Chapter – 7

CONCLUSION
“The richness of Alice Walker’s fiction is amazing, overwhelming. A hundred themes and subjects spin through it, dozens of characters, a whirl of times and places. None is touched superficially: all the people are passionate actors and sufferers, and everything they talk about is urgent, a matter truly of life and death. They are like Dostoyevsky’s characters, relentlessly raising the great moral questions and pushing one another toward self knowledge, honesty, engagement…”

(Ursula K. Le Guin, *All Those at the Banquet* 12-13).

In her novels, Walker comes to terms with both the dilemmas confronting African people in America and a part of the solution that must be embraced by them. Her novels make clear the fact that blacks in America suffer from a crisis of the African personality stemming from a three-pronged oppression of race, gender and class. Her novels make clear that the primary enemy of the Africans in America is not so much racism or sexism as capitalism in all its disguises. It is clear that the goal of her fictional art is not to deny the importance of progress altogether but to challenge those who, in its name would negate the values embodied in their folk aesthetic. In other words the goal of her art is to redeem or transform the black culture through narrative fiction. A close study of the interrelationship of race, gender and class in the novels of Walker reveals the emergence of an evolutionary pattern. One can perceive a progressive, thematic and structural development in her works. She uses each novel as a framework for investigating various problems and solution to the African’s dilemmas. In each of her
novels Walker explores many aspects of oppressions afflicting African people. Each successive novel reflects her growing understanding of the nature of the African’s oppression. As her narrative structure develops, she learns to shape her theme artistically so as to provide accurate presentation. One can perceive the thread that runs through and connects novel as one picks up where the other leaves off thematically and structurally.

Many of Walker’s contemporaries focused their attention primarily on racism as horrible affliction black men and women have been suffering from a long time because of their dark skin color. But these writers forgot to discuss another jeopardy; sexism, that is interrelated with racism. They forgot that racism is most vigorously expressed in sexist term. Different from these writers Walker is certainly conscious about demonstrating the relationship between these two oppressions. Walker in her novels insists on placing black people at the center of her work both, as subject and as audience. In portraying the sexism that exists within black communities and demonstrating its relationship with racism, she is speaking to her community about itself and its many participants. Like Audrey Lord, another contemporary Afro-American woman poet, Walker proclaims, that speaking the truth is necessary for survival, especially for those who were not meant to survive. The unique approach of Walker in her description of racism is not only to discuss the problems but also to discuss their causes, effects and solutions. She explores how racism is capable for destroying the individual’s relationship to his own kin, because of his nature to put the blame for every distortion in his life on the white folks and never to accept responsibility for his own degeneration.

All her works express how, sexism, basically is, a part of black mores, a question of power in the black community as it is in all other human cultures we know. So Walker
stands apart from her contemporaries because of her ability to write about the topics that are generally left untouched as taboos and create such by the mainstream writers and audiences. Even today Walker is busy in fulfilling her responsibility of a great artist and continuously raising the topics whose popularity freezes while the issues continue. Walker has consistently received criticism for her sympathetic attitude towards women and she was also accused of being against the men especially Afro-American male. But this was the biggest mistake of the critics because if we study the novels of Walker deeply, we find that her works are not anti male but are pro-female. Walker writes not only about any single part of society in African and African communities but she also writes of the oppressions of women, for instance, in all communities, without being reluctant to name their oppressors. Despite the negative criticism of her novels Walker continues to write from the perspectives of the oppressed and downtrodden. She also points out the impact of oppressions on all members of societies, which are connected, with the social and political issues of eras in which her novels are set. Walker includes issues that are not traditionally addressed in the eras during which her works were written. For instance, she wrote, of social change and activism in the sixties and the impact of sexism, racism, classicism on American society. Her women characters must confront issues relating to sexual politics and sexual dynamics, as well as to sexuality, child bearing motherhood, clitoridectomy, physical and sexual abuse, which simultaneously affected by the political environment of their time.

Walker proposes in her works that all members (even the oppressors) are victimized in oppressive societies and that all members must participate in the healing of the community. All characters of Walker love, forgive and heal themselves by evolving a
humanistic and spiritual approach for understanding and interacting in the world. The protagonists of Walker live a horrid existence of racism and sexism, but even in turmoil they keep their dignity safe. Her protagonists represent the generations of black women touched by the spirit of creativity.

Like other Afro-American authors Walker is very much inspired in her works by African – American folklore. She has polished her art of narration by learning from her ancestors and by diving deep in black culture and tradition. She has used her oral power to explore the history and origin of African people and their culture, as Trudier Harris in his essay “From Victimization to Free Enterprise: Alice Walker’s The Color Purple” says, “The link to orality is one of the keys to unlocking African-American literary history”(16). This folklore encapsulates the history of black and white interaction in the United States and, what is more it epitomizes the sentiments expressed in protest literature. The African-American folklore has exercised a tremendous influence upon the characters and words that Alice Walker creates, as well as upon the very shapes of her novels. Many great Afro- American authors have used the power of their speech to expose the painful condition of black people under the colonization of the white power structure. Walker is also one of them and gives voice to her experiences of Southern life as a black woman. For her depiction of black life she has selected the themes such as the quest for freedom, the nature of evil and the powerful verses of the powerless.

In her novels, Walker demonstrates a keen awareness of, concern for, and dedication to African people in America. Like a scientist she uses each of her novels as a laboratory in which to research a hypothesis as to the nature of oppression experienced by African people and to provide a solution to it. She shows that Africans all over the world
are one people having the same history and sharing the same plight since they are seen as one by those outside the African nation, no matter what their class or status might be. She reveals the fact that collective resistance is the only practical way to alleviate the oppressions African people have been experiencing.

In real sense Walker’s novels are the exploration of the meaning of blackness—what it means to be black in white America, to be a black woman in a white male hegemonic society, to believe in an indigenous African culture in a world that endorses only Euro centric culture, and to strive for visibility in a society in which blackness signifies invisibility. Her novels record the triumph and complexities of black life from the painful past of slavery to the frustrating racist present.

Walker, to give emphasis to her feministic intention or to define the intention of her writing, coined a new term womanism. About the discovery of this term she says: “I just like to have words that describe things correctly. Now to me black feminist does not do that. I need a word that is organic, that really comes out of the culture, that really expresses, the spirit that we see in black women. And it’s just womanish” (ISMG 80).

Black Feminism and womanism both have the same purpose behind their struggle and both make efforts for the liberation of women (black women) from the shackles of the afflictions like racism and sexism. Like many other black feminists, Walker in her novels strives to bring out the black woman from the dark cave of rejection, humiliation and nothingness into the open sky of love, celebration and self-affirmation. Although both these terms feminism and womanism have many similarities within yet there is a little bit difference as Walker herself explains; “Womanism is a empowered form of feminism just as purple is a bold and empowered version of lavender” (ISMG254). For
Walker purple is a symbol of unconquerable spirit of women and their strength, will power and love for life. This term womanism plays an important role in her novels. Basic contribution of this term in the writings of Walker is to give birth to sisterhood and to unite all women for the welfare and salvation of the whole black female community. Here they fight together against the male domination in society and, come out victorious in the end.

Walker’s voice in her novels is an openly propagandist protest against sexism and the patriarchal power structure. For Walker, feminism, and black feminism especially, involves the bonding of women as “a continuation of the struggle for self definition and affirmation that is the essence of what African American means” (ISMG 289). She thinks of these women, who love other women, sexually or not, as being “whole,” from “wholly” or holy or, as she says, “round women,” who also have concern in a culture that oppresses all black people (and this would go back very far) for their fathers, brothers and sons, no matter how they feel about them as males. She says, “My own term for such women” would be ‘womanist’...a word that said more than that they choose women over men. More than they choose to live separate from man. In fact, to be consistent with black cultural values...it would have to be a word that affirmed connectedness to the entire community and the world, rather than separation” (ISMG 81).

Walker has bounded these women by her concept of womanism and sisterhood. For being the victim of same afflictions and for experiencing the same pain and traumas, these women of Walker become sharer in each other’s pain, sorrow, laughter, and dreams. Being neglected and discarded by their men they become the cause of each other’s salvation and celebration. They are sisters in body as well as in spirit and the
spirit cannot be broken. They find shelter and a kind of soothing balm for their burning bosoms in love and support of their sisters. The words used by Walker come directly from the depth of the Afro-American culture. With this language Walker takes us with her inside her characters. Love redeems, meanness kills, and this is the principal theme of her novels, the theme of most of the world’s great fiction.

The storytelling style of her novels gives Walker an especial attention among her contemporaries. The words chosen by Walker for Celie undoubtedly portray before us her pain, suffering and loneliness. To survive against impossible odds and to forget her loneliness, Celie chooses to communicate with God about her painful life in the form of letters. This epistolary style used by Walker makes her novel more attractive and touching. Walker’s women no longer remain passive listeners. They present themselves not through their men but through the private voices of their imaginations or through their daring words or acts.

The way in which, Walker has portrayed her characters, gives an indication of how free her protagonists are to be themselves within the shackles of conventions. If they cannot act, they speak. If they cannot speak, they can at least imagine their salvation and being on a place where they can exercise autonomy, and present themselves before the world in the way as they are. Through their actions, words or dreams, they discover their originality and self. And to bring out their originality and self they face every hurdle of their way with a brave heart and firm determination.

Walker shows how both afflictions of racism and sexism had become like scales or webs over the eyes of these black people. Everywhere they looked, they find it and this horrible vision of these crucial jeopardies turned their thoughts to violence and revolution.
Walker creates a multiplicity of permanently maimed and damaged souls within the family structure who feel no pressure for responsible living and assume exemption from the demands of responsibility. Through her novels Walker provides to her readers an opportunity to enter into her life and to know that how words live and breathe for her and how writing for her is a living process rather than primarily the production of artifacts for publication. Walker is brave enough to depict in her novels the delicate issues as racism and sexism by going deep in the life and experiences of black women. Marthal J. McGowan in Critique, 23, 1981 speaks; “Alice Walker’s unsparing vision of black women’s victimization in sexual love—their isolation and degradation or grotesque defeat by despairing and aspiring black men has been a major element or theme in her growing body of work”(371).

Walker has used many powers or vehicles to transcend these disparate and painful circumstances of her characters in order to affirm their identity. Resistance is one of these vehicles, and another source of empowerment for these black people is their ancestral past that is essential for an understanding of the present and for a sense of identity. As Walker writes in her novel Meridian; “For it is the song of the people, transformed by the experiences of each generation, that holds them together and if any part of it is lost the people suffer and are without soul”(56). The message of her novels is that all living things in this universe must love themselves, and make a combined effort to liberate their spirit and to come out from whirlpool of racism and sexism as brave warriors.

This pantheistic approach of Walker provides to her characters the power to move further in their life towards their salvation. She teaches them to survive and to keep their capacity; confidence and will power alive amid the afflictions like racism and sexism.
She has created them with the power of love, self-celebration and a curiosity of self-discovery. These Afro-American characters of Walker keep their spirit blossoming and even in the storm and thunder of slavery and colonization they never let them slip into the ditch of hatred and humiliation. They always strive to elevate and uplift not only to them but also whole community. And this positive approach of Walker to face the traumas of racism and sexism establishes her on a special position differ from her cotemporary authors, who are also writing about theses afflictions but without giving any solution. No doubt that these contemporary authors of Walker are revealing the horrible wounds of the black people but they are not providing any balm to heal these wounds. This is the unique approach of Walker towards making a utopian world, based on love, peace and togetherness, that not even a single character of her novels remains untouched from this soothing balm and this transformation in his or her life. At one place Walker herself says that the greatest value a person can attain is full humanity, which is a state of oneness with all things. About this love philosophy of Walker Pamela Smith in her essay, “Green Lap, Brown Embrace, Blue Body: The Eco Spirituality of Alice Walker” says; “…characters of Walker learn the lesson of love through wildness and hatred. They grow towards love and self empowerment as a plant reaches through stone towards the sun”(26).

In this thesis we have focused our main attention on Walker’s eye-opener revelation of the sexist and racist tragedy of black women and their struggle, resistance and empowerment against their exploitation and degradation. In this way Walker celebrate the revolutionary spirit and intellectual and artistic capabilities of black women, that keep them moving towards freedom to come out of the chains of racism, sexism and
patriarchal power structure. Walker has created these women with artistic tools to give them vitality. This is the uniqueness of Walker as an artist that even while discussing the serious subjects and the burning issues like racism and sexism in her novels she uses art as a tool to soften the life of her long suffering black people to give water to their dry roots and to turn their barren lives in to fertile lands. Her women characters are deeply rooted in Afro-American artistic culture, and use their art as quilting, composing, writing, singing, painting, and sewing, to resist every kind of attack on their body, mind and soul. Basically the art of quilting has a special place in her novels. As the quilt that Sofia, Celie and Shug work upon in the “sister’s choice pattern with little yellow pieces, look like stars” (53) stands for love and beauty. It is even an act of health and happiness as sewing helps Celie to get over hate and despair. Walker finds sewing a creative process: a way to empowerment and a key used by her black women to unfold their deep hidden creativity because to sew quilts by assembling small pieces of cloth takes the form of self creation and provides immense relief to them. For Walker and her women quilt making is a form of sharing that comprises a sense of solidarity beyond spiritual relief.

Readers of Walker do not merely remain readers but they become her friends. For them Walker turns into their best friend, guide and role model; someone who has rescued them from passivity or anger; some one who has taught them sensuality, respect, humor and redemption. Walker, with her magical words snatches out everything wrong present in her reader, and fills them with all the positive qualities to live a loving and peaceful life. And because of these positive qualities her women come out of the mud of racism and sexism with the powerful tool of sisterhood that empowers them and enables them to
ponder about their self, and with this self-love and self-meditation they complete their journey from powerlessness to empowerment.

Walker’s negative portrayal of patriarchal society somehow is the result of her experiences in her personal life. Being a girl, she was always neglected by her brothers. Walker never enjoyed in her life the love and support of her family. In her fulltime and unwanted pregnancy she was humiliated and insulted even by her sister. Initially similar to her character, Celie in the novel *The Color Purple*, Walker turned herself into wood quite disinterested and neutral without any emotion of sorrow or happiness because this was her only way to survive in this patriarchal society. But the greatness of Walker is that in her treatment of black male she is not completely pessimistic because even in the worst conditions she has shown the ray of hope and the magic of transformation in her male protagonists. She never allows her pen to be hateful to anybody. She does not neglect the black men, who are despised and neglected by their women but the moment these exploiters resolve to be repenting and transform themselves into true human being by loving and supporting their women and by repenting about their misdeeds, they are welcomed by these women in their companies as their friends and lovers. In fact the main solution of Walker to every kind of affliction is to create a beautiful world of black men and women based on love, peace, equality and mutual understanding, a world full of happiness and propriety.

In the selection of words or language also, Walker is different from her contemporaries. She has always preferred to describe her character’s speech as “black folk English, not a dialect” a word she feels has been used in a condescending, racist way. When these people use their folk language there are no self-conscious apostrophe
and contractions to assure us that the writer, of course really knows what the proper spelling and grammar should be. There are no question marks to keep us at our distance. As in the novel *The Color Purple*, Celie just writes her heart out, putting words down the way they feel and sound. Here, Walker has used a very realistic language to affirm her existence in a language that can reveal her, pain, suffering and oppression in their real form. The speech pattern used by Walker for Celie transforms her illiterate speech into beautiful and heart touching language, into a speech that reveals what has been done to her by a racist and sexists system.

Walker’s novels are the milestones that provide suitable role models for the future generations. She extends her southern and cultural heritage up to universal level. As a writer, Walker takes a close look at south in all its essence social, economic; historic; however, as an artist with a deep sense of integrity, Walker features diverse characters caught in a spectrum of oppressive situations. Her art become more powerful in projecting oppressive and violent situations to awaken humanity from its abject helplessness so as to aspire for redemption. Her fertile imagination, keen observation, the vibrant, direct and lyrical mode in which she narrates the racial and sexual oppression of her people, her strong conviction in her own ideologies and aesthetic sensibility have combined to leave behind a lasting impression on the readers. The southern heritage and its culture give her strength needed to probe into the depths of human experience. Her own ability as a modern writer gives her the vision to provide hope to the entire human race. In her essay “Politics and Personal Aesthetics in the Color Purple” Rajalakshmi Gopalan remarks about the exceptional quality of her novels:
“Walker’s exceptional ability to strike a delicate balance between the politics of her time on one hand and her aesthetic sensibility on the other gives her works an extraordinary validity and human appeal. The novels of Walker are not mere copies of life but they are the expression of the writer and a kind of transcendental realization. The strength of Walker as a true artist lies in her courage to look at every odd thing with fresh eyes and to recreate something new from this waste material”(145).

In the novels of Walker the tragedies of her women characters are very personal, very real and extraordinary. Walker has shaped these bleak and black characters into hardened clay. On surface level they look different from one another, but inside all of them fight with the same enemy of racism, sexism, age ignorance and despair. Sometimes they are depicted in a condition worse than insects and animals, as narrated by Lissie in her slave condition. This worst condition gives birth to humiliation and frustration and pushes them towards nothingness. These poor black women are very tortured, trapped in the cage of circumstances created by this patriarchal society. Their imprisonment in the hypocritical boundaries basically is the result of their sense of powerlessness and their lack of understanding. Walker gives voice to the experiences of black women by using the south as a backdrop of her novels. Undoubtedly, Walker transposes herself into her writing. In fact at one place Walker herself confessed to Mary Helen Washington that she knew the Georgians, she smelled the burnt of their pain. The novels of Walker elevate black women to the height of great spiritual artist of soul, of their pain, resistance and celebration. Walker has chosen purple color as a royal robe and a symbol of self-love gifted to them by their creative energy that show them the way to the point that they break their chains of enslavement and come out of the darkness of humiliation and degradation into the light of dignity and self respect. Walker encourages all women to
become more politically involved in shaping America’s new priorities and in reshaping its vision. For this purpose she suggests to go back into the history, the biggest shaping power of the black consciousness. She suggests them to have faith in oneness and to move further untidily because their struggle is same and they are moving to the same destination.

Walker always attempts to define and express her own totality rather than being defined by others. She got this art of self-definition from her ideal writer Zora Neale Hurston whose famous work *Their Eyes Were Watching God* has a great influence on her. She was very much influenced by Zora Neale Hurston. In Hurston Walker not only found the authentic material that she needed for her own writing, but in her she also perceived a spiritual sister to whom she became intensely devoted. By 1979, Walker had read Hurtson’s *Their Eyes Were Watching God* eleven times, and declared: “It speaks to me as no other novel, poster, present, has ever done…. There is enough self-love in that one book- love of community, culture, and traditions-to restore a world” (*ISMG* 182). She was so much inspired by this novel that she wrote a poem entitled Janie Crawford after the name of its central character. This poem appeared in Walker’s book of poems *Good Night Willie Lee, I’ll See You in the Morning*. Hurston left such a strong influence on Walker that she set out to bring back into public attention the work, for many years out of print, of the woman whom she had grown to admire, respect and revere as a sister artist who followed her own road, believed in her own gods, pursued her own dreams, and refused to separate herself from the common people. Both these writers have many similarities as the language of black folk culture and the experience of uneducated rural southern women is depicted in the same way by both of them.
Both have the capability and artistic power to transform and regenerate the whole community. They try to search out all that is vulgar, rough and disgusting on this planet by replacing it with love, peace and brotherhood. But in some points Walker is different from Hurston as being born and raised in the all black town of Eatonville, Florida, Hurston remained far away from the racial humiliation and degradation from her early childhood. Unlike Walker her childhood was very happy, blooming and nourishing with love and care of her people. She experienced the beauty and power of her black community and the dignity of her black culture. She never felt the inferiority and the enslavement of the blacks under the racial hegemony. Perhaps this is the reason that in her works she has explored and celebrated the black life on its own terms, not primarily in its relationship with white society. As a novelist she was never forced by her circumstances to worry about the oppression of her black people by their white master for being unknown to this problem in her own life. But similar to Walker’s Celie in The Color Purple Hurston also focuses on a young woman Janie’s quest for identity and self-definition in her novel Their Eyes Were Watching God. Walker’s character Celie finds the source of her origin in the character of Jennie. Like Janie she struggles throughout her life for coming into consciousness and to find her voice and developing the power to tell her story. The destination of both women Celie and Janie is same; the search for identity but their ways to reach this destination are different as Janie finds her way by being true to her own poetic, and creative consciousness while Celie discovers her path by establishing a bond of sisterhood with others.

For contemporary readers it is important to see the significance of Walker’s position as an Afro-American author. In fact an individual cannot be separated from the
context in which he or she was created, and while this is true for most great fictional characters, it must also be seen as a fictional author herself. Walker’s novels illustrate how her characters are subjectively determined within a social framework and a mass of cultural codes, yet at the same time Walker struggles to find her position in the world, and to comfort her own race and class. Thus, while Walker painstakingly acknowledges the factors that make up the fabric of southern society, she pushes characters of all races and classes into transgress fictional spaces where they contest the very fabric from which they were conceived. Walker is able to create real possibilities for exploring human nature. In terms of contemporary literary theory Walker strives to break down, social, culture and language binaries, and arguably she did so for liberating her characters from designations that empowered some and oppressed others.

Walker’s fiction has been welcomed by many reviewers not only for its striking theme and content but also for its unique presentation, for its language and style. Many critics for her themes as “positively poetic,” “eloquent and masterful”, praised Walker. As Peter Prescott called her novel *The Color Purple*, as “an American novel of permanent importance.” Another critic of Walker Smith counts her in the company of great novelists like William Faulkner for her excellent presentation of the southern Afro-American problems in her novels. Walker got inspiration for using the southern dialect in contrast to Standard English, from Hurston. With the help of this dialect she has affirmed the value of Afro-American culture in her novels. This is the language adopted by Walker to present her characters as living human beings made of flesh and blood with their deep-rooted African folk culture. Walker’s diction is alive because in her fiction she prefers a plain, unaffected diction and moderately open forms which permit her to reveal
homespun truths of human behavior and emotion, and sing quietly of love for family, friends and other black people. Most of the women of Walker are peasants, from Celie in *The Color Purple*, to Ruth’s mother and grandmother in the *Third Life of Grange Copeland* and Meridian’s female forbearers. Bound to the land and their husbands (or fathers), worn by toil in the fields and the demands of child bearing, these women are the underclass of the underclass. Walker’s novels function as examples of revolutionary action against the oppression of those colonized by the imperialist gaze. Basically Walker champions the group of revolutionary writers and is determined to uproot the system of domination. Celie’s voice in the novel is powerful, energetic, subtly humorous, and incisively analytical at the basic level of human interactions. The voice is perfectly suited to the character, and Walker has breathed into it a vitality that frequently overturns the problematic areas of concern in the novel. The form of the book, as it relates to the folk speech, the pattern and nuances of Celie’s voice is absolutely wonderful.

Walker uses self-love, as the chief weapon to fight with every kind of abuse, and humiliation. This power of self-love paves the paths of her women characters to the point that they break away the male made chains and come out in a new incarnation of empowerment and self-dependent women. Walker makes them prepared to fight eye for an eye, tooth for a tooth. Now without any restriction and interference they cry when they need to, laugh when they want to, straighten their hair if they want to, straighten their hair if they take a notion of it. Basically they change their economic, political and moral status with this power of self-love.

Walker’s writings are continuous whole; for her writing is a healing process as well as communication with various audiences, human and non-human, in the past as
well as the present. She often explores apparently similar ideas, feelings and images in various ways. Artistic excellence of Walker presents her before us as an orchestral composer who uses different instruments and arrangements to get inside the nuances of an apparently simple sound. Walker celebrates ordinary life and everyday emotions in her novels. One of the major themes of men and women must pass through to find themselves and each other. The sympathetic approach of Walker for her race and sex and her anger and protest against every kind of injustice done to her race and sex makes her work more effectively and made it possible for readers to identify their injustice and suffering with these characters of Walker without and biasness of race and sex.

As Walker depicts racial and sexual taboos, she diagnoses abusive behavior as an expression of self-hatred and fragmentation of female wholeness as effected by conformity. Walker’s recurrent argument is that healthy self-definition stems from self-knowledge and self-love. She firmly believes that one of the chief reasons of women’s exploitation has been the men’s greed for possession. She feels it is so because at that time as in this novel, she says: “Men were strong, at least during those periods when women were weak from child bearing, begin to think owning women and children…when men saw, he could own one woman and her children, became greedy and wanted as many as he could get” (TEMPLE 86.) For Walker, black woman, as a result of history and her experience, must be in struggle against these two distortions of life. Until she is free, her people cannot be free and until her people are free, she cannot be free. About the woman characters of Walker, says Rashmi Gaur in her essay; “Self Realization and Search for Identity in The Color Purple”, “Through these characters, Walker has epitomized the realities of the lives of the black women and registered a vociferous
protest against the debilitating sexism of the patriarchal society” (167). Her protagonists understand that the respect she earned in her life was to continue to live it, and not to give up any particle of it, without a fight to the death, preferably not her own.

Besides economic independence and self-recognition, lesbianism is another tool of resistance used by Walker in this novel. When these women of Walker find their male counterparts unable to make cordial relationship with them and to satisfy their desires, they begin to discover this pleasure in their sisters’ love, dedication and commitment. For them, it not only serves as a sanctuary of relief from all types of oppression, but also facilitates their psychological growth by permeating them with self-esteem, self-identity and strength, and helps them to present a united front against them.

Unquestionably, Walker’s are the novels by a woman, about women, which argue for the rights of women. The particular right that Walker champions, a struggle to protect/defend/encode is that which ensures that African women will continue to "possess the secret of joy." For Walker, this possession and its joy are both threatened by the "literal destruction of the most crucial external sign of womanhood: the vulva itself" (Warrior 21). Characters of Walker prove the African proverb quite authentic that says, that the African race is a rubber ball. The harder you dash it to the ground, the higher it will rise. Walker proves this proverb quite authentic by creating warrior like characters who fight with the greatest enemies of humanity as racism and sexism. This revolt of them is suppressed by their masters but after a while they again start in a more energetic and powerful way. Black woman of Walker struggles for spiritual survival and tries to bloom among the prickles of racial and sexual jeopardies. Walker herself remarks about the heroism of Black woman in her book Warrior Marks,“ The black woman is one of
America’s greatest heroes…Not enough credit has been given to the black woman who has been oppressed beyond recognition” (146).

As a novelist Walker is excellent not only in her content but also in providing the artistic perfection to her novels. As quoting the lines of Virginia Woolf, that “the words ride on the back of the rhythm”, Ursula K. Le Guin remarks, about the poetic beauty of Walker’s fiction; “The rhythms of Alice Walker’s prose are beautiful and characteristic, flexible, vigorous, easy, the gait of hunting lion. Even when the pace of the story crowds and races and the words are chocked with meaning and intent, the rhythms never falter. The lion goes her way” (268).

Narrative technique used by Walker in her novels is also unique. She narrates the tales of Afro-American people in her magical words.

Walker affirms the survival and liberation of black women through the wisdom and strength of others. Walker’s novels affirm the idea that the survival and liberation of the black women can only come through learning from our past misfortunes and manipulating them to meet beneficial ends. In the novels of Walker, the basic responsibility to bring out the whole community from the slavery into the heaven of empowerment and freedom is mostly undertaken by a single individual in whom Walker vests the responsibility for survival because it is the action of a single individual that has caused the breakdown of experience or identity in private lives, and ultimately in the public or social life of the group. These selected individual characters of Walker become repositories of decent behavior, as well as harbingers that the message embedded in the lives of generations of blacks will not be lost.
Novels of Walker basically celebrate the empowerment of black spirits in their ordinary life and of every day emotions. These are the novels of spiritually, love for the land and black, love for all people regardless of color, sexual preference or age, and love for all living things. These are about compassion for the oppressed, the grief of the oppressed, acceptance of the unchangeable and hope for everyone and everything. The characters of Walker similar to their author attain this position of empowerment not by violence, hatred and anger but with love, forgiveness, self-affirmation and self-realization. Walker is against violence in her novels because it can make one powerful. As she knows that violence is not radical enough, love is more radical, and it takes a lot more courage. Throughout her writing and in her own life, she adopts the feelings of forgiveness and amity even with the oppressors and enemies. Thus Celie, Meridian, Fanny and other characters of Walker leave the violent past and empower themselves, with self-love and self-transformation and by transforming their oppressors into lovers and friends.

For the characters of Walker self-discovery and self-definition consist in learning to recognize and trust their inner voice, while rejecting the formulations others try to impose upon them. Increasingly, they come to validate "the kingdom of God within" and to refuse to conform to the world. Walker has created them finding the ground of their being, a source of value and authority out of which to live. Despite their oppressive environment, they grow steadily in self-knowledge and discernment. These women of Walker have the sensibility of a poet who, in Wordsworth’s phrase, "sees into the life of things." Their creative power of writing, singing, sewing, dancing, painting and weaving becomes their true source to make them laugh whole heartedly without any malice in
their hearts and thus to live a life of true empowerment. Walker being a true artist created her characters with some or other artistic qualities to provide them strength to fight with their enemies as great warriors and to uplift them with the power of their words, yarns and various colors.

The main strategy that Walker proposes in her novels is for the women of black community to bond even if this entails a relationship that is of a lesbian nature. As in her novels her woman characters as Meridian and Lynne, Celie, Shug, Sofia and Mary Jane, Carlotta, Fanny and Nzingha establish such bond of sisterhood that engenders individual expression while providing mutual support. Such a relationship provides protection from male violence and cruelty, while also allowing women to appraise the world through a perspective beyond that imposed upon them by men. It also liberates women from the isolation that is enforced upon them in heterosexual relationship/ nuclear family units. Sometimes this bond turns in to lesbian relationship, a bond of mutual mothering. Women reach this point because men have treated them despicably and because they need other women’s company. The lesbian relationship as an homosexual effective bond between women that perforce eliminates the presence of men, is an act of rebellion against the patriarchal cultural order, and also the sole means, for women scarred by men, to find someone who will love and cherish them and whom they will love and cherish. The lesbian relationships in the novel also demonstrate that, unlike a heterosexual relationship which inheres male hegemony leads to female subordination and arrested development, lesbianism is the rite of passage to selfhood, sisterhood and brotherhood, as it is seen to be for Celie in the novel The Color Purple. So in one sense Walker has used this lesbianism to register her resistance against the sexual oppression of women by male.
Thus in all her novels, Walker reveals black women’s struggle, the courageous fight they put up against a racist and sexist society that create hurdles in their growth towards selfhood, wholeness and empowerment. For achieving success in this struggle they develop a consciousness to inherit the black heritage, the new black woman’s sense of race and place, extending their vision into a larger world. Walker provides to her women the power to radicalize the sense of female community to find their true joy, by literally lifting the African women to the level of history, which has long “circumcised” their identity from its memory. They attempt to redefine the community of African women who have endured the “mutilation” of their gender identity in order to protect what lays at the center of their spiritual and racial heritage the Afrocentric self.

These women of Walker gradually awaken from their subordinate status as black female, daughter, wife and mother to their own self and try to become the maternal providers of the large black community. About Walker’s concern for black women in her works writes Mary Helen Washington in her book *Black Women Writers*, “From whatever vantage point one investigates the work of Alice walker poetess, novelist, sort story writer, critic, essayist, and apologist of black women it is clear that the special identifying mark of her writing is her concern for the lives of black women” (229).

The stories of the novels of Walker in real sense are the fables of recovered origin, where her characters recover their origin by reviving the fables of the racial and sexual past of the black women. From these fables of their ancestors they learn to survive and affirm their self even amid the afflictions of race and gender. These are the fables of culture, tradition and African dignity. These fables prepare them to struggle, to fight, to resist and to celebrate their own self by recovering their African origin. Basically these
Fables of the African ancestors are very much needed to understand the present society that is the consequence of its past.

Thus in this research work, we have discussed not only the problems of racism and sexism as shown by Walker in her novels but also a depiction is here of the anger, resistance and the protest of the black people against these discriminations. An effort is made in this thesis to examine the quality of black women’s suffering through racism and sexism, especially within the system of slavery in America from the 17th to the 19th century. Moreover, an attention is paid to black women’s status in and after slavery. This is done, on the one hand, in order to illustrate and underline slavery’s inhuman conditions black women suffered from and, on the other hand, to show the continuation of racism and sexism after slavery. In her works Walker has tried to reveal that the assumed changes of conditions for black women nowadays are rather superficial and that discrimination and inequality, compared to men and white people, have been persisting.

Here, an approach is also applied to make a discovery of the African roots of Walker and their influence on her works. This is only because of the nourishment of these ancestrail roots that Walker became successful to provide the healing touch to these long burning people in the fire of afflictions, by the touch of her magical words. She has interwoven very artistically the African traditions, beliefs and folklores in her books. In this thesis, along with the problems of racism and sexism, human interpersonal relationships collectively are examined connected with a consideration of the novels’ investigation and analysis of human nature, psyche and emotions. Here, the analysis focuses on questions that are essential for an entire comprehension of racial and sexual perspectives in the novels of Alice Walker for example: from where these discriminations
originated? What is the nature of these jeopardies and to what extent black people and their families are affected by these discriminations? Which tools have been used by these black characters of Walker to keep them alive with full vitality even in worst conditions of their life and how did they celebrate them by making a resistance; a protest against every kind of oppression and became successful in bringing them out from the ditch of slavery, humiliation, self hatred, pain, suffering and nothingness on a beautiful land of freedom, respect, self affirmation, celebration and empowerment? What significance do the various interpersonal relationships have?

Basically Walker gives a lesson in her novels that just as African people as a whole must bond together to survive and to progress, so also must African women- the most exploited adult sector in the African community- help one another to live healthy and wholesome lives. Her novels trace the path to the understanding of the self. Her women characters enhance their way by coming in the relationship with other black women. Defining themselves through bonding on various levels- physical, intellectual, emotional and psychic- with other black women- these black women seek their own identity. In nurturing each other. Each black woman in the novel becomes a mamma for the other. Walker celebrates the strength of black women against the heavy odds of racism, sexism and classicism. Walker’s development of the women characters in her novels parallels the way in which most black women writers like Zora Neale Hurston, Toni Morrison and Paul Marshall combine their concern for feminism and ethnicity. Though her women characters do not have a societal support system that pays them well or appreciates their beauty and the dual role as house maker and provider they assume in their families, they keep their vision and their energies focused on that which is
worthwhile and sustaining. Walker’s emphasis on their selflessness and their strength is not to romanticize their limited opportunity for adventure or fulfillment outside the boundaries of their own communities. Instead it is to show the value and the difficulty of the role that they play.


