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Ritual as a Means of Black Solidarity in Alice Walker's *The Temple of My Familiar*

Tribhuvan University

Ritual as a Means of Black Solidarity in Alice Walker's *The Temple of My Familiar*

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Approval Letter

This thesis submitted to the Central Department of English Tribhuvan University, by Keshab Prasai, titled “Ritual as a Means of Black Solidarity in Alice Walker's *The Temple of My Familiar*” has been approved by the undersigned members of the Research Committee.

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Abstract

The Temple of My Familiar is depiction of the life of black characters from the South who constantly engage themselves in traditional myth, music, story telling and so in throughout the novel to resist the whites domination and create peaceful harmony or social solidarity and spiritual unity among the blacks. . . . the writer depicts the life of black characters from the American South who constantly engage themselves in music, storytelling, bringing mythical symbol to avoid traditional system of white domination and to assert a philosophy of social solidarity and spiritual unity among the blacks.

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I. INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTORY BACKGROUND

The acclaimed writer, Alice Walker seeks writing as a way to correct wrongs that she observes in the world, and has dedicated herself to delineating the unique dual oppression from which black women suffer racism and sexism. In her great novel, *The Temple of My Familiar*, she talks about African American life in America. The novel opens with a description of how the white, patriarchal, world encroaches on a rural, matriarchal, native South American community where Carlotta's mother Zede grew up: but the opening also reveals how the vibrant aspects of that community's culture still manage to endure and make inroads into the dominant culture. Zede's mother (also named Zede) makes a living sewing feather capes and head dresses that are worn by participants in "Traditional village festivals" (3). When these festivals are forbidden (by whom, the young Zede does not know, but we can guess), the elder, Zede makes the garments for a "cold little gringa blonde" who sells them to tourists at an enormous new hotel that [has] sprung up near their village" (4). Later, after the younger Zede escapes (with Carlotta) to San Francisco. She continues to make the headdresses and capes, now for gays and artists involved in the 60s counterculture, thus the garments become "the image of [women's] subsergfvence under an encroaching patriarchy" (91). But the artistry of the feather capes, like Arveyda's music and Lissie's stories, continues to survive under the surface of the dominant culture and nourshes those who are open to it.

Arveyda's own name suggests this: He is named after "a bar soup for India" have Ayurveda that his father gave to his mother (393). Ayurveda is an ancient system of wealth that is concerned with the type of spiritual balance pursued by the characters in the novel. It is as if the power of this positive spiritual system has

managed to filter down to Arveyda ever through the world of advertisement, attesting to the power and resilience of the system itself: Although the advertisement men have appropriated it, Arveyda understands the message when he receives it. Similarly, we are told that Suwelo is the "brune for wholeness" who takes the entirety the novel (291). Suwelo needs more help than the others to release his story because he has been co-opted by the dominant culture. He is a professor of American history who has never read a book by a woman. Gradually, as he hears the stories that revise his personal history, as well as that of the world, Suwelo quickly finds himself listening to stories from Lissie and her husband Hal about their own collective pasts and then to stories from Lissie about history back to the beginning of human history and about the domination of women by men. Her stories, which make up a large portion of the novel, sufficiently undermine, redefine and humanize Suwelo's understanding of history to make it almost irrelevant. Finally, only with constant support and pressure from Lissie and Hal, Suwelo begins talking about his affair with Carlotta, break up of his marriage, and finally the terrible relationship of his parents and the horror of their death in a car accident. It is his declaration of the power of words, "talking is the very Afro-disiac of love", that brings him to a partial reconciliation with Fanny" (322).

The Temple of My Familiar generally focuses on the development of four characters: Arveyda, Carlotta, Suwello, and Fanny. These individuals are spiritually fragmented at the beginning of the novel; but by shedding the destructive aspects of their lives – anger, sexism, classism, and attachment to unsatisfying careers – and by getting touch with their parts, they falls some balance and peace by novel's end. Arveyda, a Jimi Hendrix-like rock musician – Shaman, falls in love with his mother-in-law, Zede, his wife Carlotta, a professor of women's studies, is crippled by her anger and hurt over this betrayal. Suwelo a co-opted, sexually troubled professor of history,

spends much of the novel at the home of his recently dead uncle, speaking with his uncle's lover Miss Lissie, who remembers everything", including, past lives that go back to the beginning of human history (52). Suwelo's estranged wife Fanny, who, like Lissie, has connection with past lives and spirits (albeit not as coherently), abandons an administrative position to be a masseuse. The importance of a culture beyond the individual is most clearly demonstrated by the way that story telling brings the characters to a new understanding of the world and their place in it. Fanny, Carlotta, Suwelo, and Arveyda all need to come to terms with the stories of their parents, they seem to be adrift until they learn where their roots are. But more importantly, they need to retell those stories: Fanny to Suwelo in letters from Africa as well as to her therapist, Suwelo to Hal and Lissie, Carlotta to Fanny and Arveyda, and his music. Walker's characters seek methods of connecting to their pasts and each other – through storytelling, music, massage and of course love and sex – and energetically avoid the traditional system of the white male domination while asserting a philosophy of spiritual unity and balance among the blacks. So, in the novel ritual is a means of solidarity among blacks.

Recognized as one of the leading voices among black American women writers, Alice Walker has produced an acclaimed and varied body of works, including poetry, novel, short stories, essays, and criticism. Her writing portrays the struggle of black people throughout history, and are praised for their insightful and riveting portraits of black life, in particular the experiences of black women in a sexist and racist society. In her writing, she explores the "issue of the spiritual survival of black people, in particular, black woman" (In Search 150). In her essay, she writes, "I am preoccupied with the spiritual survival of my people ... I am committed to exploring the oppression, the loyalties, the triumphs of black women" (192). She

values the bond between women, their culture, their emotional flexibility and their strength. she focuses on the saving of lives through change and redemption. The redemptive quality in Walker's work goes beyond the thematic to the very heart of her aesthetics. Even ravage the land and the lives of people, Alice walker emphasizes the healing power of love and the possibility of change: both personal, and social.

In 1989, Walker published *The Temple of My Familiar*, which includes some of her characters from *The Color Purple*. The work attempts to span the history of the world for the past 500,000 years. It's a global book that seeks to tell nothing less than all of human kind's history, in a mix of folk tale style. *The Temple of My Familiar* is full of monologue and dialogues, chiefly by and among black women. One of the protagonist of novel travel from his California home to attend an uncle's funeral in Baltimore. Suwelo is grateful for the respite provided by this visit; his wife Fanny (the grand daughter of Miss Celie, the heroine of *The Color Purple*) has discovered feminism and wants a divorce. His spirit lift when he meets Mr. Hal and Miss Lissie, two old an aged friend of his uncle's. These two drop by regularly to talk and reminisce; they prove themselves remarkable founts of memory, particularly Miss Lissie, who confides that she has lived in countless incarnations dating back to the dawn of time. Suwelo believes, short of nuzzling Miss Lissie out the door; that is probably his only option. For her voluminous story, to which a growing Chorus of other voices gradually contributes, is an extended myth that must be taken on faith or not at all. Parts of it are enchantingly beautiful. She remember primeval African as the Edenic Cradle of Life; when woman and man lived separately and thus at peace and when Lions killed only to put ailing fellow creatures out of their misery.

The present research work has been divided into four chapters. The first chapter presents an introductory outline of the present study, an introduction to Alice

Walker, a brief outline of *The Temple of My Familiar* and critical review of literature. The second chapter presents myth, music, oral story telling, spiritual call and response from Black Aesthetic Movement of 1960 as literary tools to interpret the text. On the basis of theoretical modality outlined in the second chapter, third chapter will analyze the text at a considerable length. It will sort out some of the extracts from the text as an evidence to prove the hypothesis of the study. The fourth chapter is the conclusion of this research.

CRITICS ON *THE TEMPLES OF MY FAMILIAR*

The themes of Alice walker are generally revolutionary, and confront the contemporary experiences of black Americans, particularly those of black American woman and racism, their culture and social history. Due to this, her works especially *The Temple of My Familiar* began to attract the attention of many critic. This novel has been both respected and berated in numerous essays and reviews. Critics have tried to analyze the novel from different perspectives. Several critical interpretation range from the issues of race and gender to the relationship between her characters. Since it is impossible to include all the responses to the novel in such a small research, an attempt will be made to present some representative responses selected from the huge pile of criticism.

According to Tom LeClair, this novel is purely African American which deals to the description of black people and their attachment to the culture, myth and history for their solidarity. He expresses:

Temple centers on the spiritual emergence of two prodigies – fanny and Arveyda—but they are not intellectual prodigies like those in infinite Test. Fanny and Arveyda are prodigies of the spirit: they have access to spiritual and emotional contests beyond the known world.

[...] Thus a strange hierarchy exists in the characters in the novel between the spiritual "haves" and "have nots". Lissie, Arveyda, and Fanny achieves an awareness of their place in existence with a sublimity scarcely paralleled in contemporary literature. By the novel's end, Lissie recalls her incarnations at the beginning of human history, and Arveyda and Fanny unite as incarnations of (a very different) Adam and Eve. Compared to the universal union that takes place between Arveyda and Fanny, Suwelo's and Carlotta's achievements seem a little incongruous in this between Arveyda and Fanny, Suwalo's and Carlotta's achievements seem a little incongruous in this between Arveyda and Fanny, Suwalo's and Carlotta's achievements seem a little incongruous in this novel so concerned with liberation and equality. Apparently some spirits are more equal than others. (4)

So, the characters in the novel concerned for equality and liberty through their equal attachment to their culture. Another critic Busby Margaret remarks Walker *The Temple of My Familiar* as an alternative tribal history of the universe and it is the collection of myth, oral story telling and culture of African American with owes of woman. The book describes the black old Miss Lissie and tribal history and prevent the reader from focusing too soon on any one element of the picture and thus being distracted from the effect of the whole canvas. She remarks:

Central to the book is wise old Miss Lissie, an extraordinary Black Woman with silvery white locks that are 'wild', abundant, glorious (imagery of hair features a great deal throughout; a spirit that has had many bodies, who each time she is depicted in a photograph or painting appears different 'Lissie means "the one who remembers

everything", she says, and her memories of previous incarnations are vividly, and educationally [...]. It is a book of magic and spirituality, a book with meaning beyond the literal. As Miss Lissie says, 'the memory, like the mind, has the capacity to dream, and just as the memory exists at a deeper level of consciousness than thinking, so the dream world of the memory is at a deeper level still. (2)

Similarly well known critic J.M. Coetzee comments that the novel, *The Temple of My Familiar* a novel in a loose sense. Rather, it is a mixture of mythic fantasy reversionary history exemplary biography and sermon. It is short on narrative tension, long and inspiritual message. Coetzee writes:

History is certainly written by people in positions of power, and therefore principally by men. The history of the world-including Africa-is by and large a story made up by white males. Nevertheless, history is not just story telling. There are certain brute realities that cannot be willfully ignored. [...] No doubt the world be a better place if, like Fanny and Suwalo, we could live in bird-shaped houses and devote ourselves to bread making and massage, and generally adopt Fanny's mother's gospel: "well are all of us in heaven already!"

Furthermore I readily concede that inventing a better world between the covers of a book is as much as even the most gifted of us can hope to do to bring about a better real world. But whatever new worlds and new histories we invent must carry conviction: they must be possible worlds, possible histories, not untethered fantasies; and they must be born of creative energy, not of dreamy fads. (2)

Another critic Julie Wheelwright comments Walker's novel as black woman oppression and she takes *The Temple of My Familiar* is full of mythic elements. This is the novel that celebrates the experience of blacks in contemporary America and counters the stereotype that all are mired in poverty, drugs and crime. She regards:

The central theme of black woman's oppression for Walker stems from the destruction of the African mother-goddess that paved the way for patriarchy's ascendancy. This links Lissie's previous incarnations with Fanny Nzigho's journey of self-discovery to the newly independent African state of Dolinka, where she is reunited with her father and half-sister. But here, the conflicts between the American Fanny and her African relations are submerged beneath a resolution and harmony that ring false. (35)

Next critic Kenna Dieko comments *The Temple of My Familiar* as psychological novel according to Dieke Lessie sets into the journey of self to realize the wholeness in life. The novel offers writer to one more opportunity to consummate a momentary fusion of her own being with the souls of others, brought into a psychic intimacy by some affinity of creative intellect and cultural elements. He remarks:

The Temple of My Familiar can be as romance of the development of the human psyche, in which the human ego strives consciously and unconsciously for wholeness. Man as separate from woman, humans as separate from animals, one race as separate. Another, the old as separate from the young—all that foists a gribbled self-destructive narcissism, a half-personality at best. But as C.G. Jung opines, "... since everything living strives for wholeness, the inevitable one-sidedness of our conscious. [...] As a romance of the psyche, The

Temple of My Familiar follows three kinds of wholes that procluse: the first, anterior to the parts-the human world of men and women; the second world of men and women the second, composed of the parts- the earth of living organism, including humans and animals; the third, knitting into one stuff the parts and the whole – the universe the magic circle of reunion and integration. (512)

However, Alice Walkers novel *The Temple of My Familiar* is taken different critic, Tom Clair takes this novel as African American and attachment to their culture myth for their solidarity. Bushy Margaret takes it as tribal history of protagonist Lissie. Julie Wheelwright takes the book as celebration of experience of blacks in contemporary America. Kenna dieko takes it as romance of the development of the human psyche, in which the human ego strive consciously and unconsciously for wholeness. But, I am interested to research in unexplored area of the book. So I found the novel full of myth, music, oral story telling and spiritual call of response to racist the white male patriarchy and to assert the philosophy of social solidarity and spiritual unity among the black community.

II. BLACK AESTHETIC MOVEMENT

INTRODUCTION

The Black Aesthetic movement is a way of thinking about artistic expression that while recognizing its indebtedness to the agitprop of the Black Arts movement, and confidently employing the form and themes of previous black arts, ironically parodies all claim of genealogical purity or continuity. The Black Aesthetic Movement is about understanding aesthetic blackness as a practice and not status. It is the practice of generating new signs and transgress dominant cultural norms, and recognizing that every new expression, no matter how subjective, is historically hybrid-it is related genealogically to all these utterances that come before it and are around it. This constitutes the collective enunciation of Black experience. Nathan A. Scott, Jr remarks:

Black Art is the aesthetic and spiritual sister of the Black power concept. As such, it envisions an art that speaks directly to the needs and aspirations of Black America. In order to perform this task, the Black Art Movement proposes a radical reordering of the western cultural aesthetic. It proposed a separate symbolism, mythology, critique and iconology. (306)

The Black Aesthetic movement is more of a flash of resistant subjectivity than it is a popular movement of resistance to transactional capital. In other words, it is a form of modernism, rather than postmodernism, in its understanding culture the Callao producing the authentically liberated subject. This is, perhaps, a harsh critique, depending on one's understanding of the relationship between modernism and postmodernism. The principle theme of the Black Aesthetic movement is (1) multicultural tradition of expressive practices, with a peculiar capacity for generating

new sign that transgress dominant cultural norms; (2) the power of black expression to reinvent experience, and enunciate on new world; and (3) this postliberation aesthetic is being realized by a new black intelligentsia that synthesizes the Harlem Renaissance and the Black Arts movement.

Black Aesthetic movement of the 1960s makes use of Black vernacular in rhythms and moods emulating jazz, ragtime, swing, boogie-woogie and the blues applied mostly to lower class Blacks, and addressed particularly to Black mass audience. Langston Hughes and Sterling Brown have gone back to folk tradition and folk experience. Many others have resorted to the use of the Black conventions of "call and response", "doubles", "signifying", "slave narratives", spirituals "and "tactics" in their literature. In the Black Aesthetics, a manifesto of sorts for the national Black movements of the 1960s, writer after writer railed against the U.S. cultural establishment's dichotomous formulation of humanist universality versus black racial particularity. The cultural nationalist intellectuals of the 1960s embraced instead a notion of culture rooted in racially specific experience. Henry Louis Gates, Jr. remarks:

What has happened within the profession of literature to elevate the status of African American and other 'minority' texts? Multi-cultural literary studies emerged from social and political movements within the academy in the 1960s, such as black studies, woman's studies, affirmative action recruitment of students and faculty members, and the growth of area and ethnic studies programs. [...] Until the early 1970's, however, black scholars did not find the MLA a welcoming institution, they formed instead the predominately black college language Association, which still thrives today. (289)

The effort to articulate a collective racial politics commensurate with postmodern times typically takes off from an interrogation of the 1960s cultural nationalist projects of racial representation. A representative instance of this counter-nationalist bent of postmodern models of community building is bell hook's essay "Postmodern Blackness" which has become an influential resource for postmodern theorists, such as Edward Soja, who seek to formulate a new politics of a difference that might overcome the essentialist and totalizing tendencies of modernist politics. In this essay, hook labels black nationalist movements as the 1960s modernist on account of their universalizing agenda as well as their commitment to identity politics. On the face of it, this is an arguable assertion: the black cultural nationalism of the 1960s is more persuasively characterized as postmodernist in that it deployed identity politics to contest the universalist pretensions of modern western culture. In the question of identity E. Balibar remarks:

We should notice that each of these polarities, whether directly or obliquely, delimits a different field in which to think the 'human' the psychological (or socio-psychological) field, the logical (or logico-metaphysical) to field, the political field and the historical field. the question of identity, at least of r the last two centuries, has implied an attempts to define identity either psychologically, or logically, or politically or historically but once one wants to combine superimpose these different pertinences, once one is no longer wiling to sacrifice any of them, is it not inevitable-today, in any case-that "identity" should be designated precisely as "cultural"? Or reciprocally, that "culture' should be designated as the most general element in which to identify identity? (176-177)

So, culture is itself identity. Culture and tradition is used as a tool to explore identity in many areas of society. African Americans also used this tool to resist the white domination and try to create their own identity. So, African American started their writing in the unique complexity and diversity of the African American cultural heritage – both western and African, oral and written, slave and free, Judeo – Christian and Pagan, plantation and urban, integrations and Black nationalist—have affected tensions and fusions that, over the course of time, have produced a highly innovative and distinctive literature, as well as musical forms. Thus, they stated Black art movement in literature.

THE BLACK POWER AND BLACK ART MOVEMENT

The slogan Black power was popularized by Stokely Carmichael and Willie Ricks during James Meredith's protest march through the South in 1966. The phrase has a meaning as large as the history of struggle of black people against racism in the United States. Conceptually, black power expresses the determination of black to define and liberate them. This concept rests on the fundamental premise that group solidarity is necessary before a group can effectively operate its strength in a pluralistic society. Stokely Carmichael and Charles V. Hamilton explain that the concept of Black power is one of the most legitimate and healthy developments in American politics and race relations in their time: it is a call for black people to unite, to recognize their heritage, to build a sense of community to define their own goals, to lead their own organizations and to reject the racist institutions and values of that history. Black power thus seems to have a wide range of meanings, from the developments of economic and political solidarity and the attainment of full equality, and revolutionary overthrows of old political and economic structure (44).

Many legal actions were operated to materialize the concept. Among sit-ins, marches, freedom rides, boycotts, demonstration, and voter registration drives the most salient civil rights events of the period were the 1954 Supreme Court School desegregation decision, the 1963 March on Washington, and 1964 Civil Rights Acts. The two dominant yet vastly different black leaders of the period were Malcolm X, the charismatic, militant Minister of the Nation of Islam and its chief spokesman until 1964. The equally charismatic, non-violent southern Baptist preacher who rose to national prominence as the moving spirit of the Montgomery bus boycott in 1955, of the passive resistance tactics of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), a major civil rights organization and of the March on Washington in 1963 was Martin Luther King, Jr.

In the early 1960s, the example of the emerging free African nations and the Cuban Revolution helped to raise revolutionary nationalism of many black Americans and spurred the development of black studies programs in colleges across the nation. Black power advocates redefined the liberation struggle of black Americans as part of the larger struggle of oppressed peoples against Western imperialism. They revive indigenous theories of the colonial relationship of blacks to the dominant culture of the United States. They explained the theory of black American as subject of domestic colonialism. Indeed, the American Negro shares with colonial people many of the socio-economic factors. Like the people of the underdeveloped countries, the Negro suffers in varying degree from hunger, illiteracy, diseases and ties to the land, urban and semi-urban slums, cultural starvation, and the psychological reactions to being ruled over by others not of his kind. From the beginning, the America Negro has existed as a colonial being. the United States brought the colonial system home and installed it in the Southern States. Civil War broke up the slave system and the Negro

was emancipated, he gained only partial freedom, he became only a semi-independent man.

In the revolt against historical exploitation and many beatings, jailings and killings of civil rights activists, blacks in the communication across the nation began striking out in rage in Harlem in 1964, Watts in 1965, Newark and Detroit in 1967, and nearly every city in the nation in 1968 after the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. Responding to the needs of the black lower class, some groups, promoted the development of an indigenous African-based cultural value system. Others such as the Black Panther Party, the Revolutionary Action Movement (RAM), the Republic of New Africa, and the League of revolutionary Black Workers adopted the ideology and strategy of achieving black self-determination by any means necessary, including armed struggle.

"Black Art is the aesthetic and spiritual sister of the Black Power concept", writes Larry Neal, a major proponent of the black arts movement (254). As such, in envisions an art that speaks directly to the needs and aspirations of Black America. In order to perform this task, the Black Arts Movement proposes a radical reordering of the western cultural aesthetic. It proposes a separate symbolism, mythology, critique and iconology (Bell 238). the movements marks its beginning form the Spring of 1964 when LeRoi Jone's play Dutchman stunned the theater world and the other artists in Harlem theater performed their plays, poetry readings, and concerts into the streets of the black community. At the same time black musicians like Little Richard, B.B. King, Muddy Waters and the Supremes became national and international style settlers. Black actors and actresses became more highly visible major roles in the movies and on television. And mass periodicals, presses, journals were overspread.

The black arts and black powers concepts both relate to Afro-Americans desire for self-determination and nationhood; "one is concerned with the relationship between art and politics, and other with the art of politics" (Neal 257). Nevertheless, most black writing of the 1960s has been aimed at consolidating the African American personality.

TOWARD MODERNISM

The term modernism is widely used to identify new and distinctive features in the subjects, forms, concepts and styles of literature and other arts in the early decade of the 20th century, but especially after World War I (1914-1918). The specific features signified by "modernism" vary with the user, but many critics agree that it involves a deliberate and radical break with some of the traditional bases not only of western art, but of western culture in general. Important intellectual precursors of modernism, in this sense, are thinkers who had questioned the certainties that had supported traditional modes of social organization, religion and morality also traditional ways of concerning the human self thinkers such as Friedrich Nietzsche, Karl Marx, Sigmund Freud and James G. Frazer stressed the correspondence between central Christian tenets and pagan, often barbaric myths and ritual.

The Afro-American novel from the 1960s to 1980s has been characterized by continuity and change. During this period, black novelists sought structures and styles appropriate for the imaginative reconstruction of their sense of the double-consciousness of black people as refracted through their particular vision of a rapidly changing experience of social reality and art. The eruption of the Vietnam and Arab-Israel Wars, the assassinations of major political leaders and civil rights workers, the profiteering of multinational corporations, the launching of the first manned flight to the moon, the emergence of black power movement, the influence of the pill in

radicalizing the women's rights movement swept away most of the vestiges of the traditional grounds for confidence in stable universe, a democratic society, and a mimetic approach to art. Ambivalence toward authority (father, presidents, God, family, nation, kingdom of god) with its conflicting attitude of acceptance and rejection, depend and spread to all aspects of life and to all fields, resulting often in a crisis of belief for many novelists and readers.

In the past, fact was often stranger than fiction, but in the modern and contemporary worlds the line between fantasy and reality is nearly invisible. To save the soul of his black followers, a contemporary shepherd, the Reverend James Jones encouraged hundreds to drink poison Kool-Aid. Challenging the authority and purpose of literature cultural theorists and literary critics celebrate it as a non-discursive, non-conceptual modes of discourse that has no authority and purpose beyond its symbols, sings and structure. How do contemporary novelists respond to this breakdown, social absurdity, and discrediting of the moral authority of art? More in deep air than in hope, more concerned with problems of language than with problems of life, postmodernist Euro-American novelists such as John Barth, William Gass, Kurt Vonnegut turn to fantasy and black or gallows humor (Bell 245). In contrast, a contemporary Afro-American novelists attempt to displace personal ambivalence and social absurdity with a new order of thinking, felling and sharing based on self-determination, a sense of community and a respect for human rights, most, like John O. Killens, John A. Williams and Alice Walker continue the tradition of realism; while some like, Toni Morrison, explore poetic realism. Others, like Margaret Walker, Ishamael Reed experiment with modern forms of slave narrative, romance, fable and satire (Bell 245).

There was less discussion about black American fiction in the media than about Euro-American and African fiction, and both the black and white media were more interested in promoting black poetry and drama. Nevertheless, there was more than enough ferment in the literary market place and writers workshops for writers like John O. Killens, John A. Williams, Alice Walker, and Toni Morrison to fulfill their roles as black artists in defining the complexity of Afro-American life and to realize that in spite of all its technical experimentation the autonomy of the novel as a system of artificial signs is qualified by its interrelationship with other cultural system, especially linguistic and ethical.

In their definition of Afro-American life, these writers therefore continue to tap the roots of Afro-American culture and institutions –black music, speech, religion, land and family repudiating those codes and conventions that impede individual and collective growth and self-determination, and celebrating those that enhance these humanistic objectives. Consistent with recent social developments, there is more emphasis on the importance of music speech, and religion as the foundations of contemporary Afro-American culture and the principle modalities for expressing the complex double vision of Afro-American character. Bell writes, "contemporary Afro-American novelists are still basically inclined toward a redemptive, paradoxically progressive and apocalyptic view of history even when the surface patterns are dialectical, cyclical, spiral" (269). They have increased the range of their thematic concerns from the religious and political to the economic, psychological, and philosophical aspects of contemporary life.

MODERNISM AND POSTMODERNISM

The term 'postmodernism' is sometimes applied to the literature and after world war II (1939-45), when the effects on western morale of the first war, were

greatly exacerbated by the experience of Nazi totalitarianism and mass extermination, the threat of total destruction by the atomic bomb, the progressive devastation of the natural environment, and the ominous fact of overpopulation. Postmodernism involves not only a continuation, sometimes carried to an extreme, of the counter traditional experiments of modernism, but also diverse attempts to break away from modernist forms which had, inevitably, become in their turn conventional as well as to overthrow the elitism of modernist 'high art' by recourse to newspaper cartoons, and popular music. Many of the works of postmodern literature – by Jorge Lucas Borges, Thomas Pynchon, Ronald Barthes, and many others – so blend literary genres; cultural and stylistic levels, the serious and playful, that they resist classification according to traditional literary rubrics. And these literary anomalies are paralleled in other arts by phenomena like pop. art, op art, the musical composition of John Cage and the films of Jean-Luc Godard and other directors.

If Euro-American modernism challenges or violates traditional assumption about what is real, true, and therefore meaningful by separating the literary text from the external world and defining it as an autonomous, self-sufficient world, then postmodernism compels us to consider that literature has no meaning, that its meaning exists only in our consciousness, or that its meaning is to be found in the indeterminacy of its language. Theorists like I.A. Richards, Thomas Cassier, Suzanne Langer, T.S. Eliot, Carl Jung, Northrop Frye, Roman Jakobson, and Roman Ingarden argue, as Gerard Graff lucidly explains in *Literature Against Itself*, that "literature and art dealt with experience only as myth, psychology, or language, not as an obstacle of conceptual understanding" (48). Graff further contends:

Structuralist critics analyze individual works of literature as signifying systems of hierarchical structure whose meaning is the dynamic

relationships of the differences from and oppositions to other elements in the system itself. they attempt to demystify the modernist concept of literary autonomy by showing that literary language, linguistic conventions and textuality, not the imagination or consciousness of the writer are the constitutive agents of writing. (18)

Mimetic readings of text for Miller and other structuralist critics then are considered misreading. Most contemporary Afro-American novelists subscribe neither to this old reductive theory of mimesis nor to the new gods of textuality and self-referentiality.

Postmodernism in America moves beyond modernism of the 1920s in an effort to expand the possibilities of the novel and to reconstruct liberated lives of the generation of the 1960s. That generation's sensibilities were shaped and misshaped by modern Jazz, rock music, drugs, war in Vietnam, political assassinations, black power and women's rights moments, civil rights and antiwar demonstrations, campus sit-ins and building take-over-all brought to the American people daily by black and white or living color, by the magic of technology and television. with the employment of fantasy, parody, burlesque and irony, the men of writing proclaim the death of art's traditional claims to truth and herald the birth of new sensibility. Whether by conscious ironic reconstruction of ancient myths and rituals or the self-conscious innovativeness that explores the limits of language and the liberating power of the creative process. White postmodernists like John Barth and Ronald Sukenick expressed the belief that conventional elements of fiction were exhausted and ineffective in expressing the truth of contemporary life and that the basis of a new fictive reality resided either in the individual perceiving mind or in the act of perception, not in the world outside of the novel (Klinkowitz 3-11).

Margaret Walker, Ernest J. Gaines, William M. Kelley, Charles Wright, Ronald Fair, Clarence Major, Ismael Reed, and Toni C. Bambara are some of the black modernists and postmodernists, they are influenced by the tradition of western literature and committed to the freedom of hybrid narrative forms. But because the legacy of institutional racism and sexism that shaped and continues to shape their consciousness fosters ambivalence about their culture and because the struggle for social justice continues, most modern and postmodern Afro-American novelists are not inclined to neglect moral and social issues in their narratives. Unlike their white contemporaries black American postmodernist are not merely rejecting the arrogance and anachronism of Western form and conventions, but also rediscovering and reaffirming the power and wisdom of their own folk tradition. Afro-American ways of seeing, knowing, and expressing reality, especially folk speech, music, and religion (Bell 284).

Thus, while insisting on their freedom as individual artists to choose their own subjects, form, and style-widening the range of influences on their novels from literature and music to painting, film and pop culture. Walker, Gaines, Kelley, Fair, Wildeman, Wright Bennett, Reed, and Major achieve, in Bell's words "their distinctive voices simultaneously within and against a narrative tradition of continuity and change" (284). This they achieve by experimenting with different combinations of myth, ritual, parable, legend, allegory, and satire in a post-modern mode of romance called by Robert Scholes 'fabulation'. Scholes defines tabulation as a more verbal kind of fiction, a less realistic and more artistic kind of narrative; more shapely, more evocative, more concerned with ideas and ideals less concerned with things. the continuing power and wisdom of the tradition of spirituals, sermons, blues, and jazz distinguish on those of Euro-American. So, American way of writing change they

uses myth, music, story telling tools white domination and to create harmony and solidarity among the Afro-Americans.

BLACK ISSUES

Black Arts movement purposes a separate symbolism, mythology, critique and iconography in place of western cultural Aesthetic. The different Black writers started their writing from their own African tradition and mythology, they looked back at their own past. So, African American writer who lost their own religion, land, culture so they bring myth, music, oral storytelling etc. element in their work of art from African past. The myth, music, oral storytelling they celebrate the Black Aesthetic movement and resist the white domination. They bring the novel's character and hero from black community. Their main issue is cultural such as using myth, music, and other African norms values in the work of art. African writer takes ritual in their writing prominently to celebrate their own movement. Ritual is a major part in their writing because in Black Art movement Black writers enter to explore their own cultural heritage. Ritual is very important element for black writer to support their Black Aesthetic Movement and it helps them to celebrate their own culture against the dominant white culture and help to create solidarity among themselves. Ritual, myth, music oral storytelling which is their own African heritage Black writers brings such things in their text and make Black issues to celebrate the Black movement in literature. Ritual is the only major element for them to resist and unifying themselves in their own racial unification and glorifying them in the dominant African context.

Myth

Myth is a conception which runs through many areas of contemporary thought: anthropology, psychology, comparative religion, sociology and several others. So it is hard to define exactly what the term means. However, within the limit

of the present study, myth is taken as a living reality, believed to have once happened in primeval times, and continuing ever since to influence the world and human destinies. To clarify the nature of myth etymological distinction is often made between logos and mythos. Logos refers to the rational faculties expressed in the forms of analytical or dialectical reason. Mythos on the other hand is an expression of truth as a totality, a totality inclusive of reason but not reducible simply to reason. It is a narrative expression of a total mode of perception of the reality of the world. Myth in its journey often collides with legend, folktale, religion, ritual, etc.

Many people tend to regard myth as a story or narrative about gods or legendary heroes. This generalization is true to some extent for there are myths that deal about these characters, yet there are some others that deal with some natural phenomena. Again there are some more which neither deal with gods nor with nature but with some rituals. At its best anthropological approach brought a fresh vitality to the study of classical religion and myths and enabled its followers to recover from the lethargy that had overtaken them. The modern return to mythical forms is in part an attempt to reconstitute the value-laden natural environment that physical science has tended to discredit. At the same time it is the repossession of a cultural heritage. Though history itself has produced the increasingly rational, disinherited mind of modern man, history may also be invoked as a non-rational, mythical memory, a man-made record of men's intuitive conceptions of themselves. These mythical forms are still available because in another sense they are outside of history, residing in a timeless world below the threshold of consciousness. Myths are public and communicable, but they express subliminal mental patterns that come close to the compulsive drives of the unconscious.

Different critics and scholars have different notions about the subject. Ellmann cites James G. Frazer, one of the influential, regards myth as "a primitive habit of mind that we have largely overgrown" (Introduction 617). And it is clearly associated with religion. For Malinoski, myth making function is universal. Ellmann and Feidelson quote, Malinoski in their introductory chapter "Myth" for whom myth making function is universal. According to him:

Myth is not a fanciful way of describing natural phenomena or a disguised chronicle of actual persons and events, rather, mythical stories serve as a practical cultural force, completely shaping and motivating the moral and social life of a group. The primitive does not feel his myth as a fiction referring to something other than itself, but as an articulation of cultural values. Sanctified by its archaic origin, the living form of myth gives warranty to every individual act, though and ritualistic performance. (Introduction 618)

Thus the validity of mythical thought makes it a working force beneath the surface of the rational or civilized mind. This notion brings Freud who often likes to show the affinity between myth and the unconscious. For Jung it turns to be "collective unconscious" and he puts forward the notion of "archetypes" which are instinctual and primordial.

The understanding of Afro-American novel requires the understanding of the roots of it. Nothing is rootless or without base; however, some roots are hardly clear. While looking at the roots Afro-American novel, one has to look at the oral narratives, folktales, myth, legend that have provided the fertile soil and foundation for the written indigenous literature.

Afro-American authors who have been writing literature are in trouble. The trouble comes with their rejection of white legacy. They take a departure from the tradition established by the whites and at the same time they are in trouble of forming their own tradition. This problem of influence is in Bloom's term "anxiety of influence" (Bloom 248). These authors want to write something that should be noble and new. For this, they turn to use their own resources which can give them newness and novelty. Writing from the minority group brings them nothing as long as they follow the tradition of Whites and Europeans. the problem of influence led them to dig up the hidden resources of their own which could give their works form and would be t heir 'own' works.

In *The Afro-American Novel and Its Tradition* Bernard W. Bell explains the narrative origin of Afro-American writers, "To explain the richness of the Afro-American novel as a hybrid narrative whose distinctive tradition and vitality are derived basically from the sedimented indigenous roots of black American folklore and literary genres of the western world" (Introduction xii).

It is their own culture that could give security to black writers. The constant threatening of whites could be faced with the rich antique culture—art, literature, beliefs, etc. of Afro-Americans. Though blacks while living in America were not the Africans only, they were at the same time influenced by the social systems of America. Nevertheless, they retained their past which would give them a solid base where their culture and civilization can flourish.

Almost all the literary figures who are involved in the issues of blacks have turned toward the rediscovery and revitalization of myths legend and ritual as appropriate sign systems for expressing the double-consciousness, socialized ambivalence and double vision of the black experience in America. Blacks, living in a

minority, see, know and understand one thing but need to confirm by another 'eye'. This is stark experience that blacks have faced in American society. Symbolic representative representations of crucial life situations that have been shared by people, residually oral Afro-American myths are moral as well as speculative stories that are archetypal in pattern and ethnic in content. They explain the origin of things, activities of gods and historical human dilemmas. They are, therefore, generally combined forms of myth and legend that are concerned with the founders of an ethnic group or lineage. Bell explains the unifying principles of Afro-American novel in the following lines, "Afro-American novel is the quest for identity as a free people of African ancestry and the fulfillment of individual potential by merging a divided, alienated self into a truer and better unified, literate self" (36).

Thus, Afro-American novel heavily depends on the mythic consciousness and black values for dignity and identity. The liberation or freedom is possible only when their identity is established. This is how mythic elements provide stuff for Afro-American novels from the very beginning. The anxiety of influence leads to them to the stories and songs which are told and transmitted from generation to generation.

The black women writers who played so big a role in the development of the American novel in the seventies and eighties have had the strongest sense that they are speaking from a doubly repressed but real tradition. Among these, Alice walker is a writer of high ambitions, strong mythic powers and epic sweep.

Music

Afro-American songs and music mark a distinct cultural signification in American hybrid-culture. The genesis of Afro-American music dates as back as the eighteenth century, or the time when the enslaved Negroes were commercially deported to the southern plantation, railroad construction, cannalzones. These people

could bring nothing with them but the memory of their past rituals, music, tradition systems from their land. They also could proudly locate themselves in an exclusive way in the cultural cross-roads of America, and get the identification of a distinct colour even in an all inclusive melting pot.

Every Afro-American history at once is a history of the oppressed, penalized and paralyzed black victims. So no history is complete without the reference to the situation in which Negroes were "destined" to live. The birth of their music and song therefore, obviously is the product of the lynching and the lashing the Negroes suffered. Callously treated by their white master, imposed to a more than dawn-dusk menial labour, whipped and bled to death for no mistake at all, the black slaves were so unfeelingly handicapped. Primarily the songs were a great source of relief as the songs were the ventilation through which the oppressed feeling of a people could pass away. second they were a silent but loud protest, and finally, they were a herald of future hope and regeneration.

The first African arrivants were in a state of dilemma before they could do something on their own. They were disallowed to fully enter into the life of a larger society. This may be the reason why they might still have chosen to retain and perpetuate certain elements of their African heritage. They really had no choice once denied of true acculturation. The alternatives then, were either to remain in a state of cultural limbo divested of home land-, which in the long run is no alternative, at all- or to cling to as many as possible of the old ways of thinking and acting. The slaves' oral tradition, their music and their religious outlook served the latter function, and constructed a cultural refuge at least potentially capable of protecting their possibilities from the worst ravages of the slave system.

Basically there are two types of Afro-American songs and music: spirituals and secular. The formers are religious songs, which include hymns, church songs, payer and so on. the slaves beseech with God for their freedom, while sometimes they curse the cruel master, other times they rejoice in the natural disasters that harm to their masters' plantation and economy; wail and cry; sob and bemoan their deadly living and ask for justice with God; finally, solace themselves with the inevitable truth that death equals all: rich or poor, master or slaves. the secular songs on the other hand are a modification and alternation to the changing shift of time. As America gave an urban-industrial look, there appeared changes also in the nature of slave work, there broadened the horizon of Negro culture and consciousness. New time demanded new changes and the accordance in the field of song and music was secular songs and music (L.W.L 217).

Secular Music and Protest

Black secular music and song were an addition to the expressive dimension of their state. The study on such songs over a period shows that a very sense of protest was deeply rooted from the day of its emergence. To word this in another way, protest has been one of the motivations and objects of exposures. But to argue that Negro secular song has functioned primarily or even largely as a medium of protest would distort black music and culture. Blacks do not seem to have spent all their time reacting to whites, and their songs are filled with comments on all aspects of life. Even greater would probably be the distortion to assume that a people occupying the position that Negroes have in the American society could produce a music so rich and varied with few allusions to their situation. Secular song is not demented by such reactions; it offers a new window onto the lives and into the minds of a large segment of black population.

For millions of Blacks during the century after emancipation the normal outlets for protest remained closed. They were denied the right of political expression and active demonstration. When black song is understood as protest and resistance in less restrictive and more realistic sense, less political and institutional forms, it is taken to mean that the song served as a mechanism by which Negroes could be relatively candid in a society that rarely accorded them that privilege, could communicate this candor to others whom they would in no other way be able to reach, and could assert their own individuality, aspirations and sense of being.

Blues and religious songs generally are not vehicles for the telling of explicit chronological, developed stories. This is a shared characteristic of all black song, "They never embody personal comment and reaction and put their message across through repetition hints, indirect reference and allusion," Harold Courlandor argues (240). As Bruce Jackson has maintained, the structural units in Negro folktales are typically the metaphor and live together not to create a story but instead accumulate images to create a feeling. Jazz is structured in the same vein; its function is that of telling people jazz feel rather than offer a smooth plot. Jazz, also therefore, is a document of protest, complaint and resistance to white dominance.

A number of twentieth century secular songs continued the symbolic practices of twentieth century slave lore, the most common of these were the ballads of the boll-weevil the damaging of cotton by an insect in the 1890s, 1920 in the South, Mexico, Texas, Georgia Plantation, Greene country. The song had an indirect satire to the owners and the double meanings were always hinted at. They believed that God finally sent the boll weevil to jumble them, to turn them bankrupt. In Texas, Negroes sang of an equally indomitable gray goose who was shot while in flight and took six

weeks to fall, six weeks to be plucked, six weeks to boil, and then neither fork nor knife could penetrate his skin:

So they throwed him in the hog pen, Lawd Lawd, Lawd,

He broke Ol' Jerry's Jawbone, Lawd, Lawd, Lawd,

So they taken him to the sawmill, Lawd, Lawd, Lawd,

He broke the saw's teeth out, Lawd, Lawd, Lawd,

Finally, he was flying across the oven, Lawd, Lawd, Lawd. (L.W.L. 241-242)

The convicts took this song as means to express their defense against the inhumanities of the whites in their prison life. There are still voices of the workers digging railroad tunnel in the south expressing their wish to their "honey." More direct and open secular work songs threaten the masters to leave the job. The songs also captured the fury of the prisoners against the prison captain who gave birth to a blue-eyed miscigenated baby in touch of one of the woman prisoner. Therefore the narrator in Jazz comments to many people died but the papers will not publish. In 1915 blacks in Alabama sang that if a white killed a Negro they hardly carry it out to court, if a Negro killed a white man they hung him like a goat. Blues and other forms of secular song captured the demand and pressure of time. Their songs pare about massive burden of economic and social injustice, of disaster and calamities, of Great Depression and train collision, of blood and sinking of titanic, of murder and race riots, of world wars of the assassination of John F. Kennedy and the administration of the presidents.

Oral StoryTelling

Oral story is short narrative in prose of unknown authorship which has been transmitted orally. The term, however, is often extend to include stories invented by a known author which have been picked up and repeatedly narrated by word of mouth.

Oral story are found among the people everywhere in the world. They include myths, fables, tales of heroes and fairy tales. Oral story telling in literature: literary voices and narration, the evocation of oral styles in written fiction. Much of this work raised interesting mentions about such issues as the intersections of narrative styles and ethnic identity and the relation of writer to audience with considerable reluctance. The present sophistication of academic studies oral story telling seems to me to require a special issue devoted solely to this topic. Primarily, then, this issue is devoted oral story telling styles and communities, organizations, ritual setting or public performance, unspoken narratives are also represented including Cambodian classical dance, and the clothes line project's painted shirts that carry women's accounts of gender-related violence in addition, some essays explore the relation between writing and the evocation of healing and empowering stories. The authors in this issue write not only as academic researchers, but also from other perspective – as colleagues of the narrators they study, as family member, as learners coming to their informants for education, as service providers, as tellers of their own personal stories – and this variety of point of view illustrates significant feminist contribution to academic scholarship.

Thus, Black Aesthetic movement is the practice of generating new sign and raise them dominated cultural in every new expression. So, black writing from the Harlem Renaissance started to explore their own cultural heritage in literature and celebrate it as Black Art movement. Black writer continued this tradition in modernism and postmodernism also they raise voice in literature from their own symbol and icon. They brings black ritual, myth, music, oral storytelling as their dominant literary elements. which helps them to celebrate their Aesthetic movement in literature. They started different literary chain then canonical and resist with the

Euro American canonical literature. As other many writers from Black roots, Alice Walker also started her writing with such prominent tools in her writing. In her novel *The Temple of My Familiar* she brings such Black Art movement's issue and resist with dominant literary tradition, or glorifying the Black Aesthetic movement.

So, the creative writers like Walker started their writing with new style. They used their traditional myth, music, story telling and spiritual call and response in their art. They create characters from African origin and celebrate the culture and tradition throughout the art to established the identity of Black in America and to make solidarity among themselves. They take Black art movement in their art and take ritual as defensive tool against white domination and celebrate Black aesthetic movement of America.

III. RITUALS IN ALICE WALKER'S *THE TEMPLE OF MY FAMILIAR*

INTRODUCTION

Walker divides the work *The Temple of My Familiar* into six major parts, each consisting of diverse vignettes that project iconographic narrative movement. Alice Walker not only tells a story in each movement, but also conveys its underlying metaphysical meaning by a carefully selected icon or mythic image, pretty much in the convention of African cosmological art and iconography to reflect the African culture in her art. Behind the insistent particularity of each individual story is a serious quest, albeit unconscious, for the demonstrable values of wholeness. Insistently and consistently, characters in the novel are in motion, even when it appears they are in conflict, toward an underlying kinship that binds them with one another and with forces beyond themselves. For Walker this act of seeking means a basic freedom, which only a bird can enjoy, to range over all time to employ any subtheme, to consecrate a limitless range of subject matter, to begin where she pleases, and to stop where she wishes. The basic intent is to trace human life in its pancosmic and mythical dimension through all its protean turns and twists, all its recesses, all its races and peoples.

The Temple of My Familiar is almost all talk, monologues and dialogues, chiefly by and among black women. Suwelo, a black professor of American history, travels from his California home to attend in uncle's funeral in Baltimore and to dispose of the house that comes as his inheritance. Suwelo is grateful for the respite provided by this visit, his wife Fanny (the granddaughter of Miss Cilie) has discovered feminism and wants to divorce. It is not that she has stopped loving him, as she tells him. Gloomily, Suwelo decides that his generation of men had failed woman. His spirit lift when he meets Mr. Hal and Miss Lissie two old age friends of

his uncles. These two drop by regularly to talk and reminisce; they prove themselves remarkable founts of memory, particularly Miss Lissie, who confides that she has lived in countless incarnations dating back to the dawn of time. Relating her experiences as a slave girl being transported to America. She interrupts herself to warn Suwelo. Suwelo believes short or hustling Miss Lissie out of the door, that is probably his only option. For her voluminous story, to which a growing chorus of other voices gradually contributes, is an extended myth that must be taken on faith or not at all parts of it are enchantingly beautiful. She remembers primal Africa as the edenic cradle of life, when women and men lived separately and thus at peace and when lions killed only to put ailing fellow creatures out of their misery. But then the men decided to force their way into residence at the women's encampments which Miss Lissie sees as the first of many tragedies.

The impact of Lissie's revelations upon modern black consciousness is traced in the lives of Fanny and her ex-husband, Suwelo, a middle class academic. Suwelo finds his authentic self by absorbing Lissie's message, Fanny finds hers by opening herself to her dreams her archetypal memories – and by journeying back to meet her African Kinfolk. Suwelo learns that there are better things than philandering and watching football on television. By the end of the book he has rejoined Fanny and lives with her in a house shaped like a bird in which they have separate wings. As for Fanny. The woman in her consciousness raising group had taught her how to masturbate. Suddenly she'd found herself free. Sexually free, for the first time in her life. At the same time, she was learning to meditate, and was throwing off the last clinging vestiges of organized religion. She was soon meditating and masturbating and finding herself dissolved into the cosmic all delicious. How seriously can we take Lissie's Europe, whose aboriginal "dark peoples" have been exterminated by white

invaders, or her Africa, which reads like an overlay of South Africa over a vaguely realized Nigeria?

In Walker's novel *The Temple of My Familiar* she brings so many African rituals in the text. But most prominently she brings the African myth, music, oral storytelling in her text. She takes myth, music and oral storytelling as tool to explore the text with African American characters and celebrate their rituals as means of their solidarity. Her character trying to connect their past through myth music, oral storytelling to resist the domination and make normally among themselves. So, myth, music and oral storytelling is main black issues raised by Alice Walker in her novel.

MYTH IN *THE TEMPLE OF MY FAMILIAR*

Myth is the subject of great importance, it is not only bears the fanciful events about primitive people but also carries the heavy truth of the past. So, myth is the reliable sources to know about the life and socio-cultural development of primitive people. Myth plays the role to safeguard community by strongly asserting belief in it. This belief in myth empowers and assists in every step of human life. Myth is omnipresent and its power is spread in every sphere of life. This power is inherent in human language. So, it functions along with language. In Alice Walker's *The Temple of My Familiar* writer exposes this element to show African American heritage in her art through language. Walker divides novel giving different African American mythical symbol into six parts. In first part writer present Peacock image to represent African cultures in her art. Such animal imagery has great value in African culture. In part two Walker's present image of fish which has great value in African American society. In third part writer uses other mythical symbol snake to represent the African American culture in her art. In part four Walker presents another animal mythical symbol owl to make her art pure African American. In part five writer present tortoise

a mythical symbol and finally in part six Walker presents the lion another animal image. Walker present these six mythical symbols in six parts of her book to present African culture and heritage in her art to make her art purely the African American art. Which is reflection of Black Aesthetic Movement in the African American literature.

The novel opens from the South American Setting. The initial paragraph describes the African life style and describes with African tradition or mythical references. Writer describes about Carlotta's grand mother, zede and her clothing which is typical Afro American.

In the first paragraph Walker presents the life style of African American woman in South America and their attachment with their tradition. Walker shows how the tradition rooted in the Afro-American generation and their respect to the mythical which is shown as features. Walker presents happy and prosperous life of Afro American in South America with their tradition and music. Walker presents different mythical images to make the novel Afro-American using elements of Black Aesthetic movement of 1960. Walker describes the zede a character of Novel and her room where she is living. She writes:

She was binding Peacock feather together to make capes, using the broken and partially ruined feather as in set pieces in shoulder bags. She watched him suspiciously form lowered, tightly controlled, brid like eyes. He could see he confused her. Brown skin, kinky hair, beautiful body, ready simile. She looked at him. Sandly, as it remembering him, and the thought she snift let, as if she had a cold, or was about to weep. (17)

Walker presents such mythical images in the life at Arveyda and Zede. The character of Walker's novel *The Temple of My Familiar* seeks methods to connect their past through myth to resist the white domination. Myth is means of their cultural identity. The characters of Walker bring different types of myth and traditional symbol in their life to make their lives happier and they celebrate their myth and cultural heritage too. As the plot develops, the writer brings different mythical images in the book. Zede and Arveyda talks they brings a different symbolic myth from Jesus. Zede whispered:

My parting from Jesus. People was one of the rest of the world will never see, not will they understand its meaning. I am not sure I understood its meaning myself. I only know that they gave me the last remaining symbols of who they were in the world-feathers from the red African Parrot for my ears, this parrot that had been brought to their village so many hundreds of years ago by the men with rough hair, from a continent they called Zuma, or sun and they gave me, for Carlotta, the three pigeon-e.g.-size stones. (75)

Zede brings the symbol of African American red parrot feathers, she tells that people of world don't know its meaning. Likewise, Zede brings the reference from Africa in her life and makes her tradition much effective in her life. Walker presents such mythical image in her text through the different character. Such myth continuous to survive under the surface of the dominant culture. In the first part another mythical reference presented by a Arvayda to Carlotta. He describes the place of her burn he tells the place of her burn where they also shooting a film. The place is Gnatuzocau Carlotta had never heard this name. Then he remarks:

It was about an ancient goddess he continued "tall and blonde like do Derk, who falls in love with a modern white anthropologist who had stumbled through a cave entrance and into the pre historic era in which the goddess lived. [...] her friend, Hidae, very dark and very wrinkled years old, though she was no older than Zede, and they sat under a tree watching the production of the movie most of the day. Her friend, Hidae, very dark and very wrinkled, had been hired as an extra and represented the ancient ignorant Indians from whom the smart blonde 'Indian goddess', apparently an albino, had sprung. They were in stitches over how the goddess was dressed. In a Likini made of pigeon feathers that are sold to the tourists. And fine gennail polish and Lipstick that looked like blood. On her head she was required to wear a Colossal headdresses, and in this headdress there were fleas. (119)

Walker presents the image of Indian goddess to resist the western value.

Walker presents mythical reference to present the Afro-American lifestyle in South America. The description expresses the attachment to the culture of American towards their tradition. Walker has discussed her writing as both a means of survival and away of healing herself and in search of healing and wholeness through the mythical or traditional references. Walker recognizes the African American and of her ancestry in her art to celebrate own her tradition and make her art full of American text. Walker who believes that in a perfect universe freedom and justice would extend to non-human as well as to human ones. So, she resist the white domination in American society theory the medium of writing. In part third again Walker brings cultural myth to celebrate the black aesthetic movement in her text. She explains:

It was only at the last picture not a photograph. Like the rest, but a painting, of the one broken face among the lot, and African woman wearing the beautiful robes of her tribe but painted against a gray stone interior of what might have been a cathedral, that Eleonora was able to utter a word. And the word she uttered, a job really, was "M'Sukta."
(217)

It is the description of black woman's photograph which is hanging in the library without giving name but there are also some photos where all the white people were named. The description celebrates the image of African American woman and describes with some mythical images of the Africa Walker glorified the African American in the book with bringing so many mythical images from the African tradition and make the immortal through the text. Myth contains extraordinary power to the individual to interact in his society and play diverse roles ranging from moral, legal and social to psychological character of the followers. It explains all the mysterious concepts and gives validity to human thought. So the black fiction, in the work of Alice Walker becomes a means for the myth recovery of the hidden, un-narrated history of the suppression of black. In part four also Walker brings many mythical images likewise in discussion form of Nzingha and fanny. Nzingha remarks:

Well, anyway, there was Persus in his chariot, and in his hand, hanging over the side, was the severed head of Medusa, her snakelike locks of hair presented as real snakes-everywhere in Africa a symbol of fertility and wisdom-and there were even two snakes floating about the corners of her mouth. Her face was horribly contorted, as yours would be, too, if someone had just hacked off your head. The rest of her rather large, womanly body is still on its knees, and in fact she looks decidedly, if

you know how to head the carving differently from westerners, like an angel. Because she is Isis, mother off Horus, sister and lover of Osir is, Goddess of Egypt. The Goddes, who, long before the great mother, creator of all, protector of all, the keeper of the earth. The Goddess. (268)

Walker presents different mythical characters like Medusa a great goddess of Africa her snakelike locks of hair which presented real shakes-all over the Africa which is symbol of fertility and wisdom. Walker glorified the myth of Africa in this reference medusa rest of the large body being angels. Which is Goddess of Egypt. But, all over the Africa is known on Isis the Great mother she is creator of all and protector of all creature Walker brings this mythical reference to make African history and tradition immortal all over the world through the text. She brings the Isis and Medusa the African Goddess to explore and celebrate the African culture here. This is the relative power of Walker to create a place for expression, she empowers her characters with the knowledge of pas which emancipates them and gives their identity as well. Again she brings other dominant mythical reference she writes:

"Except !" she said, in a whisper, "if you are form Africa. You recognize medusa's Wings as the wings of Egypt, and you recognize the head of Medusa as the head of Africa, and what you realize you are seeing is the western world's memorialization of that period in prehistory when the white male world of Greece decapitate and destroyed the black female Goddess/mother tradition and culture of Africa." (270)

Alice Walker articulate truths about the multiple levels of African American women by creating own mythic structure. Likewise in this reference Walker explains

medusa goddess of Africa and glorified the African people because African people only knows medusa's wing as the wing of Egypt, head of medusa as the head of Africa and while male world of Greece destroyed the black female Goddess/mother tradition and culture of Africa. Walker blames to western white as destroyer of black tradition. Walker bring such mythical reference in the text to create the black cultural art in contemporary American world which is effective to resist with white dominant culture and at the same time to glorify the African tradition. It makes her art purely Africa traditional art. In chapter five also Walker brings some dominant historical African figure. Who were fighting for the African right against white. She explains:

There was a Juan Fuentes poster of Nelson Mandela in the window of a picture-framing shop near her therapist's office. It is beautiful, vibrant, with many small images of Mandelas head imposed, smiling, over a huge red ribbon. The same kind of ribbon fanny were, in solidarity with South African struggle; on her denim coat. She decide she would buy the poster on her way home. (296)

Walker brings references of South African leader, who struggles for the right of black in his whole life. Walker describes the poster of Nelson Mandela. Fanny, character of the book also wore the same colour ribbon wore by Mandela in solidarity with the South African struggle. Writer shows the attachment with African struggle with the African American. Nelson Mandela is heroic figure, who imprisoned for twenty five years. Finally in the fifth part of the Walker's book *The Temple of My Familiar* writer brings Sun Goddess in Suwelo's narrative write describes the connection of the sun with the African black people. Suwelo speaks:

We have never considered the sun and enemy, Fanny continued gravely, "only, perhaps in the beginning, a goddess. Then later, no

doubt under coercion and stretching our imagination to the limit, a good. We have never, until very recently, far less than a thousand years, known the cold. Deep in our hearts, because of our relationship to the sun, we believe we are loved simply for being here. There is no reason for us to hate ourselves. As someone has said: I can dig worshiping the sun, because it worships back. Our relationship to the sun is the bedrock of our security as black human being. We have our me Lanin, we have our pads of wooly hair. We're ready for the beach. We can cope. (319)

Thus, Walker connects the relationship of African people with sun taking a mythical reference. So, myth has an immense power to lead human civilization forward. It is integrated with the acquisition of knowledge and reality in the profound sense. It generates the umbrella power that protects the believers from any danger because this power is venerated for the holiness. It comes into fiction when rite, ceremony, or a social or moral rule demand justification, warrant of antiquity, reality and sanctity. Walker in *The Temple of My Familiar* brings myth to make immortal to African tradition which is dominant by started after 1960's black aesthetic movement by the black writer. Walker continues this artistic movement through this text.

MUSIC IN *THE TEMPLE OF MY FAMILIAR*

The unwanted and involuntary exile resulted in sense of loss and traumatic fear, want of security and other psychotic ailments. To talk of the things lost would be to double the pain. Consequently, these Africans do not talk about the loss of parents, spouses, sibling, dolls, home, and dignity before their flight. More than anything else, the characters are driven by the need to find a vesting place in which to express the complex emotion within. Walker shows the condition of Afro-American in America

South and music and dance is their only resting place when they can enjoy in spite of deplorable condition of them in first fourth paragraph of book she describes life of zede and her attachment with music. She expresses:

Life was so peaceful that Zede did not realize they were poor [...]. At the same time, by coincidence, the traditional festivals of the village were forbidden. By whom they were forbidden, or "outlawed" as her father said, zede was not sure. The priests, especially, were left with nothing to do. The dancers and musicians danced, made music, and got drunk in the cantinas, but the priests wandered about the village stopped and lost, suddenly revealed as the weak limed old men they were. (4)

Alice Walker also uses music and dance metaphor to chart the development of central character. Walker brings music as a tool to explore the African American life's happiness in the South American white dominated country. African American are enjoying through music in spite of their poverty and many trouble in America. In those following lines Walker's describes peaceful life of zede although she is poor but enjoyed in music and dance. The attachment of African American with music is so close from the traditional. In western society also they enjoying their life in music and dance. They themselves involve in such activities to make relief their livelihood and to glorify the African unity or traditional system. They protest through the medness of music. Walker shows power of music played by Arvedya:

He mesmerized them with his perfectly, lovely, improbable music none of the children had been a violin before. Non one was more enchanted that Arveyda whose fingers crept, all on their own, to rest on the box of the fiddle. "Fiddle" was the word for violin Arveyda had

once heard at home. He inched ever closer, so that he could feel sweetness of the vibration down in the center of himself the near organismic opening out in the base of his groin. (13)

These lives shows the attachment of Arveyda with music. Walker, through the lines shows effects of music to the Afro American life in the text. Music is also a resting place where homeless, parentless, dominated people enjoy. Walker creates music as a weapon to resist westerner and celebrate the dominated among themselves which creates peace, harmony and solidarity among the blacks. Walker liberates American female protagonists and inspires their creators at the same time to dance their way into negotiating formers. These contemporary writers take their place among other African American writing who use dance scene metaphorically. In the first part of the book Walker shows attachment of music of Arveyda and creative power of his music. Walker writes:

Areveyda's music was so beautiful no one minded ho long he played. There he stood his slim legs in soft jeans, his brown suede feathered boots glowing in the strobe lights, a silver of his narrow chest revealed, his face, the face of a deeply spiritual person, intense behind guitar or flute [...]. Each time he played, he did so with his heart and soul. Always, though he might be very tired, he played earnestly and prayerfully. Even if the music was about fucking-and because he loved fucking, a lot of it was – it was about the fucking the universe does through us as it joyfully fucks itself. (24)

Music plays important and significant role in African American society. Music is ultimate place where every African American feels relief express their pain through the music. So, Arvayda's attachment with music shows the African American

attachment with music Walker express the black aesthetic movement through music. So, Walker shows many incident in text which show attachment of African American music to protect the white domination in the society on the other words the Afro-American are dominated in the society so they are compel to image in music which creates solidarity and harmony all among the blacks. Later, it is itself good tool to resists white domination in the country. Walker present music as spiritual connection with the African American. By presenting such event. Walker makes her art full of African cultural heritage and celebrate the black aesthetic movement. Later again Arvayada sing a music for his family but the song carries message from Africa.

Walker writes:

He began to sing ever so gently, to his wife and children. A song about a country that wore green as its favourite dress: a land of river and of boats that form a distance made once think of the pods of dried vanilla beans. He sang of the people who came to this country long ago, from land called sun, how they'd discovered the river that flows through the ocean-and know also of the one that flows through the heavens but had not means travel it-and of how they met the people already there and how some of them ran off together to share each others understanding of the world. (123-24)

Walker admires through the song and music the African tradition and people. This song played by Arveyda glorifies the African civilization, African people discovered the river that flows through the ocean and also one that flows through the heavens but had no means to travel it. Then, African founded great civilization. In this way writer makes African tradition and culture so much important to make her art pure Afro-American literary art. Walker glorifies the African music in this way to

make solidarity between black and resist the written domination. The song singing by Arvayds only for his family but it carries the message from African and glorified the African civilization. Likewise Walker shows her attachment with Black aestheticism. African expresses their sorrow and pain through the music which is also called yet by the Afro-American to resist the white domination. In the second part writer explain about the blues singer. She explains:

Come to think of it, there must have been so many musicians because of Miss Shug, who was a great blues singer, though she rarely sang in public anymore. There were poets and funny men, what you would now call 'comedians' and, really all kinds of people. Magicians, jugglers, good horseshoe throwers, the occasional man who quilted or did needlepoint. 'Slavery left us with a host of skills. One old, old optimist, who was king of the barbecue, often said. [...] In fact, there was a greeting that habituates our hosts used on encountering each other: 'All those at the banquet they'd say, and shake hands or hug sometimes they said this laughing, sometimes they said it tears. (167)

In these lines Walker tries to capture whole African American situation in American South and their attachment with themselves through the music. In various parts of country there is so much as so much oppression of black people that was considered as inferior or strange on that there was absolutely no self pity. So, they shake hands and hug. Sometimes they tell by laughing, sometimes they tell by tears. Such condition shows their inferior status in society which makes them weak but at the same time they are united among themselves and resisting against the domination through the medium of music. African American uses the blues music to express their sorrow and pain in this way music is the resting place to Afro American which makes

them happy and creates her money and solidarity among them. Walker glorifies the African music in this way in her art. Again in part six, she bitterly talks about music African American connection with music. Walker writes:

Besides, she founds the country and people very unlike the ones she'd left back women in Harlem And she realized she preferred the ones in Harlem. This surprised the shit out of her. There's something about the old Harlem, the Harlem of the twenties, that had a tremendous hold on people, loyalties" mused Fanny. "I think it was the great music, the Barties. The emancipation proclamation. Finally in action."

"I've read about Harlem said Ola." in Langston Hughes. And it's true, his love of the place shines in every line." (340)

Fanny narrates her biography in these lines. She expresses the musical connection with African American and Harlem. Writer brings reference of Langston Hughes and his poem Harlem to show the condition of Afro America, by themselves. Why the dream deferred. It is the question raised by the Hughes in his poem Harlem. Walker brings the thought and Harlem. Harlem is the place heavily settled by African American. They started the resisting movement in literature from the same city. In this way so many poets like Hughes wrote about the Black people dream and condition in their art. Walker connects her art with those Harlem art with glorifying Black music and tradition to put some bricks in Black aesthetic movement in literature. Fanny, protagonist of novel takes Harlem as great music and proclamation finally in action. In final part of her novel she again describes about music and musician. She writes:

What is truly regrettable is how, as a musician, you tend to lose people as you go along. They want you to keep playing music that made them

feel something once. Something they think your old music will help them recapture. But really, if you are at all alive as an artist. You are somewhere else other than where you were almost constantly. (382)

These lines are the expression of Arveyda. Arveyda express the experience of a singer being musician. Thus, Walker shows the connection of music with black people living America with white domination. Basically she talks about two kinds of music and one spiritual and secular. Both of them are important t Afro American to make solidarity among them-ination. In this way the black people connect their-prest with past through music Walker presenting such events in makes her art purely African American and follows the tradition of Black Aesthetic Movement of 1960s in art.

ORAL STORY TELLING IN *THE TEMPLE OF MY FAMILIAR*

Oral stories may lead Afro-American to, safer, oblique commentary on present situation. The power of traditional tales to reconstruct history and memory is used strategically so African American story tellers employed to entertain visitor and themselves, drawing of African folk talks in oral story telling, they reconstruct a racial past that had been erased. In the present work Walker discuss many oral story telling for the solidarity among the blacks in the America. Walker brings such tradition things in her art to celebrate her own history. In first part of book Carlota describes:

When I was a child, I told Hal this story because he was only one who wouldn't laugh at me for thinking. I remembered it, the next things I knew, held found cryons and painted it. He painted the face, of one of the women as if he'd seen it himself. It was a sight on dues not often see, but I will always remember the way it made me feel, the small and not so small, boys and girls plastered against the sides and

stomachs of our grieving young women, who nursed them standing up,
 Crowded together in the fetid barracoon, in the while man's hell that he
 was permitted and sometimes even encouraged to build in our own
 land. (168)

Story telling may collectively construct and intimate and immediate group, but traditional narrations – legends, myths, parables, bits of scripture, folk tale-have an important place as well. For they invoke larger and older communities. This story telling connects Afro-American to their past tradition. Walker shows the social condition of America to the African American in these lines. So, oral story telling is another tool to resist to the white heavily imposed story telling in the text make solidarity averages the black and connect to African American with their past tradition. Walker using this tool in her art to give continuity to Black aesthetic movement smarted by the so many African in the America. Again Suwelo describes the story telling Walker writes: "At last, one day, Sulweo had a story for his friends. They sat down for tea and cookies in the living room, and he began slowly, in a soft, rusty voices" (136). This lines show thae connection of the African American with the oral story to connect their past. Suwelo, being a modern man ones this tool because he wants to celebrate African tradition and glorify the African themselves. Walker this elements stress intersection categories of identify-race, nationality, ethnicity, age religions and in this acknowledgment of diverse perspectives look toward a richer, more flexible, and more inclusive future. Again in part three also Walker describes the story telling. She writes:

The stories his children and grand children told about him were as
 pointed as mortality talks and could as easily have been entitled "Lust",
 "Avarice" "Greed", unlike mortality tales the massage won never

avaricious genes and of course added much of their own vast resources, after their deaths to his. (215)

These lines show how the stories are deeply rooted as a traditional and own form and how it transfer to generation onward. Oral story telling is issue as the intersections of narrative style and ethnic identity. At the same time it is celebration of culture of their own for the resist with others or create and preserve the identity Walker uses this style in her art to celebrate the African heritage any establish the identity of African American throughout the society from the executive writing.

Alice Walker brings her characters from African tradition and myth. Miss Lissie, protagonist of the novel is an ancient goddess who has been incarnated hundreds of times, usually as a woman, sometimes as a man, once even as a lion. Walker takes fanny the beginnings of woman. In first age Lissie is incarnated as the first white-skinned creature a man with insufficient melanin who flees the heat of Africa for Europe. In next age of pygmies, when the man tribe and woman tribe visit back and fourth with each other and with the apoes last age the time of war waged by Europe and monolithic Islam against the Great Goddess of Africa. The instrument of this warfare is the slave trade (Lissie lives several slave live). Its emblem is the Gorgon's head, then head of the goddess, still crowned, with the serpents of wisdom, cut off by the white hero-warrior presus. Other characters like Arveyda, the dandy rock star, his wife Carlotta, a women's studies scholar, Zede carolotta's mother and latter-lady Sham, fanny, literature teachers, Olivia, Ranny' feisty man. Suwelo professor of history. All the character taken by Walker from African mythology also. It is the way of her to explore African myth, music and oral story telling tradition in her novel to create harmony and make solidarity among the dominated blacks. Walker wings this tools to make her art full of African heritage and culture which fulfills the

demand of Black aesthetic movement of 1960. Walker strongly support the movement and tries to put it in higher state through the novel *The Temple of My Familiar*.

Alice Walker's novel *The Temple of My Familiar* opens with a description of how white urban world dominated the rural native South American community live where Carlotta's mother Zede grew up, but the opening also reveals how the vibrant aspects of that community's culture still manage to endure and make in road into the dominant culture. But the artistry of the features cases, Arveyda's music, Lissie's stories and myth, continues to survive them under the surface of the dominant culture and nourishes those who are open to it. Walker's characters seek method of connecting the past through the mean of story telling, myth, music as to avoid traditional system of while domination and assert the philosophy of social solidarity and spiritual unity among the blacks. So, Alice Walker uses rituals as a means of black solidarity in *The Temple of My Familiar*.

IV. CONCLUSION

Alice Walker like other African American writers turned to her own cultural heritage likes myth, music storytelling love and sex, beliefs and religion to find the best mode of literary expression. She felt the strong urge to trace the 'roots' and devoted herself to establish a connection that could give true identity to herself and other Afro American people. For this purpose she searched the best stuff in the treasury of black culture. When she found any material that could serve her goal, she would unhesitantly take out and reformulate with the magic of her literary imagination.

Black people have been suffering from the crisis of identity and culture ever. Since the introduction of slavery in America, the reduction of all black people to the mono-dimensional role of passive victims in the genocidal grasp of slavery ignores the enduring strength of cultural cohesion that existed and still exists among African Americans. Although these African cultures were clearly disrupted by the tribal scattering caused by the slave trade and the dehumansing brutality of slavery. It became stronger with the creative reaction to the relatives of a new situation. So many slaves retained traditional African beliefs, most argument their folkloric wisdom with various elements adopted form the European world view commonly shared by their masters. *The Temple of My Familiar* manages to tell a cohersive story that details the lives of the main characters – Carlotta, Suwelo, Arvedya and Fanny. Each character goes through an identity crisis. In the process of defining, what it means to be African American, or to be a woman they also define what it means to be human. By the end of the novel, each character has pressumably found true happiness. Their search for happiness occurs in a series of flashbacks, conversations, and straightforward narratives.

In this way, as a member of largest ethnic minority group in the U.S., Walker, develops her personal and national identities through art within values, tradition, culture, myth, music and shared historical memories. She acquired and contribute to Afro-American culture. Therefore, thematically and structurally, *The Temple of My Familiar* is depiction of the life of black characters form the South who constantly engage themselves in traditional myth, music, story telling and so in throughout the novel to resist the whites domination and create peaceful harmony or social solidarity and spiritual unity among the blacks.

To conclude, if there is an African celebration of tradition, it is their quest for equality, freedom and communal grounded social reality. Walker takes rituals as a means of black solidarity, and brings African tradition, myth, music and storytelling as tools to explore the Black aesthetic movement in her novel *The Temple of My Familiar*. So, the writer depicts the life of black characters from the American South who constantly engage themselves in music, storytelling, bringing mythical symbol to avoid traditional system of white domination and to assert a philosophy of social solidarity and spiritual unity among the blacks.

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