along with her little son named Star, she kills her son, whatever may be the reasons, it is sufficient to call her a bad mother.

The above discussed crimes committed by Margaret, undoubtedly, put stigma on her as a bad wife and mother. But when one studies the life of Margaret in which circumstances she commits both the crimes, one definitely, realizes that she is equally a good mother and wife as well. The study of African American fiction provides the long list of Black women, who out of mere helplessness commit such crimes repeatedly. In the previous chapter, the researcher has already discussed the mother characters namely Eva of *Sula*; Sethe and Ma’am of *Beloved* who commit the same crimes. In the same context, Robert Staples in his book *The Black Woman in America* (1973) defends the role of prostitute the mothers had to play for the betterment of their children. He writes: “Impoverished women of all races have historically played the role of prostitute” [1973:94] Carolyn Ann Wayne also defends the infanticide of Margaret in the following way:

Neither murder nor suicide is recognized as a positive response to the role of motherhood. Margaret in *The Third Life of Grange Copeland* is guilty of both misdeeds. She decided that life no longer held any value for her after Grange left her. She knew that her baby would not have anyone to take care of it after she committed suicide so she murdered him as an act of mercy. Her role as wife and mother had become more than she could bear

[http://etd.ohiolink.edu/view.cgi/wayne%20carolyn.pdf/osu 1130780485(03.03.2011)]

Trudier Harris also holds the prevalent social forces responsible for Margaret’s infanticide and suicide. He puts: “Margaret’s murder and suicide are not defiance; they are a bow of defeat, a resignation to the
forces outside. She is *destroyed* by forces that have dissolved her family” [1975: 246].

Except these two faults, Margaret throughout her life struggles very hard to make her married life happy and comfortable. In the beginning of the novel, it is reported that Margaret is quite happy with her husband Grange and son Brownfield. Margaret has to do hard work along with her husband in the fields. She is satisfied with Grange’s work of share cropping because she easily gets food and shelter. She tells Brownfield: “We ought to be thankful we got a roof over our heads and three meals a day” [TLGC: 05]. Margaret loves her son Brownfield greatly. It is her helplessness that she cannot take him to the place of work. Therefore, she has to leave him alone at home. The narrator describes the situation:

His mother left him each morning with a hasty hug and a sugartit on which he sucked through wet weather and dry, across the dusty clearing or miry, until she returned… At first she left him home in a basket, with his sugartit pressed against his face. He sucked on it all day until it was nothing but a tasteless rag. Then, when he could walk, she left him on the porch steps. In moments of idle sitting he shared the steps with their lean mangy dog. And as the flies buzzed … No one was there to shoo them away …. [TLGC: 06-07].

When she comes back from the work, she takes him in her arms and washes him thoroughly. The narrator further states:

His mother washed the sores in bluestone water. Suddenly, out of his days of sitting and of picking the scabs from his sores, there evolved a languid slow order of jobs he had to do [TLGC: 07].

Though she is uneducated, yet a number of times, she decides to admit her son in the school. But her dream of Brownfield’s education
gets shattered into pieces when Grange as usual shrugs: “Knowing nothing of schools, but knowing he (Grange) was broke, he had shrugged; the shrug being the end of that particular dream” [TLGC: 16]. Her son Brownfield never gets the answer of the question that how and why his mother is so submissive to her husband. He calls his mother “like their dog in some ways” [TLGC: 05]. And such a stoic, simple and submissive woman turns into a wild woman looking for frivolous things. In fact, it is Margaret, who knows well that her husband has illicit relationship with another woman. But she blames herself for her husband’s infidelity. Vernessa C White observes: “Margaret interprets her husband’s infidelity as rejection and proof of some personal failing on her part which allows in her mind self-contempt to grow” [1983:98]. And it is the same woman who becomes prostitute, finally commits infanticide.

Thus, she is a bad mother for whatever crime she has committed but she is also good and loving mother because she does each and every thing in her life in that particular helpless situation for the betterment of her married life and her children.

4.1.1.2 Mem Copeland

Mem Copeland is the mother of three living and three dead children. She is the daughter of Josie’s sister who dies just after giving birth to Mem. She is the niece of Josie who hates her very much. It is Mem’s good luck that her white father sends money for her education. She becomes a school teacher. But the narrator does not provide any reason behind her marriage with uneducated Brownfield. She is superior to her husband in every sense of the term. But after her marriage with him, she never asserts her superiority. She always tries to make her husband happy and hopeful. Though, her husband later on makes her life
a hell. She then decides to live only for her children. All her attempts to upgrade her family and to provide all the possible facilities to her children by doing extra hard-work, puts her in the group of good mothers, who interact with the positive manifestation of maternal archetype:

Maternal solicitude and sympathy; the magic authority of the female; the wisdom and spiritual exaltation that transcend reason; any helpful instinct or impulse; all that is benign, all that cherishes and sustains, that fosters growth and fertility. The place of magical transformation and rebirth … are presided over by the mother [Jung 1967:82].

The very first requirement for becoming a good mother is to become a devoted wife. Mem definitely possesses this requirement since her marriage to her own death, she proves herself a devoted wife. The first three years of her married life pass very happily. She gives Brownfield plenty of love and receives the same. The narrator says:

He (Brownfield) did not care what anybody thought about it, but she (Mem) was so good to him, so much what he needed, that her body became his shrine and he kissed it endlessly, shamelessly, lovingly and celebrated its magic with flowers and dancing; and, as the babies, knowing their places beside her as well as life, sucked and nursed at her bosom, so did he, and grew big and grew firm with love, and grew strong [TLGC: 66].

Mem is an ideal wife and mother. She knows well how to keep the house clean and decorated. Whatever house he gets to live, she transfers this house into a home. She decorates her house by pasting various pictures on the wall and placing jars of colored leaves on the tables. She tries much to keep the cloth on the table as white as an ivory. She also cuts logs to make steps of the house and plants flower seeds in the garden. Alice Walker has purposefully based Mem on her mother who was a
great grower of flowers. Walker in her book *In Search of Our Mothers’ Gardens* (1983) writes:

Like Mem, a character in *The Third Life Of Grange Copeland*, my mother adorned with flowers whatever shabby house we were forced to live in … Whatever she planted grew as if by magic, and her fame as grower of flowers spread over three counties [1983a:241].

Mem always spends much time in keeping the house clean. In her little house in the city for the whole three years, she gives a pleasant atmosphere to her husband and her children. This act instills the feeling of security and dignity in her children.

Mem quarrels with her husband many times but unlike Mrs. Breedlove in Toni Morrison’s *The Bluest Eye*, she never comes to blows with him. She bears the beatings of her husband mutely because she decides to live only for her children. The narrator remarks: “She slogged along, ploddingly, like a cow herself, for the sake of the children” [TLGC: 78]. But at a certain point of the story, when Mem dreams of having a house in the city for admitting the children in the school, that time her husband unfortunately forces her to move in J.L’s shabby shack. Mem, for the very first time in her married life, rebels against him. She makes a list of assets of the city – house in order to persuade him. She says:

“…. it don’t cost but twenty dollars a month to rent and you can make enough at a factory in town to pay that much: factory work’ll keep you out of rain. A school is close by for the children and the neighbors look like nice people. And on top of that ....” [TLGC: 113].

But Brownfield does not seem to be in position of listening to her. She then puts a shotgun on his head and compels him to follow her with Ten
Commandments to the house in the city. Mem is not cunning. She does not read the strategy of her husband. She very plainly continues to offer herself to her husband. She loses all her physical strength due to the back to back pregnancies. She reaches the death bed. Due to the non-payment of all utility bills and rent, they again have to go back to J.L’S shabby shack. When her husband himself confesses about his plot of making her pregnant every year, Mem on the death-bed determines to get recovered as early as possible for the children. This again shows her positive attitude to motherhood. Having determined, she gets well and gets a job of maid in the town. But her husband finally stops her and murders her.

4.1.1.3 Mrs. Mamis Lou Banks

Mrs. Mamis Lou Banks is the mother of eight sons, by different husbands. Her last husband has recently been killed by his white master for stealing chitlins out of a hog. Her five children have already gone to North, remaining are also expected to go to North. Mrs Banks does not want to let her children stay in the racist South. She is the representative of all black common women. She always shows her readiness for helping the people, who have rebelled against inhuman racist social system. Instead of abject poverty in the house, she wholeheartedly gives meals to the people on run-way. She invites Brownfield to meals. She says: “Aw, don’t mention it. ’N if you gets hongry runnin’ back the other way drop in again” [TLGC: 37]. She is firm in her view that north is better than south. “But I declare it so out of fashion round here you’d think most any other place would be better” [TLGC: 36]. Though, she has children from different men but to her, they seem to be the same. She tells: “But they is so much alike, just to look at; they git along right well together” [TLGC: 37]. Though, she herself persuades her children to go to north, yet she is very much concerned about her children’s meals in the north. She says:
“For all I know somebody just might be feeding my old hongry Younguns up there in Chicago. I swear, they could eat up yere ’bout a whole hog at one dinner” [TLGC: 35-36].

4.1.1.4 Sister Madelaine

Sister Madelaine is mother of a son. She is the sister of Josie and aunt of Mem. She is a fortuneteller by profession. The narrator does not provide much information about her.

Being a fortuneteller, she has to believe in witches, couches and all related mystic things. But her only son is a student of science and he does not believe in such mystic things. Sister Madelaine is really a good mother, she accepts mutely and happily the views of her son against fortunetelling, and seeks advice from Josie for changing her profession. She says:

“That theory about witch-riding belongs wholly to my educated child. I don’t argue with him to keep peace in the family. But I ask you (Josie), what kind of business could I have built up if I didn’t believe in witches? ...My son has learned they are not real in college....”[TLGC: 48]

Sister Madelaine is a good mother. She is ready to stop her business of fortunetelling in order to make her son happy. Thus, she definitely interacts with the positive manifestation of maternal archetype as explained by Jung.

4.1.2 Josie and Others: Bad Mothers

Josie and Lorene are two mother-characters who are whores by profession. They are both highly selfish and self centered. Though, they are both mothers and daughters, but they always fail on every front of their lives.
4.1.2.1 Josie

Josie is the mother of Lorene and aunt of Mem. At the very young age of sixteen she gets raped and is made a mother. She also gets thrown out of the house for bringing shame to her parents. She, then, becomes a prostitute. It can be argued and defended that for the future and welfare of Lorene, she chooses to be a whore. But the daughter Lorene for whom she sacrifices who becomes a whore. So Josie fails to realize the importance of her sacrifice. On the contrary, it is her negative influence on Lorene that spoils the child. Therefore, Josie serves as an apt introduction to the negative manifestation of the maternal archetype.

There are many other characters like Josie portrayed in Walker’s short-stories and novels who become mothers before marriage. Alice Walker has purposefully portrayed such maiden-mothers to bring out her own life experiences. When she was on tour to Africa before marriage, she suddenly realized that she was pregnant. She was tense for three whole days. After getting released from this tension, she started writing poems which were published in her Once: Poems. In this context, she confessed that woman was always lonely because of her body. She admitted: “Then I wrote the suicide the poems, because I felt I understood the part played in suicide by circumstances and fatigue. I also began to understand how alone woman is, because of her body” [Walker 1983a:248]. While presenting the character of Josie, the writer wants to add one more thing that the price is to be paid by woman alone. But Josie becomes wild and terrible. Gloria Wade-Gayles observes: “Like a phoenix who rises from the ashes with unfurled wings, she soars above male control to become the richest and most powerful black person, male or female, in the community” [1984:130].
There is not a single scene or incident in which Josie is shown nurturing and loving her daughter. On the contrary, her account of Lorene is very shocking:

According to Josie, the only reason Lorene didn’t go to school (‘of course, I were anxious and well off enough to send her’) was because she was too stubborn to go. However, by the time she was fifteen Lorene was the mother of two baby boys. Living in the lounge with her mother’s boy friends always after her, she was tripped up from the start by the men underfoot, and was the fastest thing going, next to her mother, in town [TLGC: 57].

When Josie introduces Lorene to Brownfield her style of introduction is not definitely maternal or emotional. The narrator describes:

“This here’s my daughter, Lorene.” Josie reached out abruptly, arrested the woman (Lorene), and pulled her unwilling and muscled arm close beside her, holding it in a pinch. The woman, darting her eyes at Brownfield, snatched her arm from her mother’s grip, then looked from one to the other of them with baleful scorn [TLGC: 43-44]

The above passage makes it clear that there exists no relationship between them as mother and daughter. Though, mother uses the words like: “that’s the pride of her mama’s heart” [TLGC: 44] are ironical and teasing. The readers also witness the professional rivalry between the mother and the daughter. They always fight for each other’s men. The narrator comments:

They (Josie and Lorene) existed for the simple pleasure of flirting with each other’s men, and then of fighting it out in the street in front of the lounge, where every man in the district soon learned that if you wanted a piece of pussy you had only to make up to one of them to have the other one fall in your lap [TLGC: 62].
Thus, it is proved that Josie is not a good mother. She definitely interacts with the negative manifestation of the maternal archetype.

She is not only a bad mother, but is also a bad mistress, who sleeps with her servant named Brownfield; a bad beloved, who betrays Grange Copeland; a bad daughter, who brings shame to the parents by becoming a maiden-mother; a bad wife, who for getting her husband’s love is ready to do and undo anything; a bad step-grand-mother, who always holds responsible her grand-daughter for stealing her husband; and also a bad aunt, who curses her unreasonably for getting Brownfield.

4.1.2.2 Lorene

Lorene is the mother of two sons. She is the daughter of Josie. She is the cousin of Mem, but there is no similarity between the cousins. On the contrary, she is the carbon copy of her mother. Whatever mistakes or blunders have been committed by her mother, instead of taking lessons from them, she unblushingly commits the same mistakes. One is reminded of the relationship between Eva and Hannah in Toni Morrison’s *Sula*. Lorene at a very tender age of fifteen becomes a maiden-mother and happily becomes the whore. Her maleness, her rivalry with her mother, her lack of maternal heart, put her in the group of mothers, who interact with the negative manifestation of the maternal archetype.

She is a minor character. The narrator does not provide sufficient information about her. Like her mother, she is not shown caring and nurturing her children. The narrator informs:

…. (Lorene) had a reputation for toughness that earned her an abundance of respect from youngsters who hoped to grow up to be like her. She was noted for her expert use of the razor, and it was said that she had once cut up a customer’s
wife and then run the customer out of the room while his wife almost bled to death [TLGC: 57].

The description about her maleness is also a proof enough to call her a woman without maternal heart and instinct. The narrator paints her maleness thus:

She was cursed with the beginnings of a thick mustache and beard. Her hard, malevolent eyes were a yellowish flash in her dark hairy face. She was sinewy as a man. Only her odor and breasts were female. She reeked of a fishy, oniony smell [TLGC: 44].

In short, Lorene is a modern version of her mother, who also fails on all her fronts as a daughter and mother as well.

4.1.3 Maternal Figures and Relations

The title _The Third Life of Grange Copeland_ indicates that the novel mainly deals with the third life of Grange Copeland. Grange really wants to repent for all his brutality and cruelty of his earlier two lives, especially inflicted on his family. For the purpose, he adopts the motherless Ruth, who is his grand-daughter too. He, thus, showers all his maternal (paternal) love on her. He does not only nurture and care for her, but also secures her life by murdering his own son Brownfield. The study further attempts to analyze the mother-daughter relationship between Mem and her daughters.

4.1.3.1 Grange and Ruth

Grange Copeland is the grand-father of Ruth. He cares and nurtures this motherless Ruth to a great extent. Ruth, on the other hand, needs a mother rather than a grandfather. The black children do not consider grandfather as a loving or maternal company. The narrator comments on the condition of Ruth:
Mothers, she (Ruth) learned very soon, were a premium commodity among her classmates, many of whom had never known a father and if they had could no longer even remember him. She got no consideration either for living with her grandfather, who was believed to be strange, “funny” old man [TLGC: 241-242].

On the other hand, Grange Copeland also realizes that he has got a reason in the form of Ruth to hold on himself. He himself confesses to Ruth:

But then I (Grange) came back here, sick of feeling that way and seeing all the rest of our folks standing around praying. And the Lord or something dropped you (Ruth) in my lap. A voice said to me you stop that cuttin’ up, Nig, here is a reason to get yourself together and hold on [TLGC: 251].

Grange then becomes so sensitive about Ruth that he does not allow anybody, even his second wife Josie, to harm her in any way. He himself gives her bath, makes plaiting of her hair and he does everything for her. At one point of the story, he scolds Josie for not neatly plaiting her hair:

“You (Josie) don’t know nothing about raising no child”, Grange said when Josie tried to make her do anything. “Look what a mess you did on your own young ’un!” Josie would sulk, but Grange’s was the final word [TLGC: 164].

Like a real mother, Grange starts to take care of her. He fulfills almost all her wishes or demands. He buys for her different books and toys. He does not allow her to work in the field. He admits her in the school. He personally goes with her school and brings her back. He also tells her various stories dealing with his earlier two lives. He always tries to keep her close to him and vice versa. He informs her about the neighboring cities and countries. He also drinks and dances with her. But in the process of showering maternal love on her, he forgets Josie. In fact, he
does not love Josie and it was his compromise to marry with her to buy the farm.

Ruth also becomes very fond of him. But she never understands the hatred in the heart of Grange for white people. The narrator states Ruth’s dilemma in the context:

Ruth could not understand Grange’s aversion to white people. Mem (Ruth’s mother) had let her play with white children, and now, at her grandfather’s, there were wonderful ones, she thought, down the road. Playing with them, however, was strictly forbidden [TLGC: 183].

Ruth and Grange lead a happy life in each other’s company. But Josie, who considers Ruth as an obstacle in her married life, accuses her of stealing Grange from her. She has already made a contact with Brownfield, a jailbird. They have sorted out a plan to separate Ruth from Grange. But Josie is also confident that her husband will not live without Ruth. She tells Brownfield: “If you (Brownfield) took that gal (Ruth) away from him (Grange) it’d be the same as if you took the air. He wouldn’t live out the week! I tell you he love her!” [TLGC: 219]. Josie further makes aware Brownfield that Grange will “shoot to kill if you laid a hand on Ruth” [TLGC: 220]. This shows the intense love of Grange for Ruth. Brownfield, after his release from the jail, goes to the court for the custody of Ruth. Unfortunately, the court grants custody of Ruth to Brownfield. Grange smells the danger and in order to secure her future, he murders his son. He thus clears the way for Ruth as he has dreamt for her:

Her future must be the day she lived in. These were the thoughts he thought, sitting before the fire, pulling on his pipe, or hunched up on his bed clipping his toenails. Survival was not everything.
He had survived. But to survive whole was what he wanted for Ruth [TLGC: 272].

Ruth is really luckier than her two elder sisters. She gets maternal love, gets a mother in the form of Grange Copeland and leads a happy and comfortable life.

4.1.3.2 Mem and Her Daughters

E Franklin Frazier in his book *The Negro Family in the United States* (1939) writes about essentiality of the relationship between mother and the child. He opines that this relationship is “the primary and essential social bond around which the family develops” [1939: xii]. The relationship between Mem and her daughters namely Daphne, Ornettee and Ruth is also so solid and essential that Brownfield feels jealous of it. He accuses her of trying to turn them against him. In fact, it is he, who himself turns his daughters against him. The common essential bond between their relationships is to leave Brownfield or wish his death. They are wholly tired of his brutality. This hatred against Brownfield is not only the thread of this relationship but Mem’s concern for her daughters’ welfare.

Mem, being an ideal and devoted mother, bears all the cruelty of Brownfield. She never gets intimidated by his accusations. She is always ready to work hard for her daughters. She is more concerned about their education. She knows well that without going to the city, her children’s education will not be possible. She, finally, decides to move the family into town. In spite of her husband’s opposition, she manages to shift in the city. Trudier Harris, in this context writes: “Mem fights for her children in the matter of the house and exacts submission from Brownfield at gunpoint” [1975:242].
But this city life proves to be short-lived. She, due to the back to back pregnancies, reaches death bed. However she recovers with firm determination and finds out a job. In spite of her husband’s conspiracy, she does not get defeated. He realizes the survival of Mem and at the end of the story shoots her with his shotgun. The heart rending cries of the daughters on the death of their mother show how concrete the bond is between the mother and her daughters.

4.2 Meridian: Story of Movement

Meridian (1976), Alice Walker’s second novel, but it is serially her sixth book. It mainly deals with Civil Rights Movement. It also deals with the loneliness of black woman because of her body. Walker herself confesses in her essay “From an Interview” written in 1973, later published in her most influential book In Search of Our Mothers’ Gardens (1983) that how she suddenly realizes her pregnancy while on her tour to Africa. She further writes that for the whole three days, she did not eat nor sleep well, until the problem was solved. “I (Walker) also began to understand how alone woman is, because of her body” [Walker 1983a:248]. In the same autobiographical essay, she announces that her forth coming novel will deal with the movement in the South. She writes:

My new novel (Meridian) will be about several women who came of age during the sixties and were active (or not active) in the Movement in the South. I am exploring their backgrounds, familial and sibling connections, their marriages, affairs, and political persuasions, as they grow toward a fuller realization (and recognition) of themselves [Ibid: 256].

Alice Walker herself is an activist. Whatever ideas and views about Movement have been elaborately stated in her essay entitled “The Civil Rights Movement: What Good Was It” written in 1967. She puts it:
Because of the Movement, because of an awakened faith in the newness and imagination of the human spirit... because of the beatings, the arrests, the hell of battle during the past years, I have fought harder for my life and for a chance to be myself, to be something more than a shadow or a number, than I had ever done before in my life [1983a: 125].

The Movement has given her a “reason” for living: “It has been like being born again, literally” [Ibid]. She further writes that the Movement might be “dead” for the white people, but it is life for her and her people. She says:

> It gave us history and men for greater than Presidents. It gave us heroes, selfless men of courage and strength, for our little boys and girls to follow. It gave us hope for tomorrow. It called us to life. Because we live, it can never die [Ibid: 129].

The novel tells the story of Meridian Hill, who grows up in a small southern town. In childhood, she, like a pure and innocent girl, has no knowledge about sex and its consequences on woman’s body. Nobody including her own mother Mrs Hill has warned her about sex. On the contrary, her mother’s caution puts her in a dilemma. The narrator says: “--- her mother only cautioned her to “be sweet”. She did not realize this was a euphemism for “Keep your panties up and your dress down”, an expression she had heard and been puzzled by” [M: 55]. As a result, at the very age of fourteen, she becomes pregnant. Even before that she has been seduced by a mulatto named Daxter. Due to the pregnancy, she has to leave school. After delivering the baby boy, she thoroughly realizes, as Walker realized that how woman is lonely because of her body. This sudden and unexpected motherhood becomes a burden for her. Though, she cares and nurtures the baby, but a number of times decides either to kill the baby or to commit suicide. She is so entrapped in this
motherhood that she cannot think properly. She is completely frustrated and disappointed. She finds no way of coming out of this situation. But on a certain afternoon, she watches the news of bombing on voter registration office.

She, then, takes rebellious decision of leaving her boy Eddie Jr. and joins the movement. All oppose her including her mother. She finally joins the Movement. While working as a volunteer, two great things take place in her life. She falls in love with Truman Held, a Black activist from North and a scholarship is offered to her by a generous and wealthy white family from Connecticut. She, with the help of scholarship, joins the Saxon College and dreams of marrying Truman. But even after joining the college, she continues to participate in the Movement. Along with Truman, she gets a number of times, arrested, flogged and beaten by the police. She, for the second time in her life, becomes pregnant. She, on the other hand, sees Truman’s involvement with Lynne Robinwitz, a Jewish Civil Rights volunteer. She, then, aborts her baby and gets her tubes tied.

Meridian, after the failure in love, does not look back and continues her struggle for the freedom of her people. She scarifies all her joys and pleasures for the cause; she even does not care about her own health. Besides her story, there are different stories of Mrs. Hill, Wild Child, Fast Mary, Lynne Robinwitz and others which are finely interwoven. These women or incidents signify the life of Meridian as a woman, who, though fails as a personal mother of Eddie Jr., but becomes the mother of the whole black community.

4.2.1 Meridian and Others: Good Mothers

Except Mrs Hill, all the mothers painted in the novel are good mothers. Meridian and Lynee Robinwitz are community mothers. The
foremothers of Mrs Hill are the best examples of devoted biological mothers.

4.2.1.1  **Meridian: Mother of Black Community**

Meridian is the daughter of Mrs. Hill. She is an activist of Civil Rights Movement. She is also the mother of Eddie Jr. At the very early age of fourteen, she becomes the mother of a boy, out of sheer ignorance about sex. Her leaving of three years old boy for the cause of Movement and education, itself makes clear that she fails as a personal mother. Her constant thoughts of killing the child, “Rebelling, she began to dream each night, just before her baby sent out his cries, of ways to murder him” [M: 65]. Because motherhood becomes a burden for her, she considers it as slavery: “So this, she mumbled, lurching toward his crib in the middle of night, is what slavery is like” [M: 65]  This constant thinking of murdering her own child sometimes frightens her and that gives birth to the idea of suicide. She then sorts out different methods of killing herself. “It seemed to her that the peace of the dead was truly blessed, and each day she planned a new way of approaching it. Because of her growing reliance on suicide, the thought of it, she was able to function very well” [M: 66]. Luckily for the boy, Meridian does not dare to kill him but abandons him at his infantile age. All this clearly shows that Meridian definitely fails as a personal mother, and that she communicates negative manifestations of maternal archetype as enunciated by Jung.

Meridian, when gives birth to Eddie, Jr., is so confused with her life, that she is unable to make a right decision. Her immaturity cannot bear the burden of unexpected motherhood. The cold and loveless relationship between Meridian and her mother is thoroughly responsible for Meridian’s tragedy. Her mother Mrs. Hill, in spite of having full
knowledge about sex and its dire consequences for woman, purposefully avoids informing her. Whatever expression or caution Mrs Hill gives to Meridian, the daughter contrary gets more puzzled. After becoming mother, Meridian loses control over the brain. Gloria Wade-Gayles considers the condition of Meridian as “the true condition of womanhood trapped in the institution of motherhood” [1984: 202-203].

Meridian, at the age of seventeen, decides firmly to join the Movement. The firebombing by white racist on the voter registration office inspires her to devote her life for the civil rights of her people. Her decision of joining the movement is greatly opposed by all including her parents. But she has already decided not only to become the mother of Eddie Jr., but also of whole Black community. While in college, she continues her participation in the activities of the Movement. She gets jailed and beaten for the cause. At the same time, she starts taking interest in life by falling in love with Truman Held. She becomes pregnant, but she aborts her child and gets her tubes tied. She does so because her lover is already interested in Lynne Robinwitz, a Jewish Civil Rights volunteer. After her failure in love with Truman, she does not look back at her past life and Truman. She continues her fight against the segregation policy of white Americans. But the narrator does not forget to describe her nightmares of the child:

When she gave him away she did so with a light heart. She did not look back, believing she had saved a small person’s life. But she had not anticipated the nightmares that began to trouble her sleep. Nightmares of the child, Rundi, calling to her, crying, suffering unbearable deprivations because she was not there … She felt deeply that what she’d done was the only thing, and was right, but that did not seem to matter. On some deeper level than she had anticipated or had even been
aware of, she felt condemned, consigned to penitence, for life [M: 89-90].

The narrator further describes Meridian’s conflict regarding her loosing of a chance of becoming a respected Black mother. The conflict is telling and exposes her wounded psyche:

Meridian knew that enslaved women had been made miserable by the sale of their children, that they laid down their lives, gladly, for their children, that the daughters of these enslaved women had thought their great blessing from “Freedom” was that it meant they could keep their own children. And what had Meridian Hill done with her precious child? She had given him away. She thought of her mother as being worthy of this maternal history, and of herself as belonging to an unworthy minority, for which there was no precedent and of which she was, as far as she knew, the only member [M: 90].

The above passage makes it clear that Meridian completely fails in becoming the personal mother of her child. At the same time, she decides to devote her whole life for all Black children. Throughout her life, she fights for the civil rights of Black people, particularly for the safety of Black children. In the beginning of the novel, one sees how Meridian arranges a march of the Black children on Chicokema to show them Marline O’Shay exhibition on a day reserved for white children. In fact, the white soldiers are ready to kill her. She dares to climb up on the tank. Through her adventure, she gives a message to the boys that they are not inferior to whites. She also bravely exposes the billing attached to woman “One of the Twelve Human Wonders of the World…” [M: 04] as fake and bogus.

While in Saxon College, she gets information about Wild Child. She locks herself in a hostel room for a day. She is so shocked that she thinks about Wild Child very deeply and the very next day captures her.
“Wile Chile shouted words that were never uttered in the honors house. Meridian, splattered with soap and mud, broke down and laughed” [M: 25]. Meridian gives her good bath and food. But it is very unfortunate that before making any arrangement for Wild Child, Meridian gets killed:

The next morning, while Meridian phoned schools for special children and then homes for unwed mothers – only to find there were none that would accept Wile Chile – The Wild Child escaped. Running heavily across a street, her stomach the largest part of her, she was hit by a speeder and killed [M: 25].

C.V.Venkatasubramanian in his doctoral thesis entitled “Journey towards Wholeness: Women in Alice Walker’s Fiction” rightly points out how Meridian realizes the so-called superficial white culture. He writes:

The death of Wild Child is an eye opener for Meridian to understand about the so-called superficial white culture and also the impact of racism and sexism on the lives of black people. The gory tale of Fast Mary leaves Meridian with a question: “Is there a “community of support””? These images of women provide Meridian significant strategies for creative living. Therefore, she intensifies her search for an opposing set of values which will provide relief from the strictures of the Anglo-Saxon value system [http://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in / handle / 10603/ 785 (12.08.2011)].

In the same context, Susan Willis writes that how Meridian and Wild Child, though social-antithesis to each-other, became the victims of oppression. She puts: “Meridian and the Wild Child do not share a common social ground, they come together on one point, and that is the possibility of being made pregnant. For both of them conception stands for oppression” [1987:111-112].
Meridian’s love for children as their mother is again seen in her act, when she carries the dead and decomposed body of a black boy to the mayor’s office for asking him to stop playing with the lives of black children. In Alabama town, the black people lived in an area called ‘the pool’. In the seasons of fall and spring, due to heavy rains, the pool gets flooded. In addition, the city officials have already closed the public swimming pools. The naughty black children always swim in the pool and get drowned. Meridian carries one such victim to the mayor’s office and protests against them. The narrator describes the bravery of Meridian, but at the same time, points out the greatness of her carrying the dead-decamped child, whom his own mother avoids to behold:

It was Meridian who had led them to the mayor’s office, bearing in her arms the bloated figure of a five-year-old boy who had been stuck in the sewer for two days before he was raked out with a grappling hook. The child’s body was so ravaged, so grotesque, so disgusting to behold, his own mother had taken one look and refused to touch him. To the people who followed Meridian it was as if she carried a large bouquet of long-stemmed roses [M: 209].

It again shows her love for children. She leaves her own child for selfish cause but adopts all the Black children of her community in return, and becomes their other-mother.

Meridian’s decision of practicing non-violent resistance is also highly maternal. She spends a decade in finding the answer to the killing of the people for revolution. Her answer remains negative and remains non-violent till the end of activist life. The narrator points out how Meridian is different and distinct from all revolutionaries:

She could not help struggling with these questions. Just as Truman could not help thinking such struggle useless. In the end people did what they
had to do to survive. They acquiesced, they rebelled, they sold out, they shot it out, or they simply drifted with the current of the time, whatever it was. And they didn’t endanger life and limb agonizing over what they would lose, which was what separated them from Meridian [M: 207].

4.2.1.2 Mrs Hill’s Foremothers

The maternal history of Mrs Hill is very briefly narrated in the novel. The narrator purposefully introduces the maternal legacy of Meridian to make a contrast between enslaved black women and their “free” daughters. Meridian has already confessed that she is not a match to them. She further makes it clear that her foremothers had not lived in an age of choice. Mrs Hill’s great-great-grandmother, great-grandmother, grandmother and mother had sacrificed their personal freedom and lives for their children. Their sacrifice for the welfare of the children put them in the group of good mothers, who positively interact with the maternal archetype as enunciated by Jung.

Mrs Hill’s nameless great-great-grandmother’s story is very heart-rending and touching. She struggles throughout her life to get back her sold children. From the third owner, she somehow gets them back on the grave condition that her children “would eat no food she did not provide herself” [M: 128]. She after much labor teaches them how to get food from the jungle. Finally, she dies and her children are again sold. The narrator informs:

They (her children) smoked fish they caught in streams and the wild game she learned to trap. They were able to exist this way until the children were in their teens. Then their mother died, the result of years of slow starvation. The children were sold the day of their mother’s burial [M: 128].
Mrs Hill’s great-grandmother is luckier than her mother. With her painting skill, she buys the freedom of all family members including her husband. For this, she has to incessant work, without thinking of her personal freedom and rest.

Mrs Hill’s mother also pays much price for bringing up her children. Her husband reminds the readers of the husband of Eva of Toni Morrison’s Sula. The narrator describes him thus: “He was a person who kept his word ... had no desire to raise children—though he enjoyed sex with any willing, good-looking woman who came his way—and he beat his wife and children with more pleasure than he beat his mules” [M: 129]. It has been pointed out earlier that Mrs Hill’s mother had to make an agreement for the education of Mrs Hill, when her mother was pregnant with her twelfth child. Thus, the foremothers of Mrs Hill are really great mothers.

4.2.1.3 Eddie’s Mother

Eddie’s Mother is a minor character. She is forty-nine, but has a late-baby of three years old. She is a very loving mother. She definitely interacts with the positive manifestations of maternal archetype.

She does not hate Meridian for her becoming mother before marriage. When Meridian starts living with Eddie, Eddie’s mother offers all possible help to the couple. It is Eddie’s mother, who supports Meridian and tells her about the mysteries of life. She teaches and helps Meridian:

Astonishing her with such facts as: It is not possible to become pregnant if love is made standing up. Together they (Eddie’s mother and Meridian) bought cloth to make the baby’s clothes. Shopped for secondhand furniture, bought quantities of seasonal foods the two households could share [M: 59].
She visits Eddie regularly and solves the problems in a possible manner. But after Meridian’s delivery, she stops taking her son’s clothes for washing, starching and ironing. Finally, Eddie’s mother becomes the other-mother of Randy or Eddie, Jr. She is very amiable, loving and pleasant.

4.2.1.4 Lynee Robinwitz

Lynee Robinwitz is the mother of Camara. She is a Jewish Civil Rights volunteer and wife of Truman Held. Her love for her child and her mourning on the death of her daughter puts her in the group of mothers who positively interact with the maternal archetype.

In spite of being white, she becomes an activist and fights for the civil rights of Blacks. She does not like white racism, capitalism and sexism. She falls in love with Truman Held and marries him. She wants to show that racism is inhuman and beastly. But she gets wildly punished by Blacks including her husband. Not only that, her little daughter also gets attacked and killed by Black racism. Lynee’s crying for Camara is very touching and heart-rending.

Lynee has great love for Blacks and Truman Held. She has her own views about Blacks. The narrator puts: “It was clear also in her (Lynee’s) poetry and in the things she said that to her black people had a unique beauty, a kind of last-gasp loveliness, which, in other races, had already become extinct” [M: 169]. She is a very honest worker. While living among them, she feels guilty that her people are responsible for the worst condition of Blacks. Even when Tom Odds rapes her, she does not scream or file a complaint against him. The narrator records her thoughts:

She lay instead thinking of his (Tom’s) feelings, his hardships, of the way he was black and
belonged to people who lived without hope; she thought about the loss of his arm. She felt her own guilt … and before he left she told him she forgave him and she kissed his slick rounded stump…. [M: 172-173].

After her rape, Truman goes away from her. Her daughter Camara remains the only link to reconnect them. But she also gets attacked and killed.

Lynee finds the shelter in the form of Meridian. In fact, she is jealous of Meridian and is confident that there is an immoral relationship between her husband and Meridian. But when her own parents refuse her, she recognizes the real value of Meridian. She tells Meridian that her father is originally good man: “He (her father) never spoke more than a dozen words to me in anger, all the time I was growing up” [M: 163-164]. But she says that her mother is a beast and always talks about herself. Lynee is shocked when her own father refuses her. After the death of Camara, Lynee phones him to tell him the bad news. She further tells Meridian that her “father took the phone and asked me to repeat. I told him my daughter was dead and he said. ‘So’s our daughter,’ meaning me! [M: 164]

Lynee loses everything, her parents, her husband, her beloved daughter and even the love of Black people; but she does not lose her sympathy for Blacks. Thus, like Meridian, Lynee also becomes the mother of whole black community and a successful personal mother of Camara.

4.2.2 Mrs Hill: A Bad Mother

Mrs Hill is the mother of six children including Meridian. Despite her good knowledge and experience about marriage, motherhood and sex, she fails in saving her daughter Meridian from the early motherhood
and subsequent tragedy. Thus, she is the mother who interacts with negative manifestations of maternal archetype.

Though, Mrs Hill acquires education and becomes a school-teacher, she has already forgotten the price her mother paid for her education. Her mother makes an agreement with her husband as follows:

The agreement was wretched: School would cost twelve dollars a year, and her (Mrs. Hill’s) mother would have to earn every cent of it. Refusing to complain and, indeed, refusing even to discuss the hardship it would cause, her mother had gone out to do other people’s laundry, and Meridian’s mother remembered her trudging off—after doing her own washing and work in the fields—with her rub board under her arm [M: 129].

Mrs. Hill completely fails as a good mother. She deliberately forgets the troubles taken by her mother for her. When Mrs. Hill delivers Meridian, she cries loudly and declares: “She could never forgive her community, her family, his family, the whole world, for not warning her against children” [M: 41]. It is again surprising that she expects that somebody should have warned her against children. On the contrary, Mrs. Hill herself forgets to warn her daughter Meridian about the dire consequences of sex. Whatever caution she gives Meridian, she gets puzzled by it. It means that Mrs Hill wants to trap Meridian in the same trap in which she is already trapped. Alexis Durell Powe in her thesis entitled “Black Women Writing Black Mother Figures: Reading Black Motherhood in Their Eyes were Watching God and Meridian” puts it: “Mrs Hill sets a deliberate trap for her daughter when she does not tell Meridian about such opportunities or warn her against promiscuous sex, thereby dooming Meridian to an unwanted pregnancy and subsequent loveless marriage” [http://etd.isu/ docs/ available/ etd-04062004-184200/ unrestricted/ powe-thesis.pdf (02.03.2011)]. In the same context, the
narrator too comments: “With her own daughter she (Mrs Hill) certainly said things she herself did not believe. She refused help and seemed, to Meridian, never to understand. But all along she understood perfectly” [M: 43].

When Meridian decides to leave her husband and her son, Mrs Hill tries to persuade her. She also tells her that she is wasting her life for the Movement. She says:

“….you’ve wasted a year of your life, fooling around with those people. The papers say they’re crazy. God separated the sheeps from the goats and the black folks from the white... It never bothered me to sit in the back of the bus, you get just as good a view and you don’t have all those nasty white asses passing you” [M: 83].

As a young teacher, Mrs Hill does not want to marry and get settled in life. But due to pressures of the community and family, she has to marry one of her fellow teachers. In fact, she was also completely ignorant about the consequences of sex and marriage. And when she becomes the mother of Meridian, she considers motherhood as a burden on her life. “That her personal life was over … is being buried alive, walled away from her own life, brick by brick” [M: 42]. She also fails as a wife, because she already has no interest in love and sex. She never tries to cook well and to braid hair prettily or to be in any other way creative in her home. The narrator says she can do if she decides to do so, but she wages a war against everybody including her own children. The narrator further tells: “Creativity was in her, but it was refused expression. It was all deliberate. A war against those to whom she could not express her anger or shout, “It’s not fair!” [M: 42]. Alexis Powe, while comparing Nanny of Hurston’s Their Eyes Were Watching God (1937) and Mrs. Hill of the present novel, finds Mrs Hill a bad mother. She remarks:
Mrs. Hill mirrors Nanny in her behavior toward her daughter— withholding sexual information, misleading Meridian about marriage and motherhood, taking out her resentments about her life upon Meridian, and finally using guilt in an attempt to confine her own daughter to an equally dreary existence. Yet Mrs. Hill’s motivations do distinguish her from Nanny, whose “bad” mothering seemingly derives from love … Mrs. Hill, on the other hand, chooses to be a bad mother because she despises the confines of domesticity [http://etd.isu.edu/docs/available/etd-04062004-184200/unrestricted/powe-thesis.pdf(02.03.2011)].

4.2.3 The Unwed Mothers

There are some unwed mother-characters briefly portrayed in the novel. These mothers, directly or indirectly, stand for Meridian’s life, who “volunteers to suffer” [M: 11]. Susan Willis in her essay “Alice Walker’s Women” studies in detail the social conditions of that time and provides reasons that childbearing is consistently linked to images of murder and suicide. She also talks about the problems of individual’s relationship with the society. Willis further writes:

In posing the contradictory social constraints that demand simultaneously that a woman be both a virgin and sexually active, the parable of Fast Mary prefigures the emotional tension Meridian herself will experience as a mother, expressing it in fantasies of murder and suicide [1987:112-113].

Fast Mary of the Tower is a college girl. Due to her illicit sex with somebody, she becomes pregnant. Fast Mary as usual conceals her pregnancy and delivers the baby. After her delivery, she very carefully makes the pieces of the infant but she gets caught. The narrator does not give details about her, but describes the punishment given to her: “Caught, she was flogged before her instructors and her parents. At
home she was locked in her room and denied the presence of a window. She hanged herself after three months” [M: 35].

The Wild Child is another maiden mother. Her story is equally tragic and touching. It also reminds the readers of the stories of both – Walker and Meridian. The Wild Child is a nameless and homeless orphan. She has lived off garbage for several years. Her pregnancy becomes the topic of gossip for people. It also makes clear that she is raped; somebody has taken undue advantage of her poor situation. Meridian decides to help her. She wants to become her mother. She somehow catches her but unluckily the Wild Child gets killed. The narrator describes her end thus:

The next morning, while Meridian phoned schools for special children and then homes for unwed mothers – only to find there were none that would accept Wile Chile – The Wild Child escaped. Running heavily across a street, her stomach the largest part of her, she was hit by a speeder and killed [M: 25].

Marilene O’Shay is a purely legendary mother. Her story is told by her husband. He murders her, “Cause this bitch was doing him wrong, and that ain’t right!” [M: 07]. The four captions: ‘Obedient Daughter’, ‘Devoted Wife’, ‘Adoring Mother’ and ‘Gone Wrong’ painted on the wagon; ironically tell the story of Meridian. After the murder, he throws her dead-body in the sea. But after some years, he finds out her dead-body. He then makes a circus and earns money by showing her preserved dead-body to children. Her story again tells the story of patriarchal society, which treats woman as second sex.

Louvinie is another legendary mother. She is an expert in two things; herbal power and story-telling. She accidently murders a white boy whom she tends by telling him a story so horrible that it stops his
weak heart. The white master punishes her by cutting her tongue. Louvinie then buries her tongue under the heel of Master Saxon. The tree, later on, is named the Sojourner; it grows to enormous proportions and acquires numerous legends. Though, she is not a biological mother of any child, but her love for children and her herbal treatment on the patients makes her a maternal figure. No doubt, she seems to be a monster type, but her heart is purely maternal and showeres much love on children.

Mother of Daxter is a white woman. Her story is also very tragic and pathetic, and it also describes how the white Americans were racist and cruel. The narrator tells the story:

His (Daxter’s) mother, so the story went, was white. When her parents found she was pregnant by the black man who worked for them, they shut her up in the cellar and threw away the key. They fed her pig bran and a little watery milk. When Daxter was born he was thrown out into the street with the rest of the trash [M: 62].

Nelda, like Meridian and others, also becomes the unwed mother. She is an intimate friend of Meridian. She is the daughter of a woman, who “had lost her hair, bit by bit, during each pregnancy” [M: 87]. Like Mrs Pauline Breedlove of Morrison’s The Bluest Eye, she is compelled to do all housework because her mother is a working woman. The narrator describes her duties:

She (Nelda) had been left in charge of her five younger brothers and sisters every day while her mother worked. On Saturdays she struggled to town to do the shopping, the twins racing ahead of her down the street, the two toddlers holding to her arms and the baby strapped to her back [M: 86-87].
Like Pauline, she also falls in love with a boy, who “often came by to cut their grass and stayed to help Nelda give the children supper, baths and put them to bed” [M: 87]. As a friend of Nelda, Meridian knows well the condition of Nelda and her lover. Nelda also wants to join the college, but she cannot. The narrator does not tell much about her pregnancies and marriage. But one thing seems to be clear that the childbearing poses a great problem in the lives of modern free women.

4.3 The Color Purple: Story of Racism and Sexism

Alice Walker’s *The Color Purple* is Pulitzer Prize winning novel. It has been widely read and translated into many languages. It is a ‘womanist’ book. Technically it is an epistolary and bildungsroman. It mainly deals with the white racism and black sexism. It also deals with the sisterhood, which is itself an important feature of black womanhood. It is a heart-breaking story of ill-fated black girl named Celie. The similar tragic stories of other black girls like Nettie, Sophia are cleverly interwoven with the story of the protagonist.

It has been pointed out in the earlier chapters, the life of a Black enslaved woman, has been dominated, exploited, humiliated and fully controlled over by the white racism and black sexism. Centuries of enslavement make the black people negatively socialized. The black woman rather than the black man has been greatly socialized. Consequently, she has lost her native identity and started to look at herself through the eyes of others. Pecola and Pauline of Toni Morrison’s *The Bluest Eye* are good examples. One sees how the women like Pecola and Pauline find themselves in dual-identities W.E.B. Du Bois brings out this dilemma: “this sense of always looking at one’s self through the eyes of others, of measuring one’s soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity” [2007:08].
The protagonist Celie also gets negatively socialized. She looks upon herself as a cow, tree, but not as a human being. Her younger sister Nettie, her sister-in-law Kate, her daughter-in-law Sophia and others try to convince her that she is not a cow or tree, but Shug Avery who succeeds in awaking her slept or died spirit. As her duty of black woman writer, Alice Walker gives back Celie her beauty, physical and sexual strength through motherhood, sisterhood and wifehood. Thus, sisterhood is also a major theme of the novel.

The novel is packed with the events, narrating the tyrannies of white racism and black sexism on innocent black women like Celie, Nettie and others. Celie does not know the person named Pa is not her real father but a step-father. Through one of Nettie’s letters from Africa, Celie learns that their father was a well-settled farmer. He, for becoming richer, opened a store of dry goods. He was getting more and more profits along with his two brothers. The white merchants did not bear that a black man was taking away some of their business. They then made a plan to kill him along with his two brothers. “And so, one night, the man’s store was burned down, his smithy destroyed, and the man and his two brothers dragged out of their homes in the middle of the night and hanged” [TCP: 157]. The letter of Nettie further informs Celie about Alfonso’s entry in the life of their mother.

Celie’s mother, due to constant pregnancies and deliveries, lies permanently on bed. She is unable to satisfy the sexual desires of her husband and cannot look after her children. Celie’s step-father Alfonso then catches Celie for fulfilling his sexual desires. The fourteen year old girl finds herself in confusion. Her father threatens her: “You better not never tell nobody but God. It’d kill your mammy” [TCP: 03]. Celie then decides to write to God. Her first letter to God is very appealing:
I am fourteen years old. I have always been a good girl... she (her mother) went to visit her sister doctor over Macon. Left me to see after the others. He (Pa) never had a kine word to say to me. Just say You gonna do what your mammy wouldn’t. First he put his thing up gainst my hip and sort of wiggle it around. Then he grab hold my titties. Then he push his thing inside my pussy. When that hurt, I cry. He start to choke me, saying You better shut up and git used to it [TCP: 03].

In this way, he continues to rape her. Her mother dies because of Celie’s pregnancies. Her father sells both the children of Celie to Samuel. He then decides to marry off Celie with Albert, and to use Nettie for sexual satisfaction. Celie is married to Albert, whom she only calls Mr−. Celie’s husband is another Alfonso. He marries her only for two things – to look after his four rotten children and to satisfy his sexual desires.

When Nettie learns about the intentions of her Pa, she takes shelter in Celie’s house. But her brother-in-law also tries to seduce her. Nettie is ordered to leave the house and on Celie’s advice, she finds out the black missionary couple Samuel and Corrine. Nettie then goes to Africa with them and offers motherly love to Celie’s children. After the death of Corrine, she marries Samuel. Celie, on the other side, leads unhappy and loveless married life with Albert. She is regularly beaten by her husband. She decides not to cry but to consider herself as a tree:

He (Albert) beat me like he beat the children. Cept he don’t never hardly beat them. He say, Celie, git the belt. The children be outside the room peeking through the cracks. It all I can do not to cry. I make myself wood. I say to myself, Celie, you a tree [TCP: 23].

Cели’s two sisters-in-law, on their visit try to defend Celie. But Albert scolds his sisters for it. Like Nettie, one of Albert’s sisters named Kate advises Celie to fight against her husband and children. “You got to
fight them, Celie, she say. I can’t do it for you. You got to fight them for yourself”[TCP: 22]. Sofia, the wife of Albert’s elder son Harpo is a strong and fighter woman. She also encourages Celie for fighting against them. She is of the opinion that she will never allow her husband to beat her. “But I’ll kill him dead before I let him beat me” [TCP: 39]. But Celie as a mute doll, does not try to rebel or fight with her husband. When Shug Avery, Albert’s mistress comes to live with them, she awakens the slept spirit of Celie. It is Shug, who becomes the mother, guide and anchor of Celie’s life.

The police arrests Sofia for insulting and fighting with the Mayor. She boldly refuses to become the maid of Mayor. Sofia is then sentenced to life imprisonment for twelve years. The lynching of Celie’s real father and Sofia’s imprisonment sheds light on white racism. Thus, throughout the novel, along with the tyrannies of Black sexism, the white racism and sexism also play a great havoc in the lives of black women.

4.3.1 Celie and Others: Othermothers

Almost all mother-characters depicted in this novel are ‘other mothers’. Though, they are originally ‘biological or personal mothers’, but under some circumstances or out of helplessness, they have to love and nurture other women’s children. “Other mother is a woman caring for children who are not biologically her own” [http://othermother.co.tv (14.03.2011)]. This web-page has collected different definitions of other mother by various scholars. Patricia Hill Collins taking into consideration the study of Cheryl Gilkes explains other mothers as women who held the family infrastructure together by their virtues of caring, ethics, teaching, and community service. She is also of the opinion that other mother “can be sisters, aunts, neighbors, grandmothers, cousins, or any other woman who steps in to relieve some stress of intimate mother-
daughter relationships” [Ibid]. The feminist Collins in her book “Black Women and Motherhood: Black Feminist Thought” (2000) also talks about the ‘community other mothers’. She writes that community other mothers have made dramatic contributions by creating a new type of community in often hostile political and economic situations. Collins concludes by stating that othermothers’ participation in activist mothering demonstrates a rejection of individualism and adapts a different value system where ethics of caring and personal accountability move communities forward.

The previous chapter described the role of othermothers played by different mother-characters depicted in the selected novels of Toni Morrison. Mrs MacTeer and Aunt Jimmy of The Bluest Eye, Mrs Suggs and Cecile of Sula, Pilate of Song of Solomon and Baby Suggs of Beloved. Alice Walker’s Meridian of Meridian is also a good example of community othermother. In the present novel almost all mother-characters are othermothers. Celie’s real mother due to the illness cannot personally look after her own children by her second husband. Celie, as an elder daughter of the family, nurtures the children. Celie delivers two children, but they are sold to Samuel. But being a parasite on the family, Nettie looks after the children of Celie. Albert’s first wife named Annie Julia is murdered by her lover and Celie, being the second wife of Albert, has to look after the children. Sofia, mother of six children, is sent to jail for insulting mayor and his wife, so, her sister takes care of her children.

4.3.1.1 Celie

Celie is the mother of two children – Olivia and Adam. She is the wife of Albert or Mr−. Though, she has these children by her Pa, but he sells her children just after their birth. Therefore, she does not get chance to nurture and love her own children. But due to the illness of her mother,
she is compelled to look after the children of her mother by her second husband Pa. “She (her ailing mother) went to visit her sister doctor over Macon. Left me (Celie) to see after the others” [TCP: 03]. And after the death of her mother, she becomes a full time mother to her mother’s children till her marriage with Albert. When Albert comes to see her for second time, that time one of her little brothers named Lucious comes to her for something. Pa himself tells Albert that she is very good with children. This scene is very important and worth noting:

I (Celie) turn around. One of my little brothers come up. I think it was Lucious. He fat and playful, all the time munching on something. He (Lucious) say, What you doing that for? Pa say, Your sister thinking bout marriage. Didn’t mean nothing to him. He pull my dresstail and ast can he have some blackberry jam out of the safe.

I say, Yeah.

She good with children, Pa say, rattling his paper open more [TCP: 12-13].

In other words, Pa (Alfonso) certifies that Celie has mother-instincts and is good with children.

Celie does not only become a mother of her step-brothers and sisters, but also of her own real sister Nettie. In her letters addressed to God, she tells the readers that Pa also wants to exploit Nettie sexually. “I see him (Pa) looking at my little sister. She (Nettie) scared. But I say I’ll take care of you. With God help” [TCP: 05]. Celie asks Nettie to get married with Albert, so that Nettie will be saved from Pa’s lustful intentions. But when Nettie refuses to marry him, she herself tells Pa that she is ready to marry Albert. Though, she marries Albert, but she has much concern about Nettie’s safety in Pa’s house. And one day Nettie comes to live with her. But in her house, her husband is after Nettie. Celie finally advises Nettie: “I tell Nettie the next morning. Stead of
being mad, she glad to go … But I only got one thing to give her, the name of Reverend Mr−. I tell her to ast for his wife. That maybe she would help” [TCP: 19]. Celie in her letters to God, a number of times remembers Nettie, and consoles herself that she might be dead.

Celite, as certified by Pa, happily looks after her step-children. In the beginning, her elder step-son, Harpo creates troubles for her, but Celie wins his love by showering motherly love on him too. When Sofia complaints against Harpo to Celie that he always eats. Celie, as a real loving mother, defends Harpo by saying that she has never noticed that he always eats.

Celite is really a large-hearted woman. She always tries to win the love of persons around her. Though, the surrounding persons initially hate her as being black and ugly, but finally they also start loving her. The study will try to examine the maternal relationships of Celie with such surrounding persons namely Shug Avery, Sofia and others.

4.3.1.2 Sofia

Sofia is the mother of six children and wife of Celie’s step-son Harpo. She is a bold and fighting woman. She has to fight throughout her life with everybody. She has to lead a miserable life of twelve years in prison for “sassing the mayor’s wife and hitting the mayor back. First she was in prison working in the laundry and dying fast. Then us got her move to the mayor’s house. She had to sleep in a little room up under the house, but it was better than prison” [TCP: 179]. Thus, she has to become the nurse of the mayor’s children. She has showered love on them, especially, on Miss Eleanor Jane, the elder daughter of the mayor, who herself confesses: “Sofia raise me, practically, say Eleanor Jane. Don’t know what we would have done without her” [TCP: 238]. Not only this, this white girl continues her relations with Sofia to the end of her life. It
makes quite clear that Sofia is a good othermother, who “steps in to relieve some stress of intimate mother-daughter relationships” [http://othermother.co.tv (14.03.2011)]. The narrator also reports: “Anyhow, they kept her eleven and a half years, give her six months off for good behavior so she could come home early to her family” [TCP: 179]. But when she comes back home, she finds her children married, gone and forgotten her. The narrator tells:

Her bigger children married and gone, and her littlest children mad at her, don’t know who she is. Think she act funny, look old and dote on that little white gal she raise… Children reach cross her like she not there…Children call Odessa mama. Call Squeak little mama. Call Sofia ‘Miss’ [TCP: 179].

In her free life, she only gets her younger daughter Henrietta, who later suffers from unknown disease. Sofia weeps much for the daughter. But one more thing happens with Sofia, the daughter of Squeak and Harpo named Suzie Q loves her much. And when Squeak decides to go with Shug for her singing career, Sofia has to become the othermother of Suzie Q. Whenever there is a problem in the mayor’s house regarding children; Sofia is called to solve the problem. The white girl Eleanor Jane does not take any decision or does not do anything in her life without the advice or permission of Sofia.

Sofia is famous for her bold and outspoken nature. She is always loved and welcomed by all. But she has to face several difficulties in her life because of white racism and the black sexism. But Celie holds responsible Harpo for Sofia’s troubles. She accuses: “If you hadn’t tried to rule over Sofia the white folks never would have caught her” [TCP: 181].
4.3.1.3 Nettie

Nettie also proves herself as other mother of Celie’s children. Being dependent on Samuel-Corrine’s family, she has to look after the children adopted by the couple. In fact, Nettie is confident that these are the children of her elder sister Celie. Nettie, in one of her letters to Celie writes how a miracle happened with her:

I wanted to say, ‘God’ has sent you their sister and aunt, but I didn’t. Yes, their children, sent by ‘God’ are your children, Celie. And they are being brought up in love, Christian charity and awareness of God. And now ‘God’ has sent me to watch over them, to protect and cherish them. To lavish all the love I feel for you on them. It is a miracle, isn’t it? And no doubt impossible for you to believe [TCP: 119].

Nettie in her letters talks about the children. She is really happy that she has become the mother of Celie’s children. But Corrine suspects her. She thinks that her husband Samuel has secretly married Nettie and these are Nettie’s children. She, one day asks Nettie: “Why do my (Corrine’s) children look like you?” [TCI: 155]. Nettie tries to tell her that they are not her children. Corrine then starts to avoid children: “And the way she treats the children is the hardest part. She doesn’t want them near her, which they don’t understand. How could they? They don’t even know they were adopted?” [TCP: 156]. While writing to Celie, Nettie tells her how unbelief is a terrible thing that hurts. And because of this unbelief, Corrine reaches death-bed. Nettie writes: “She gets weaker and weaker, and unless she can believe us and start to feel something for her children, I fear we will lose her” [TCP: 167]. Fortunately, before her death Corrine believes in the story of Nettie and Samuel that they are not Nettie’s children. Corrine says: “But, Celie, in the middle of the night she
woke up, turned to Samuel and said: I believe. And died away” [TCP: 169]

Nettie, for becoming a good other mother of Celie’s children has to pay the price of losing confidence and love of Corrine. But she continues her life with them only for Celie’s children. Nettie has no complaints against Corrine. Ever after her death, Nettie remembers her:

All of her sweet ways went with her. All of her education and a heart intent on doing good. She taught me so much! I know I will miss her always. The children were stunned by their mother’s death [TCP: 170].

Through her letters, Nettie informs Celie that the children have completed their education and Adam married Tashi. Nettie safely brings back Celie’s children to her in the end of the novel and gets herself freed from the duties of mothering.

The love between Nettie and Celie is thoroughly maternal. Nettie is thankful to Celie, for the sacrifice she made for her. She writes: “But God, I miss you, Celie. I think about the time you laid yourself down for me. I love you with all my heart” [TCP: 115]. Sisters are separated from each-other, but they are confident that one day they will definitely meet. The letters they write to each-other is sufficient proof of their love for each-other. In the end of the novel, when the news of Nettie is arrival with her family is confirmed, Celie’s reaction is noteworthy:

I’m (Celite) so scared I don’t know what to do. Feel like my mind stuck. I try to speak, nothing come. Try to git up, almost fall. Shug reach down and give me a helping hand. Albert press me on the arm. When Nettie’s foot come down on the porch I almost die. I stand swaying, tween Albert and Shug. Nettie stand swaying tween Samuel and I reckon it must be Adam. Then us both start to moan and cry. Us totter toward one nother like us
use to do when us was babies. Then us feel so weak when us touch, us knock each other down. But what us care? Us sit and lay there on the porch inside each other’s arms.

After while, she say Celie
I say Nettie [TCP: 260].

4.3.1.4 Odessa

Odessa performs both the roles together as a biological mother of her children and as other mother of Sofia’s six children. She is the sister of Sofia and loving wife of Jack. The narrator does not tell much about her. Only three to five times, she is referred to in the novel as a raiser of Sofia’s children.

Though, much is not said told about her, yet it is sufficient to mark her as a good other mother of Sofia’s children. Because Sofia’s children, even the little ones too, forget Sofia and call Odessa as mama. Along with her, her husband Jack is also co-operative and has a heart full of motherly love. When her sister Sofia gets released from jail, she is very happy and decides to celebrate the occasion. She gives a dinner-party. It is at her dinner party, Celie takes rebellious decision of leaving Albert and becomes ‘free’ in the real sense of the term.

Thus, Odessa’s role, though little, becomes memorable for her other mothering of Sofia’s six children.

4.3.1.5 Shug Avery

Shug Avery is the mother of three children by Albert, but she does not herself raise her children. She, instead of becoming a good personal mother, prefers to become other mother of Celie, Sofia and Squeak. She has already been rejected by two of her children as a mother, only one, accepts her as a mother. She writes:
Dear Celie, she (Shug) wrote me, Me and Germaine ended up in Tucson, Arizona where one of my children live. The other two alive and turned out well but they didn’t want to see me. Somebody told them I lives a evil life. This one say he want to see his mama no matter what [TCP: 242-243].

While reading her story, one is reminded of Meridian of *Meridian*, who sacrifices her own son and becomes the other mother of Black community. Like Meridian, Shug also becomes a successful other mother of Celie and others.

4.3.2 Corrine and Others: Bad Mothers

There are only two bad mothers portrayed in the book. Corrine is actually a missionary. She is the messenger of God, but due to unbelief she goes away from her adopted children. Mary Agnes also leaves for her singing career.

4.3.2.1 Corrine

Corrine is the wife of Samuel, the black missionary. She happily adopts the children, her husband brought from somewhere. Before the arrival of Nettie in her house, she greatly loved the children but when she doubts that the children look like Nettie, since that moment, she starts avoiding them and fails as a good other mother. Thus, Corrine is a bad other mother.

Though, everybody finds resemblance between Nettie and the children, it does seem fair for Corrine, being a missionary, to doubt her own husband and Nettie. She is always worried about the affair between Nettie and Samuel, and ultimately loses her strength and health. Samuel and Nettie try their level best to tell her that the children are not Nettie’s. Nettie on faith tells her: “I met Samuel the same day I met you, Corrine, I said (I still haven’t got the hang of saying ‘Sister’ all the time). As God is
my witness, that’s the truth. Bring the bible, she said. I brought the bible, and placed my hand on it, and swore” [TCP: 155]. Corrine also checks the stretch marks on Nettie’s stomach. When she does not find the marks, she bluntly asks her: “What do I know about pregnancy, she said. I never experienced it myself. For all I know, women may be able to rub out all the signs” [TCP: 166]. But it is good luck of Nettie that Corrine before her death believes in Nettie’s story that they are not her children.

Thus, Corrine fails on all grounds (due to the fatal doubt), as a woman, as a messenger of God and as a mother of adopted children.

4.3.2.2 Squeak or Mary Agnes

Squeak is the only personal mother in the crowd of other mothers. She is the mistress of Celie’s step-son Harpo. She has a daughter named Suzie Q by Harpo. Squeak is never shown nurturing her daughter. Sofia, on the contrary, comes to attend the dinner party on her release from twelve long years of imprisonment. Her own children do not recognize her as their mother, but Squeak’s daughter Suzie Q sits with Sofia. The narrator states: “The only one seem to pay her (Sofia) any tension at all is Harpo and Squeak’s little girl, Suzie Q. She sit cross from Sofia and squinch up her eyes at her” [TCP: 179]. Besides it, when Squeak decides to go north for singing career, she puts her daughter in Sofia’s custody. The following conversation throws more light on it:

Squeak and Harpo’s little girl (Suzie Q or Jolentha) come over, look up at Sofia, say, You gotta go Misofia?
Sofia say, Yeah, pull her up on her lap. Sofia on parole, she say. Got to act nice.
Suzie Q lay her head on Sofia chest. Poor Sofia, she say, just like she heard Shug. Poor Sofia.
Many Agnes, darling, say Harpo, look how Suzie Q take to Sofia.
Yeah, say Squeak, children knew good when they see it. She and Sofia smile at one another.

Go on sign, say Sofia, I’ll look after this one (Suzie Q) till you come back [TCP: 184-185].

The above passage clearly points out that Squeak has no such maternal attachment for her own daughter. That’s why the daughter gets attracted to Sofia. Thus, Squeak or Mary Agnes fails as a good personal mother. But her sacrifice for Sofia in shifting her from the jail to the mayor’s house is memorable.

4.3.3.1 Celie and Shug

. The friendship between Celie and Shug is so maternal and intimate that it also reminds of Alice Walker’s second definition of ‘womanism’.

2. Also: A woman who loves other women, sexually and / or nonsexually. Appreciates and prefers women’s culture, women’s emotional flexibility (values tears as natural counter-balance of laughter), and women’s strength [1983a: xi].

This relationship is lesbian, but Shug Avery does not stop Celie from loving her husband and others. Walker also does not despise heterosexual relationship in her second entry of ‘womanism’.

Shug Avery enters the life of Celie as an ailing woman in need of nursing and nourishment. Celie welcomes her and very happily nurses her. She gives her baths, combs her hair and does everything for her as a mother does for her daughter. But sometimes she thinks Shug is her mother. She herself says:

I (Celi) work on her (Shug) like she a doll or like she Olivia (Celi’s daughter)–or like she mama. I comb and pat, comb and pat. First she say, hurry up and git finish. Then she melt down a little and lean back against my knees. That feel just right, she
say. That feel like mama used to do. Or maybe not
mama. Maybe grandma [TCP: 51].

In fact, Celie knows Shug before her marriage with Albert. She also has a
photograph of Shug. Celie likes the photograph of Shug and asks herself:

The most beautiful woman (Shug) I ever saw. She
more pretty then my mama. She bout ten thousand
times more prettier then me...An all night long I
stare at it. An now when I dream, I dream of Shug
Avery. She be dress to kill, whirling an laughing
[TCP: 08].

Shug initially hates and makes fun of Celie. But as Celie showers her
love on Shug, she becomes friend, philosopher, anchor, guardian of
Celia. First of all, Shug makes Celie realize that she is a woman and has a
charming personality. She saves her from the daily tortures of Albert and
helps in getting back the precious letters of Nettie. In return, Celie
becomes her maid and nurse.

Celia’s life in her own house is very sorrowful and unhappy. Celie
tells her pathetic story to Shug that nobody loves her:

My mama die, I tell Shug. My sister Nettie run
away. Mr− come git me to take care his rotten
children. He never ast me nothing bout myself. He
clam on top of me and fuck and fuck, even when
my head bandaged. Nobody ever love me, I say
[TCP: 103].

Shug consoles her saying, “She say, I love you, Miss Celia. And then she
haul off and kiss me on the mouth” [TCP: 103]. Shug then teaches her
how to make sexual-life pleasant. When Celie herself learns the tricks of
love, she becomes very happy and starts considering herself as a human
being rather than a tree or wood. Before this, her sexual life was very
boring. She tells Shug:

I don’t like it at all. What is it to like? He git up on
you, heist your nightgown round your waist,
plunge in. Most times I pretend I ain’t there. He never know the difference. Never ast me how I feel, nothing. Just do his business, get off, go to sleep [TCP: 73-74].

Celie loves Shug as a mother loves her daughter. Celie tells how she feels when she sleeps with Shug:

Me and Shug sound asleep. Her back to me, my arms round her waist. What it like? Little like sleeping with mama, only I can’t hardly remember ever sleeping with her. Little like sleeping with Nettie, only sleeping with Nettie never feel this good. It warm and cushiony… It feel like heaven is what it feel like, not like sleeping with Mr− at all [TCP: 104].

At a certain point of the story, Shug asks Celie about Nettie. Celie tells whole story to her: “Every day when Mr- come from the mailbox I hope for news. But nothing come. She dead, I say” [TCP: 108]. Shug then reminds of the envelops Albert had. Celie finds out all the letters written by Nettie in the trunk of Albert’s trunk. Celie gets very angry with her husband for hiding Nettie’s letters and wants to kill him. It is Shug who saves Celie from committing the crime. Shug then answers all the questions raised by Celie about the existence of God. As a guide and philosopher Shug tells Celie that God lives in our hearts. It is God, who does and controls each and everything. She further says:

God is inside you and inside everybody else. You come into the world with God. But only them that search for it inside find it. And sometimes it just manifest itself even if you not looking, or don’t know what you looking for … God love all them feelings. That’s some of the best stuff God did. And when you know God loves ’em you enjoys ’em a lot more. You can just relax, go with everything that’s going, and praise God by liking what you like [TCP: 176]
Shug finally frees Celie from the clutches of Albert. She takes her to Memphis. Celie starts her own business of making pants. Thus, both women love each other in such a way that one feels they are a couple yearning for each-other’s company. When Shug is on her tour with Germaine, Celie waits for her. Celie expresses her real love while writing to Nettie, she expresses:

And I miss her. I miss her friendship so much that if she want to come back here dragging Germaine I’d make them both welcome, or die trying. Who am I to tell her who to love? My job just to love her good and true myself ... What I love best bout Shug is what she been through, I say. When you look in Shug’s eyes you know she been where she been, seen what she seen, did what she did. And now she know [TCP: 244].

4.3.3.2 Celie and Sofia

As pointed out earlier, both Celie and Sofia are good other mothers. The love between Celie and Sofia is purely maternal. Sofia herself reminds her own mother when she talks about Celie as a stoic woman. She says:

She (Sofia) say, To tell the truth, you remind me of my mama. She under my daddy thumb. Naw, she under my daddy foot. Anything he say, goes. She never say nothing back. She never stand up for herself [TCP: 39].

After Nettie, Sofia is the person, who advises Celie to fight with her husband for human rights. Through her fightings with surrounding persons, she teaches Celie not to be mute and dumb against the tyranny of the male world.

Celic is very sorry for her advice to her step-son Harpo to beat his wife, if she does not listen to him. Celie confesses that she has made a mistake. She accepts: “I say it cause I’m fool, I say. I say it cause I’m
jealous of you. I say it cause you do what I can’t” [TCP: 39]. Celie feels so sad for doing wrong to Sofia that she cannot have a sound sleep for over a month. Her inner voice says: “I sin against Sofia spirit” [TCP: 38]. After the event, Celie stands with Sofia as a mother stands with her daughter. When she goes to meet Sofia in jail, she expresses her sorrow. She groans:

They crack her skull, they crack her ribs. They tear her nose loose on one side. They blind her in one eye. She swole from head to foot. Her tongue the size of my arm, it stick out tween her teef like a piece of rubber. She can’t talk. And she just about the color of a eggplant [TCP: 82].

Celie then tenderly brushes and combs her hair. She washes her and her wounds with the water provided by the colored tenant. She is so upset and unhappy at the pathetic condition of Sofia that she has no words to express. “I can’t fix my mouth to say how I feel” [TCP: 83].

Celie then participates in the discussion of how Sofia is to be shifted from prison cell to the mayor’s house. Celie has no idea but wishes a miracle to happen for the release of Sofia. Celie is very happy when Squeak’s sacrifice bears fruits and Sofia is shifted to the mayor’s house. She also joins the dinner party given by Odessa on the release of Sofia and it is really surprising to Celie that at the same party, she dares to tell her husband that she is going to Memphis along with Shug. Celie also attends the funeral ceremony of Sofia’s mother and expresses her condolence.

In this way, Celie always stands with Sofia in all difficult situations. The love between them is motherly.
4.4 The Temple of My Familiar: Story of Achieving Psychological Wholeness

_The Temple of My Familiar_ (1989) is the fourth novel by Alice Walker. It is mainly written to show how one can achieve the psychological wholeness through the union of mind and body. Walker selects history, particularly oral history, which is fast forgotten. She herself says in one of her interviews with Tate:

> I think my whole program as a writer is to deal with history just so I know where I am. I can’t move through time in any other way, since I have strong feelings about history and the need to bring it along. One of the scary things is how much of the past, especially our past, gets forgotten [1983b:185].

The novel deals with the oral history, written in the tradition of African griots. The griots are always men, but Walker for the first time in the history of literature, uses women as the narrators of the history.

Elisabeth Trofs in her thesis entitled “Alice Walker’s Womanism: Theory and Practice” talks about the three important aspects that every character of the novel has to go through in order to become spiritually whole. Each and every character is an artist and he or she has to get connected to being whole as a person. The characters have to reconnect with their past, which, as they find, helps shape their present and future. Lastly, there should be communication among them. Walker has already provided different sorts of communication: dialogues, letters, tape recordings, fragments of a diary, paintings, music, stories, etc.

The oral history narrated in the book is too lengthy and complex, but all the stories revolve round the three couples – Arveyda and Carlotta, Suweló and Fanny, and Hal and Lissie. Almost all the characters except Miss Lissie are more or less weak persons
psychologically. They are already confused with the problems of their
day to day either married or social life. As they start to communicate
with one-another, they achieve psychological and spiritual wholeness.
Their journey from fragmented to spiritual wholeness is quite difficult.

Carlotta is the daughter of a seamstress from South America
named Zede. She and her mother have already escaped the terrorism of
their country with the help of Mary Ann, a wealthy white American
woman hooked on drugs and political activism. Carlotta and her mother
now settle in San Francisco where Zede runs a fashionable boutique and
sells the traditional costumes of feathers, which she learnt to make from
her mother named Zede the Elder. Carlotta, though, educated, sells these
feather costumes to the priests, but the costumes are generally bought by
the rock stars like Arveyda. He is a regular customer of the costumes.
Carlotta falls in love with the musician Arveyda. “But now Carlotta and
Arveyda had been married for three years. They had two children her
mother (Zede) adored” [TMF: 19]. Arveyda is a very popular singer
among the people. His music is thought to be a medicine. The narrator
further notes:

Arveyda and his music were medicine, and, seeing
or hearing him, people knew it. They flocked to
him as once they might have to priests. He did not
disappoint them. Each time he played, he did so
with his heart and soul. Always, though he might
be very tired, he played earnestly and prayerfully
[TMF: 24].

Though, he is a great musician, he has broken the contact with his past.
He has some troubled memories about his parents. The narrator
comments:

His mother. Any remembrance of her pained him.
So he never thought of her. Reading the Gospel
was the first time since his long-ago meeting with
Zede that he’d seen anything that made him feel curious about her, or that he missed something of her spirit in the world. Why had his mother loved a photograph? Whose was it? ‘Your father’, she’d always said; but now that he was a father himself he knew how much more there was. Why had she removed it from beside his bed? Why had she become a ‘whirling dervish’? Why had she never been able to affirm all that he was? [TMF: 297].

In this way, he always avoids to remember the troubled memories of his past. But his and Zede’s confession to Carlotta that they love each other, makes their married life unhappy. He takes Zede on the tour for finding out her past and Zede, Carlotta’s mother decides to stay in South America and to marry one of the persons there. Carlotta is very unhappy and frustrated. She falls in love with Suwelo. When Arveyda comes back to Carlotta, he, as an artist, tries to tell her that her mother is already unhappy that she has hurt her darling Carlotta. And the story of her life, Zede had told Arveyda during the tour; he sings it to Carlotta. The narrator tells:

He sang of the confusion and the terror of the mother: the scars she could never reveal to the child because they still hurt so... Arveyda sang softly of how much the mother, far away still, loved and missed the child. How grieved she was that she had hurt her. How she prayed the child would forgive her and one day consent to see her again... He sang until Zede, small and tentative, was visible, a wisp, before her daughter [TMF: 126].

When Carlotta realizes that Suwelo has already left her and once again hears the story of her mother from Arveyda, she starts to find happiness in her life. She, first of all, leaves the job of teaching and like her grandmother Zede the Elder becomes a bell chimist. On the other hand,
Arveyda also reads Fanny’s pamphlet, *The Gospel According to Shug*, and gets himself reconnected with his past and starts loving his parents:

‘These are the very things’ he says, with the fullness of a grateful heart in his voice, ‘that I love about my mother’. And… about my father… And he suddenly realizes that it was Fanny’s pamphlet. *The Gospel According to Shug*, and Carlotta’s sharing of it with him that he has to thank [TMF: 397].

Another couple (Suwelo and Fanny) is also the victim of fragmented and broken personality, because they too have disconnected themselves from their past. Suwelo is the only relative of Rafe, who leaves his house to Suwelo after his death. Suwelo is already tired of his wife Fanny when he comes to live in late great-uncle Rafe’s house. He intends to stay in the house until he has found someone to buy it. During his stay, he meets his late uncle’s best friends – Hal and Lissie. The three of them tell each other the stories of their lives. Miss Lissie and Hal tell Suwelo that “Lissie is a lot of Women” [TMF: 38] and tell him the stories of thirteen lives of Lissie mostly as a black woman. While talking with Suwelo, Hal and Lissie come to the conclusion that he has a problematic relationship with his wife Fanny. They have completely opposite views about everything. For example, marriage, to Suwelo, is a legal knot. He says to Fanny that when “we were married, I considered it a natural *joining*, a legal verification of what was already fact. We were one, in my opinion. And being legally married seconded that opinion” [TMF: 140-141]. But Fanny thinks: “Marriage simply hadn’t fit us. Fanny thought it probably didn’t fit anybody. She thought it unnatural” [TMF: 284]. Thus, Suwelo is unhappy with Fanny. He falls in love with Carlotta, but considers Carlotta’s love as a time pass. Mr. Hal and Lissie advise Suwelo to reconnect with his past. Suwelo has purposefully forgotten his parents. When he sits in the hot tub with Carlotta at the end of the novel
and when Carlotta talks about her mother and grandmother, he also starts telling the story of his parents’ death:

‘My mother is dead’, Suwelo says to Carlotta. It sounds as if he’s finally admitting it to himself. He sees Marcia once again timidly approach the door. She stops, her fist unraised to knock, and listens. She is so surprised to hear he is speaking of her! “Come in, Ma” he says [TMF: 403].

On the other hand, Fanny is troubled with the racism in her school. She is very angry with the white people. Though, she is loved by her mother Olivia and grandmothers Celie and Shug, she still has not seen her own father. When her mother takes her to Africa, where her father lives, and when her father tells her different stories about Africa and America, she reconciles with her husband and racism present in America. Like Arveyda and Carlotta, they also start to live in a house modeled on the prehistoric ceremonial household of M’Sukta’s people – the Ababa:

….a house designed by the ancient matriarchal mind and the first heterosexual household ever created. It has two wings, each complete with its own bedroom, bath, study, and kitchen; and in the center there is a ‘body’ – the ‘ceremonial’ or common space… After thousands and thousands of years of women and men living apart, the Ababa had, with great trepidation, experimented with the two tribes living, a couple to a household, together. Each person must remain free, they said. That is the main thing. And so they had designed a dwelling shaped like a bird [TMF: 399].

The third couple, mainly Miss Lissie is the whole character psychologically and spiritually. She is the instrument in the hands of Walker, used to make people aware of their glorious forgotten history, their disconnection with the past things. Walker herself says: “What I’m doing is literary trying to reconnect us to our ancestors. All of us, I’m really trying to do that because I see that ancient past as the future, that
the connection that was original is a connection; if we can affirm it in present, it will make a different future” [Quoted in Braendlin 1996:54].

Through her stories, Lissie tells Suwelo how she has been connected with her past lives as a pygmy, as a member of a harem, as a woman without hymen and as a Moor woman. She also tells him how she has been oppressed in all her lives time to time by “parents, siblings, relatives, governments, countries, continents. As well as from own body and mind” [TMF: 83]. In the present life, she is the wife of Hal, but she having seen the confused, frustrated and fragmented people around her, realizes her real duty to reconnect the disconnected people from their respective past. She tells Hal:

It is against blockage between ourselves and others – those who are alive and those who are dead – that we must work. In blocking off what hurts us, we think we are walling ourselves off from pain. But in the long run the wall, which prevents growth, hurts us more than the pain, which, if we will only bear it, soon passes over us. Washes over us and is gone. Long will remember pain, but the pain itself, as it was at that point of intensity that made us feel as if we must die of it, eventually vanishes. Our memory of it becomes its only trace. Walls remain. They grow moss. They are difficult barriers to cross, to get to others, to get to closed-down parts of ourselves [TMF: 358].

4.4.1 Miss Lissie and Others: Good Mothers

With the exception of Katherine Degos, all mothers depicted are good mothers. Miss Lissie is the towering mother figure, who becomes the spiritual mother of Suwelo.

4.4.1.1 Miss Lissie Lyles

Miss Lissie Lyles is a wise old woman, who through the stories of her past thirteen lives, teaches Suwelo that if one has to have a whole
personality, he or she has first to get reconnected with his or her painful past by making communication with surrounding situations and people. Thus, she is the sage:

The sage is a wise or holy figure, who guides the hero. Can appear as an oracle, a mentor, guide, teacher, wise old man/woman. Provides gifts to the hero. Role model for the hero’s conscience or good behavior[http://www.wtps.org/wtps/imc/pathfinder s/archetypes.pdf (16.11.2010)].

She and Mr. Hal tell Suwelo that how Lissie has loved her children in her each past life. It shows that she is a loving mother:

Maternal solicitude and sympathy; the magic authority of the female; the wisdom and spiritual exaltation that transcend reason; any helpful instinct or impulse; all that is benign, all that cherishes and sustains, that fosters growth and fertility. The place of magical transformation and rebirth… are presided over by the mother [Jung 1967:82].

Elisabeth Torfs also observes:

Besides referring extensively to different sorts of matriarchies, the novel also talks more concretely about motherhood and motherly figures. First of all, there are a lot of biological mothers present in the book: Zede the elder, Zede herself, Celie, Olivia, etc. The book suggests the importance of the mother-child relationship in several ways. The two most obvious examples are the relationship between Carlotta and Zede and the one between Suwelo and his mother… Apart from the biological mothers, there are also some spiritual mothers who stand even more explicit than do the biological ones for wisdom and guidance… The most obvious example of this of course is Lissie [http://www.fondspascaldecroos.org/uploads/documentenbank/5e3cda5f134474722d04f455ad65e82e.pdf (16.11.2011)].
In the present life, Miss Lissie performs both the roles as a biological loving mother and the spiritual mother of Suwelo. Lissie is the mother of five children. Lulu is her elder daughter from her husband Mr. Hal. But all the remaining four children die prematurely:

One was a little boy, the child of that picture taker I (Mr. Hal) mentioned. It died before its second birthday. One was by some other lover she (Miss Lissie) had, and the last two were by your (Suwelo’s) great-uncle Rafe. They started out healthy enough, but only a son by Rafe made it to being grown – your uncle Cornelius, who was killed while on duty in the navy [TMF: 110].

Instead of Lissie, Mr Hal tells the story of Lissie’s present life to Suwelo. Mr Hal knows well his wife. He also knows that Lissie is a lot of women. She loves her husband. She is also a good house-wife. She is an expert in every work “Lissie tried to help out in the shop, but my (Hal’s) daddy claimed women got in the way. So she stopped that, and instead she sewed and looked after the children, and went out fishing in the bay” [TMF: 112]. After the birth of Lulu, her husband vows celibacy and does not want to be responsible for her killing labor pains. But Lissie wants more children. As said earlier, she becomes the mother of five children. Unfortunately no child of her survives. When her son by a picture taker dies, Lissie expresses her sorrow:

We lost little Jack to a cold a healthier baby would have shaken off. I was up night after night with the little fellow. He looked just like his mother, and it was hard for us to let him go. I thought Lissie was going to die herself, she loved him so [TMF: 112].

Mr. Hal talks more about her way of living life. He also makes clear that though she is with children, she is always aloof from them including him because: “Lissie was a good mother, but aloof. She didn’t
seem to be present for the child. Always off somewhere roaming through the ages” [TMF: 114].

Though, Lissie is not successful as a loving mother of her children, but she definitely succeeds in becoming a spiritual mother of Suwelo. Miss Lissie through her stories and tape recording guides Suwelo. She very finds out the real problem of Suwelo’s unhappy and broken relationships with Fanny and Carlotta. In her tape-recording, which is sent to Suwelo by Mr Hal, she says:

Hal and I are sorry we did not encourage you to speak to us about your parents… I know you are caught up now in this knottedness with Fanny, and both Hal and I agree that the work with her is what has to be done. But part of your work with Fanny is the work you must do with your parents. They must be consciously called up, called upon, re-called … Hal and I felt you have closed a door, a very important door, against memory, against the pain [TMF: 357].

Miss Lissie’s relationship with her mother and grandmother in the present life is not good and loveable. The narrator does not describe any event or episode that shows any love between mother and daughter. On the contrary, at the time of Miss Lissie’s first delivery, both Lissie’s mother Eula Mae and her grandmother Dorcy Hogshead wrongly interpret the time of Lissie’s delivery and go on fishing. And on the trivial topic, they quarrel hardly and in anger, both throw the oars in the bay, so they cannot reach home in time. Mr Hal then has to deliver his wife. Miss Lissie’s mother is not right at head and has very strange views about the food of the pregnant woman, while, Dorcy is nothing but a devil. The narrator paints her in the following way.

She (Miss Lissie) had her mother, Eula – Eula Mae – and the woman Lissie was most like in the world, Dorcy – Dorcy Hogshead – her
grandmother. Dorey was a devil. The most contentious, cantankerous old witch that ever lived. However, a genius at delivering babies [TMF: 102].

Miss Lissie herself tells about one of her past lives on the island hundreds of years before. She tells Suwelo that in that period, the life of enslaved people on islands was very troublesome and unhappy. The life of children was more unsafe and unhealthy. In that life, she was not very happy with her mother because her mother was an insane person. In the beginning years, her language was unintelligible and difficult to pronounce. She further says:

I did not like my parents at all. My mother was rather clumsy and obviously untutored; she seemed to speak not only in a language I’d never spoken, but in a language newly invented… I used to lie on the bed and watch her going back and forth through the house in her slovenly wrappers… She dipped snuff. Every so often she’d drag herself to the side of the porch and spit off into the weeds. I knew I’d never seen, in any of my lifetimes, a more stupid person [TMF: 54].

Lissie further tells him that it was miracle that her mother started understanding everything. “And it was – that first morning after so many dead nights and one live one – as if she’d seen a ghost” [TMF: 57]. Because of that change in her mother’s behavior and knowledge, Miss. Lissie also started liking her mother and they become friends. She says:

Her speech remained strange, but ceased to be unintelligible as she added more of herself to it. She stopped dragging her feet. Her taste for snuff left her. I began to see her in a quite a new light, with less impatience and contempt. It was from this time that we became more than mother and daughter. We became friends [TMF: 58].
This is how, Miss Lissie talks about the development of human civilization and the positive effect in relationships that took place between her and her mother.

Miss Lissie is very unhappy when she talks about one of her past lives in Africa. She talks about the story of the tribe of mother worshippers and how, due to the slave trade in Africa, the tribe was destroyed. Being one of the narrators, she describes the end of the tribe thus:

The ones who were not forced to do this were either executed or sold into a tribe whose language was different. The men had decided they would be creator, and they went about dethroning woman systematically. To sell women and children for whom you no longer wished to assume responsibility or to sell those who were mentally infirm or who had in some way offended you, became a new tradition, an accepted way of life [TMF: 63-64].

Miss Lissie tells her own story that when she was two years old, her father died of heart-attack. She, her mother and her brothers were mercilessly sold by her uncle. They were brought to the white master’s fort. They were beastly treated by the master. Lissie in moving words describes the enormous agony of her mother:

‘After a week in the stockade, my mother fell sick. There was no room for any of us to lie down comfortably, but one of the Mother worshipers forced a little extra space by the wall, toward which my mother could turn her head for air, and when the pains wracked her, she could kneel. She was sick with vomiting and dysentery, those sicknesses it is least possible to hide… On the seventh day she willed herself to die [TMF: 64-65].
Lissie further tells that she along with other slaves was dragged to the ship. At the plank that led up onto the deck, their last remaining garment was snatched away and they were forced naked as they came into the world. When the ship landed, they were again sold to the planters. Lissie, her brothers and sisters were sold to different masters. And when her son became two years old, she tried to run away for the safety of the child. The master caught her in the wood and beat her mercilessly. He also snatched her son and broke her body. She herself says:

The strain of losing a part of my body, namely, my leg and foot, accompanied by the loss also of my child – given to another woman to bring up – whom, against all nature, I had grown to love, was a condition a heartless beating could only exacerbate. Underneath it, my weakened body gave up the ghost – in other words, I died [TMF: 71].

This story of Miss Lissie is very tragic. It tells that to dominate the women; the white masters first of all destroyed the tribe of mother worshippers and finished the story of women as mothers and as goddesses of men.

In this way, Miss Lissie tells the stories of the pain and agony of enslaved mothers, which she had herself experienced almost in all her past lives. Her stories make her grandmother of all the people, who learn from the stories, the inhuman treatment given to women, especially to mothers.

4.4.1.2 Carlotta

Carlotta is the mother of two children Cadrico and Angelita. She loves her children very much. Though, the narrators do not describe more scenes of her tenderly nurturing and loving her children. But she is
undoubtedly a loving mother. When her husband Arveyda and her mother go to South America, Carlotta does not allow them to take her children. She deliberately hurts them, because she is greatly hurt by them. She keeps her children for herself:

Taking her children away from Arveyda and Zede was the only way she could make them hurt as she was hurting. She could not know at the time how much she was hurting herself [TMF: 20].

Even after her compromise with her husband, she keeps her children to herself in her part of the house. She brings up her children with whatever money she earns from the teaching job. All this shows that she is a good and loving mother. “all that is benign, all that cherishes and sustains, that fosters growth and fertility. The place of magical transformation and rebirth… are presided over by the mother” [Jung 1967:82].

4.4.1.3 Zede

Zede, on the other hand, is also a good and loving mother. Her struggle for living a free life and giving decent and happy life to her daughter Carlotta is appreciable and praiseworthy. Zede is the daughter of a matriarch Zede the Elder. She learns the skill of making headdresses. She is educated and has completed a teacher’s diploma. Due to sudden riots in her village, she gets arrested, considered a communist. She spends many years in jail, where she gives birth to Carlotta. Luckily they escape from the jail with the help of Mary Ann and come to live in San Francisco. She, then, starts to make feathered headdresses and also works in a sweetshop to run the house. But on a certain day, when she meets Arveyda, she falls in love with him. And when her own daughter marries him, it becomes very difficult for Zede. So, in a state of confusion, she confesses to her daughter: “Arveyda loves
you, said Zede. ‘You must believe this. But also, he and I loved each other from the start’ [TMF: 19]. It is because of the affair between Arveyda and Zede, the relationship between the mother and the daughter becomes complicated. In fact, Carlotta loves her mother very much. When she sees her mother purposefully ignoring her own health. Carlotta thinks:”How old she looked. How tired her skin was; how lusterless her hair. Her back teeth were breaking off at the gum”[TMF: 09]. The same Carlotta then hates even to read the letters sent by her mother, who is on a trip with Arveyda.

Letters from them as they traveled through Mexico and Central and South America she resisted opening for many months, preferring to think of them as dead… But as the letters continued to arrive, Carlotta, reading through the evaporated teardrops, which had left puckered circles on the pages, sensed an animation in her mother’s spirit she had never felt before [TMF: 20].

Before going on trip with Arveyda, Zede has already apologized to her daughter for her grave mistake:

Zede came to see her, wrapping her arms around Carlotta’s legs, face pressed against her knees, her tears so profuse they soaked Carlotta’s skirt. ‘I date now. Soon, I promise, I will marry someone I love. We will go away. To Mexico, maybe. I will try to get out of your hair’ [TMF: 27].

As she promised, Zede remains in South America, but when Arveyda tries to tell Carlotta about the life of her mother and when she herself reconnects with her mother, she, first of all, stops teaching and like Zede and Zede the Elder, becomes a bell chimist.

Zede is undoubtedly a very brave and courageous mother, but the narrator does not tell why she falls in love with Arveyda and how she dares to sleep with him even after her daughter’s marriage with him. The
narrator repeatedly says that they are both artists. One cannot understand this type of intimacy between the artists, throwing all relations to the wind.

4.4.1.4 Olivia

Olivia is the mother of Fanny and the daughter of Celie of Alice Walker’s *The Color Purple*. She has been brought up by Aunt Nettie but originally adopted by Cornnie. She herself talks about her life in Africa, when she was a child. She whole-heartedly confesses that her daughter has really been nurtured and loved by Celie and Shug. Though, Olivia has no interest in taking care of Fanny, yet it is she, who takes her frustrated and disturbed daughter to Africa, where the daughter Fanny gets reconnected to her past and becomes happy in her life. Thus, Olivia is a good mother as described by Jung.

When Olivia comes to America along with her family members to meet her real mother Celie, that time Olivia is pregnant with Fanny. Celie has already told her that the child in her belly is a girl. When Olivia gives birth to Fanny. “My own mother, by now a midwife in addition to being the best seamstress around, delivered me. Just as my baby’s head emerged, my mother shouted, “Little Fanny!”’. This was even before she could tell it was a girl” [TMF: 153]. In the house of Celie and Shug, Olivia has no place. She herself says:

But there was really no place for me there. Not really. I was welcome and I was loved, but I was also grown. After a few years I began to feel smothered by their competence, their experience in everything, their skills that caused me to feel my own considerable attributes were not required [TMF: 169].

The daughter Fanny in one of her letters to Suwelo puts the same thing:
I (Fanny) sit and listen to her (Olivia’s) stories and I feel embarrassed that for so many years I ignored her. As I have told you, probably a really boring number of times, when I was a child, she had no real authority in our house, which was ruled by the two queens, Big Mama Celie and Mama Shug. Next to these two, and even next to Great-aunt Nettie, who raised her, my mother’s flame seemed feeble. Even Uncle Adam had a certain exuberance that my mother lacked [TMF: 157].

But Fanny is loved and welcomed by all of them. When Fanny talks about her childhood, she reminds one of the events when she was a crawling baby, wanted her mother to play with her and to hold her up. But Olivia is not ready to put aside the book, which she is reading. Shug then comes there and plays with her. So, she starts avoiding her own mother:

I soon learned to pay as little attention to my mother as she paid to me, and my life was a round of fascinating events and spontaneous smiles… and all my womanish ways were approved. I decked myself out in what finery came my way in a routine rummaging about in everybody’s drawers [TMF: 155].

But when Fanny becomes the victim of racism in her college, when the great differences arise between her and her husband Suwelo and when she falls in love with the spirits; she gets totally disturbed and wants to murder somebody. Her mother Olivia takes Fanny to Africa in order to meet her father and get relieved from the tensions. In Africa, it is Olivia, who time and again encourages Fanny. She says:

We had all begun to see, in Africa – where people worshiped many things, including the roofleaf plant, which they used to cover their houses – that “God” was not a monolith, and not the poverty of Moses, as we’d been led to think, and not separate from us, or absent from whatever world one
inhabited... The God discovered on one’s own speaks nothing of turning the other cheek. Of rendering unto Caesar. But only of the beauty and greatness of the earth, the universe, the cosmos. Of creation. Of the possibilities for joy. You might say the white man, in this dual role of spiritual guide and religious prostitute, spoiled even the most literary form of God experience for us. By making the Bible say whatever was necessary to keep his plantations going, and using it as a tool to degrade women and enslave blacks [TMF: 146-147].

In this way, Olivia tries to answer all the questions that arise Fanny’s mind with the help of her husband Ola, who is a minister of Culture. Thus, it is Olivia, who finally plays the role of mother and settles Fanny in her life.

4.4.1.5 Nzinga Anne’s Mother

Nzinga Anne’s nameless mother is the wife of Ola. She is like her husband, an activist. She does not only love her daughter but also loves her country. When her husband takes Nzinga Anne away from her, she does not protest, because she “told me (Nzinga) it was for my own good – of course I couldn’t see that!” [TMF: 259]. She for the welfare of her daughter, sacrifices her life. It does mean that she is the loving mother.

The story of the mother is narrated from the daughter’s view. Her mother is a warrior; she can do and undo anything for her motherhood. Nzinga describes her bravery:

My mother was the kind of woman who could fight in the mountains or the caves or gorges for months, even years, alongside the men and blow up power stations, and at the same time accept, with obvious gratitude, the shelter of her five-year-old’s arms in the middle of the night [TMF: 258].
She is a loving wife too. She saves the life of her husband. She also saves the government, but both forget her easily. Nzinga says: “It was a government she had helped – through immense risk and personal sacrifice – put into power, but that, once in power, conveniently forgot she existed. This was true of all the women; they were forgotten” [TMF: 257].

Though, she is illiterate and superstitious, she has strong will power. She, like an artist, decorates the house. Due to the loneliness in the end of life becomes wild and dies of cancer:

She died, after a lingering illness, when I was sixteen. Probably from cancer. Or heart failure. Or heartbreak. The cause of death had no name, in the village [TMF: 260].

4.4.2 Katherine Degos: A Failed Mother

Katherine Degos is the mother of Arveyda. She does not prove herself as a good and loving mother, and also fails in becoming a mother of the whole community. His mother:

…..was one of the three black women who had organized and founded their own church: the Church of Perpetual Involvement. His mother, whose name was Katherine Degos, was one of the most intrusive people he knew. She did not recognize limits, whether of body or mind [TMF: 12].

Though, she is famous and popular among the people, she does not connect herself with her son. “As a teenager, Arveyda had felt no strong connection to her… She did not seem to mind. Everyone on their block praised him for his music… She gave him no praise. She looked through him” [TMF: 12]. She loses interest even in her son because of the dissolution of her church. She loses herself and becomes completely directionless. The narrator describes her condition:
She didn’t care. She began to play with her makeup, painting her face, dying her hair, doing her nails as if she were creating a work of art with her body, and with her mind the appeared to roam great empty distances [TMF: 12].

When she hides the photograph of Arveyda’s father, he bluntly asks her, but she does not reply. In short, only after the dissolution of her church, she loses interest in life. Thus, she is a failed mother.

4.4.3 Zede, Celie and Others: Matriarchies

Zede the Elder, Celie and Shug and M’Sukta’s tribe, the Ababa are the matriarchies. Gerda Learner defines matriarchy as “power by women, decision-making power, power over their own lives, power over the lives of others, power in the community” [Quoted in Kulkarni1999:95].

Miss .Lissie, in one of her past lives, very happily tells Suwelo that she was a black man. In those periods, the men and women lived separately. She further states that her (his) mother was the queen of their tribe. She says: “I suppose she was what queens were originally, though: a wise woman, a healer, a woman of experience and vision, a woman superbly trained by her mother. A really good person, whose words were always heard by the clan” [TMF: 360]. In her another life, when she was a black woman, she talked about the tribe of mother-worshipers. It means that in that period, a mother was worshipped. She tells: “These were men sold into slavery because of their religious belief, which was not tolerated by the Mohametans. They carried on the ancient tradition of worship of the mother, and to see a mother sold into slavery – which did not turn a hair on a Mohametan’s head if she was not a convert to his religion – was a great torture for them”[TMF: 63]. Such matriarchies were supported by the people because they believed in religion and the women were made the priests.
Zede the Elder is the mother of Zede and grandmother of Carlotta. “Zede, had been a seamstress, but really more of a sewing magician. She was the creator of clothing, especially capes, made of feathers” [TMF: 03]. Zede tells the story of her mother Zede the Elder. The story shows Zede the Elder is a matriarch. The daughter tells that how her mother was free from all oppressions. She talks about the power of her mother in the house: “Their compound consisted of two small houses, one for sleeping, another for cooking – the cooking one was never entered by Zede’s father or brothers….” [TMF: 04]. Zede while on trip with Arveyda to South America, which was her native country, tells him that in her country now everything has been changed. She remembers how the young girls like her enjoyed in the old times. Their mothers teach them lovemaking and babies along with the history of their civilization. She further reminds:

Our mothers would prepare food, and the young girls went up and down the sides of the falls collecting bits of wood for a fire. After eating and bathing we drew up in a circle near the fire, and if someone was nursing a tattoo, her mother would work on it, rubbing in the dye, while someone else’s mother told stories of long ago [TMF: 46].

Zede the Elder was born in such a period, where women had the power on everything. They were the priests. Zede’s mother had a special house for doing artistic work. When she was making the clothes of feathers, no one, even her husband, was allowed to disturb her. After the work, when she came back, all the family members got delighted: “And we were always so glad to have her back, too, though she’d never been farther away than a few steps cross the yard. My father, especially, was happy to have back his wife” [TMF: 47]. Zede herself describes her mother as: “mujer my mama was” [TMF: 48].
Celie and Shug are also the matriarchs. They, though living in 20th Century, have a strong hold on the family and surrounding people. Fanny, their granddaughter says to Suwelo that her mother “had no real authority in our house, which was ruled by the two queens, Big Mama Celie and Mama Shug” [TMF: 157]. Celie is an expert in pant-making, while Shug is a great singer but now she is a great worshiper of God. They both have formed a band. Fanny says that their “grandmothers formed their own church; a tradition of long standing among black women. Only, they didn’t call it a “church”. They called it a “band” [TMF: 301]. Besides, they have contact with outer world; all types of people come to visit them. In short, they have a great power on everything – on family, on neighboring people, on artists etc. Thus, they can be called matriarchs.

M’Sukta’s tribe, the Ababa is also the best example of matriarchy. Mary Jane Briden fortunately finds out her great aunt’s diaries about this tribe. She also tells an astonishing tale about an Ababa woman, who had been taken to England and shut up for nearly fifteen years in the British Museum of Natural History. She was unfortunately the sole survivor of her tribe. The house, in which Fanny and Suwelo decide to live, is modeled on the prehistoric household of M’Sukta’s people – which stands for an ancient matriarchal mind. The narrator describes the house:

….is modeled on the prehistoric ceremonial household of M’Sukta’s people, the Ababa – a house designed by the ancient matriarchal mind and the first heterosexual household ever created... After thousands and thousands of years of women and men living apart, the Ababa had, with great trepidation, experimented with the two tribes living, a couple to a household, together. Each person must remain free, they said. That is the main thing. And so they had designed a dwelling shaped like a bird [TMF: 399].
Mary Ann and Her Parents

Mary Ann Haverstock or Mary Jane Briden is the daughter of wealthy white parents. She hates her parents only because they have made money by wrong ways “Ann described them as people who had personally assassinated six rivers and massacred twelve lakes, because they manufactured a deadly substance that was always swimming away from them” [TMF: 79]. On the other hand, her parents love her very much. They are ready to do anything for her but they only want her “to be at least competent; not a scarred, drugged, disheveled mess, plotting assassinations and muttering into her blond locks that looked like sheep’s wool” [TMF: 79].

Mary, due to her strong hatred for her parents, always runs from the house. Whenever her parents get the news of their daughter’s whereabouts, they go, run after her and take her back home. Her parents are very sorrowful at her pathetic condition. And when they get news that their daughter is in La Escuela de Jungla, they come and take her home, but she again runs away. She is very good at heart. She believes in God. That is why; she helps Zede and her daughter Carlotta to escape from the custody of gringos. While crossing the sea, the storm sinks her ‘special boat’. But before sinking, she shifts herself, Zede and Carlotta to another boat. Her parents get the news of the sinking boat. They are assured that she is dead. Mary, on the other hand, runs to Africa and in her thirty years of stay in Africa, she first of all changes her name. She herself says:

In establishing myself in Africa, I called myself “Mary Jane Briden”, getting rid of “Ann”, which I’d never liked, and “Haverstock” which seemed just a pseudonym for cash, and adding a name that now that I consider it – had something of the possibility of marriage in it [TMF: 209].
Mary, whatever money she inherits, puts in the various banks by opening accounts in the name of dead persons. She, then, marries Ola, the minister of Culture of Africa. But, she is not happy with her life; she also wants to connect herself with her past. She thus comes to meet her great-aunt Ella in the hospital; there she finds the diary of her great-great-aunt about the life of M’Sukta’s tribe.

Mary, no doubt, is a strong, bold and courageous girl. But she is also equally idealistic. She does not approve the unfair means her parents adopt for earning money. She discards their ways and them too and lives an independent life to the end. Thus, relationship between Mary and her parents is completely broken and highly complicated. Mary expresses her sorrow, when she sees the photograph of her parents in the newspaper:

This was in a second article, after the newspapers discovered whose daughter it was who owned the boat. And there was an enchanting picture of Mom and Dad holding hands and walking back to their limousine. It made me sad to see them; they seemed so old, and so lost… There was no reason for them to think me alive or to grieve over me excessively [TMF: 208].

4.5 Conclusion

Like Morrison, Alice Walker has also presented the mother-characters in her novels under study. They, almost all, interact with all the manifestations of maternal archetypes as enunciated by C. G. Jung in his The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious.

In The Third Life of Grange Copeland totally six mother-characters are portrayed. Almost all of them with exception of Josie and Lorene, are good mothers. Margaret Copeland interacts with both the positive and negative qualities of maternal archetypes. She, like Eva of
Sula and Sethe and Ma’am of Beloved, commits the crimes of debauchery, infanticide and suicide. In spite of it, she is a good and loving mother. The relationship between Josie and Lorene as mother-daughter repeatedly reminds the relationship between Hannah and Sula of Sula. There is no relationship between Josie and Lorene as mother and daughter. There is only professional rivalry between them. But the relationship between Grange and his grand-daughter Ruth is really great and memorable.

Walker in Meridian portrays thirteen mother-characters. With only exception of Mrs. Hill, all the mothers are good and loving ones. The protagonist Meridian, like Margaret of The Third Life of Grange Copeland is a good and bad mother at the same time. She by abandoning her own son becomes the mother of black community through her struggle for the civil rights of her own people. Mrs. Hill’s foremothers are the examples of good mothers as they have sacrificed their lives for the welfare of their children. There are also more than five women-characters including Fast Mary and The Wild Child, who directly or indirectly stand for Meridian’s life. The common thing among them is that they become unwed mothers and face the problems relating to them.

The Color Purple is Walker’s Pulitzer Prize winning novel. There are eight mother-characters portrayed in it. The interesting thing is that except Squeak or Mary Agnes, all are other mothers. Though they are all biological mothers, but for one or the other reason, they have to become other mothers. Besides, there are two maternal relationships depicted by the novelist. The friendship between Celie and Shug is so maternal and intimate that reminds of Alice Walker’s second entry of ‘womanism’ in her most influential book In Search of Mothers’ Gardens (1983). The same type of intimate friendship is between Celie and Sofia.
In fact, such type of friendship or sisterhood is one of the essential features of Black womanhood.

In *The Temple of My Familiar*, Walker as usual presents some biological mothers, four matriarchies, along with two most complicated mother-daughter relationships. Lissie is a towering mother figure. Carlotta, Fanny, Olivia and Nzinga’s Mother are really good and loving mothers. Katherine is the only mother of the novel, who completely fails in her life as a personal and as the mother of Black community.