

Tribhuvan University

Resistance through Female Bonding in Alice Walker's *The Color Purple*

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences Department of English, Ratna Rajyalaxmi Campus, for Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for the Degree of Master Arts in English

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Declaration

I hereby declare that the thesis paper entitled "Resistance through Female Bonding in Alice Walker's *The Color Purple* is my original work carried out as a Master's student at the Department of English at Ratna Rajyalaxmi Campus extent that assistance from others in the thesis paper's design and conception or in presentation style and linguistic expression are duly acknowledged.

All sources used for the thesis paper have been fully and properly cited. It contains no material which to a substantial extent has been accepted for the award of any other degree at Tribhuvan University or any other educational institution, where due acknowledgement is made.

Krishna Kali Pariyar

May, 2017

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Letter of Approval

This thesis entitled “Female Bonding in Alice Walker's *The Color Purple*”
submitted to the Department of English, Ratna Rajyalaxmi Campus, by Krishna Kali
Pariyar, has been approved by the undersigned members of the thesis committee.

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Abstract

The notion of Female Bonding lies in the affirmation of the solidarity and similarity of all women. *The Color Purple* is a novel structured around four protagonists, not divergent in socioeconomic status and values. They have enough in common to share a rich friendship. They are all in their late thirties and are similar in many ways. A little more thought would tell us what brings these black females together in the novel. The absence of responsible men in their households makes them stick together. None of them has found a reliable man who is adequate in every sense. She does not tell her to imagine a black God. Shug tells Celie to feel loved by God by being herself.

When black people are talked about, sexism militates against the acknowledgement of the interests of black women. When women are talked about racism militates against recognition of black female interests. When black people are talked about, the focus tends to be on black men. When women are talked about the focus tends to be on white women. The compounded nature of their experience is absorbed into the collective experiences of either group or as too different. Celie is subjected to plenty of unlucky events. She is encircled by racist obstacles and harsh constraints of patriarchy. Though she makes an effort to rise above these traumatizing events, she cannot go beyond these obstacles.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Scenario of Unity and Cooperation in Walker's in *The Color Purple*

The Color Purple gives African American women a voice. It describes the protagonist's rise from patriarchal oppression. African-American women challenge patriarchal social structures in the black community as well as society at large. Many female characters including Celie write letters. These letters reveal the injustices that women suffer from men in the United States of America and in Africa. Walker is able to express the effect of oppression on the spirits of the major characters. The story chronicles Celie's growth from a defeated personality to an independent confident woman.

The Color Purple celebrates love. It explores the friendship. Women can love each other whether they are sisters, friends, or even enemies. Walker presents a world of oppression. Friendship opens the door for hope to enter the lives of Walker's characters. The Friendship which initiates among women in the novel is viewed as a redemptive relationship. It heals all the hardships of their lives. Celie's first friend and companion is her sister Nettie. Nettie tries to teach Celie reading and writing. Nettie urges Celie to fight back against her abusive husband but Celie accepts her condition and doesn't fight, she says "I don't fight; I stay where I'm told" (29). Nettie conveys to Celie her belief that Celie is valuable.

Nettie is unfortunately unable to continue her role as Celie's sister and friend because she is forced to run away to a community of her friends. She is one of the women in the novel who will challenge Celie's passivity and influence her development into an independent woman. Sofia's active resistance of her abuse captures Celie's attention. She describes Sofia as a woman who possesses a physical

presence as well as a strong inner resolve, Celie says, "Sofia is Solid. Like if she sits down on something, it is mash"(41).

Celie is sexually abused by her supposed father. Celie manages to save her younger sister Nettie from being abused like herself. Celie's experience is so horrifying that she cannot tell it to anyone, including her sick mother. She can only write her sad experiences in letters to God because she feels ashamed to tell people about her misfortunes. Celie conceives two children from her physical relationship with her stepfather. Alfonso takes advantage of her because of her mother's physical and mental illness. Her illness is the result of the murder of her first husband. Celie's mother dies and Alfonso soon remarries but his marriage does not end Celie's sexual abuse

The most powerful female executive still nurtures and cares for her friends. Most women believe that women's bonding is one of the strongest relationships. Female solidarity and bonding can be the means to deal with patriarchy. She also feels jubilant and liberated. He ultimately settles with friendship with Celie. Only the search of the narrator for liberation through female bonding appears to be the focal point of the researcher. Many Black female characters in Alice Walker's *The Color Purple* overcome their hardship by means of resistance through female bonding.

Female bonding is the cooperation among women who are subjugated to patriarchy and oppression. Women have not successfully come out of various forms of subordination and oppression. The condition of Celie is a case in point in Alice Walker's *The Color Purple*. Celie, her sister, and various other women surrender to the harsh and oppressive practices of patriarchy. Each of them is aware of injustices and oppressions to which they are subjected. But such awareness alone is not

sufficient in eliminating woes and agonies of women who are victimized. Finally, Celie and other female friends develop a sense of bonding with which they put end to all sorrows and sufferings wrecked on her and her friends.

Only the unity amidst female can address the women's goal of liberation. To come out of their marginalized and subordinated condition, they help each other. Cooperation and mutual sense of assistance among them become the means to cope with the harsh effect of patriarchy. Patriarchy and racism offend Black women. Yet they decide to come out of it. The only weapon to fight with gender oppression is female bonding. Female bonding is a good strategy to deal with it.

Celie is a Black Girl who fall prey to dual marginalizing tendencies. Her father is lynched by a white man. As a result, they have to live their whole life mistaking Alfonso as her father. Her biological father is killed by a white man. She and her sister Nettie had to live without knowing who her real father is. It is the racial crimes committed by the white that produced harsh effect in Celie and Nettie. Patriarchy and racism are liable to the double marginalization of Black women including Celie and Nettie. But Female bonding across race, culture, class and ethnicity is essential to fight off challenges created by patriarchy.

Celie is prohibited from articulating her experiences to the outside world. Celie begins writing letters to God, sharing with him the unspeakable circumstances of her life. She resists harsh forces and develops independent mindset. In Walker's *The Color Purple*, the idea of resistance through female bonding is exemplified by Celie. Women friends often serve as guides and rescuers for the protagonist. They model the attributes and provide the emotional support that the protagonist needs to persevere and succeed in her quest. As Celie embarks on her journey to voice and

selfhood, she encounters several women who model alternate ways of being female within her environment. Nettie is the first woman to serve as guide for Celie. She provides Celie emotional support and regards her as a teacher.

Celie's effort to develop creativity, dignity, career and good social standing faces unexpected difficulties. Her struggle to build up independent mindset and nonconformist outlook come to a halt as she is raped by her mother's lover. Pi-Li Hsiao is critical of Alice Walker's implication of probing race relation in America. Race relation has undergone massive change in America. Those who were oppressed and enslaved are now equipped with every rights which a white person can get lots of freedom and self-esteem in America. In this current context, Walker's's historical mode of reiterating the painful past hardly carries conviction. Hsiao asserts his view in the following extract:

Patriarchal surveillance causes female speechlessness. Others contemplate self-assertiveness and subjectivity, laying emphasis on the growth and development of female characters as well as male characters. Critics also pay attention to Walker's writing techniques. Through tough measures, the notion of gender is allowed to grow and expand strengthening the foundation of patriarchy. (3)

When the present race relation is strained, historical reminiscence can be fruitful. But present scenario has undergone huge progress and change. It would not be relevant and sensible to scratch the old wound when the society is heading towards the unique level of progress. Hsiao's interrogation of the race relation is convincing and appealing as well.

Bülent Cercis notices subversive ethos in *The Color Purple*. Angelo discourages the trend to separate history from fiction. Both fiction and history can come in joint cohesive form. The novel is a good example of how the fusion of both history and fiction serves humanity trapped in the chaos of silliness and shortsightedness. Schickel discloses the following viewpoint:

The protagonist of the novel *The Color Purple*, Celie, at first cannot do anything to object the brutality of both black men and white men. However, in time by the help of her female friends, like Sofia and Shug Avery, she realizes the fact that she has the right to act as she wants. After so many years of racial oppression, sexual abuse and brutality, she encourages herself to object all this hard conditions of black woman's life. (7)

Celie reaches her ideal plucking the chain of oppression. Walker is able to have her major character Celie to express the impact of oppression.

The African woman schooled in the art of obedience to a higher authority by the tradition of her society is probably seen by the white male slaver as an ideal subject for slavery. Bell Hooks says:

It failed to generate in depth critical analyses of the black female experience. Most feminists assumed that problems black women faced were caused by racism—not sexism. The assumption that we can divorce the issue of race from sex, or sex from race, has so clouded the vision of American thinkers and writers on the woman question that most discussions of sexism, sexist oppression, or woman's place in society are distorted, biased, and inaccurate. (12)

The experiences of African women carry specific value in the analysis of their position. Their painful experiences of being slaves need thorough analysis. Other African women are sold into slavery as punishment for breaking tribal laws.

According to Du Bois, to be black means to be so in marginalized conditions. “A black living in the white society suffers from the double consciousness- the double standards of a citizen, where one is born an American but discovers that one is not fully a citizen by virtue of being racially designated black. Why, one ask, is being black treated as indifferent being as American?” (Du Bois 64) This leads to the notion of irreconcilable doubleness, where being black does not mean being equal to an American.

Jane Flax approaches gender from the vantage point of gender relations. Gender relations have been examined in the light of the relation of domination. Flax describes gender relations as:

Differentiated and asymmetrical divisions and attributions of human traits and capacities are difficult to chart and document graphically. Through gender relations two types of persons are created: man and woman. Man and woman are posited as exclusionary categories. One can be only one gender, never the other or both. If gender relations are not to continue to be relations of domination, then gender itself needs to be problematized. (173)

Flax avoids Enlightenment essentialisms and universalisms. She, too, finds that feminist notions of self, knowledge, and truth are too contradictory to those of the Enlightenment to be contained within its categories. She suggests that both sex and

gender find their origin in social relations, rather than in a natural or essential difference in being.

Susmita Roye notices the projection of girls' vulnerability in *The Color Purple*. Such vulnerability on the part of women arises not from the internal weakness of a female being. On the contrary, it arises from various external factors.

Concentrating on this aspect, Roye produces the following viewpoint on the subject of the novel:

The Color Purple is a rich web of intertwined tales of several girls from different back- grounds, unravelling the universal vulnerability of tender-aged girls to brutal disruptions. The main narrator is an adolescent slave girl named Celie, who has been given away by her mother to another master. Sorrow is an abandoned daughter of a dead ship captain and is constantly misunderstood and mistreated by people around her. Her close mate is a Native American girl who is uprooted from her own culture and is never at home in any other. (216)

The ritual of loss, search and ultimate union underpins the whole narrative framework of the novel. In this process defense mechanism is searched for. To save themselves from all types of possible harms, it becomes imperative for women to explore all the possible supportive methods. Celie and her ally exemplify what is necessary and what is not necessary in this search for warmth and recognition.

The dearth of explicit historical elements and high narrative decoration put into puzzle the core artistic integrity of the novel. Being in consistent with this claim, Chiara Cillerai makes the following disclosure:

The Color Purple challenged students to consider how, or whether, historical fiction and other imaginative treatments of the past may help us recover voices silenced by traditional historiography. The protagonist talks about the way that having graduate students read a work of fiction alongside historical monographs gave the students an opportunity to explore the relationship between history and fiction. (178)

Readers are likely to lose receptivity if they are faced with somewhat odd and eccentric parts of the novel. In other words, when readers hear a new voice of pathos embodied in the characters, they are likely to go astray. Only by following the trend of historical reading they can hope to catch a track of understanding.

The voice of marginalized women belonging to the so-called inferior race rings persuasively in the novel, *The Color Purple*. Lisa M. Logan is attentive to this aspect of the novel. She is keenly interested in examining this aspect of the novel. Logan's view is cited in the following extract:

Walker's novel operates as an evocative object, bridging the historical facts of patriarchy with the emotional resonance of non-elite, marginalized women's experiences. The stories of Celie and her sister show that early America was especially dangerous, tenuous, and brutal for women and girls. Walker deepens our emotional understanding of those marginalized women who appear in history only incidentally, as a line in a ship's log, a slaveholder's inventory, or a letter home. (196)

America is in no way a heaven for women of color and race. Even in the women who are deprived and victimized there is a sort of humiliating hierarchy. Celie's final act

seems a commentary on the still-elusive history of non-elite early American women's lives.

Claude Tate arrives at a conclusion after his singlehanded program of critically re-examining Walker's works that self-recognition and self-affirmation are some of the most recurrent themes in the majority of her novels. In this connection, Tate furthermore adds:

The mixture of critical commentary in this anthology encourages readers to re-examine Walker's novels and especially to see that she offers a revisionist model for the act of reading that bypasses self-recognition and self-affirmation in favor of self-exploration. In Afro-American literature and criticism, the unity of the ego-centered individual self invites us to see that not only is the self-fragmented. (5)

In Walker's attempts to recreate art forms, the theme of self-recognition and self-affirmation carry lots of importance. She creates a body of work informed by a distinctly black sensibility.

Although all these critics have mentioned different issues like racism, gender subordination and intra-racial conflict in their analysis and interpretations, none of them have seen how oppressed and subordinated female blacks in Alice Walker's *The Color Purple* resist through the idea of female bonding. Celie's confrontation with the arrogant females of her own community becomes a victory for those who refuse to be displaced. Such confrontation is another example of de facto racism. While Celie feels apprehension, Sofia's refusal to retreat inside the Store at their approach addresses the girls with respect, demonstrating her maturity and poise.

Normative discourse of mothering polices all women's mothering and results in the pathologizing of those women. The modern ideology of motherhood makes mothering deeply oppressive to women because the first belief requires the repression or denial of the mother's own selfhood. Women's mothering is fully controlled and arbitrated by the patriarchal institution of motherhood. Changes in the social role of motherhood are not as easily defined. The results of a survey conducted in the early 1990s concludes that there is no obvious correlation between being a one-child mother and spending less time on domestic work. Instead, many women are doubly burdened by responsibilities at home and at the workplace.

The articulation of disjuncture between received ideology and social experience. Subjectivity should not be abandoned as a category of oppositional political thought, nor does the de-centering of the subject in contemporary theory mean that discourses are therefore anachronistic. Subjectivity remains an ineradicable element of modern social experience. It brings with it attendant needs-for autonomy. It must be addressed in the context of an emancipatory politics.

In the Black leadership literature, no one universal definition exists. However, three themes focused on Black female leadership have emerged in the literature. First, Black female leadership exemplifies survival techniques in family, church and community organizations that encompass the creativity and commitment for group well-being. Allen Rogers says "Black female networks, formal and informal, are dynamic and interrelated entities that form a matrix of reinforcements that hold the Black community together while developing leadership for a better future" (56). Lastly, Black female leadership represents the collective experiences and action toward community empowerment.

Despite the growing awareness of the importance of Black female networks in the Black community scholars still have not provided a definition of Black female leadership. However, Allen presented the following working definition of Black female community leadership as the struggle for group survival whereby group collective experience, and group socio-supports, as well as the instrumental aspects of developing and maintaining internal female networks for institution building.

The underlying message from this definition is that Black women and their male counterparts have the tenable responsibility of ensuring community survival. It is through Black female networks that provide the structure for the emergence of Black women's community leadership. Moreover, Black community survival means that Black female leaders play a vital role in improving the Black community. Even more critical is the Black female networks which are crucial to the transmission of tradition from generation to generation.

This thesis is divided into four chapters. In the first chapter, the researcher introduces the topic, elaborates the hypothesis, and quotes different critics' views regarding the text. In the same chapter, the researcher shows the departure also. In the second chapter, the researcher makes use of the theory of female bonding. In the third chapter the researcher makes a thorough analysis of the text. The last chapter contains the conclusive ending of the research.

II. A Study of Female Bonding

Female bonding is the idea that women can do away with their sufferings and subjugations if they unite and cooperate. It is the strategy of standing against the uninterrupted oppression of women by men. Female Bonding implies mutuality. It can be defined as a bond developed among any group of women for support and the accomplishment of shared goals. In due course they also take certain vows and live together under conventional rule of kinship relation between females. Female Bonding has offered women "a safe heaven without disrupting existing social structures or values. It has erased all differences by a monolithic concept which ignores age, race, economic and social class" (Beardsley 34).

The relationship is much more like two different females from different backgrounds bonding together to sustain each other rather than a relationship between mother and daughter. Gender unity across culture and race is basic to the collective emancipation of women. Denise Riley suggests “ we could try another train of speculations that woman is indeed an unstable category, that this instability has a historical foundation, and that feminism is the site of the systematic fighting out of that instability” (16). In other words, there is a productive tension between essentialist, constructivist, and deconstructive understanding of gendered subjectivity.

Chris Beardsley hints at women’s group identity. She contends that Union among women is a milestone to reaching the ultimate destination of liberation. Her view is mentioned below in a precise way:

Women suggest that women should be considered in their own terms. Hence, the focus is not on a universal human nature but upon positively re-valuing group identities like women/ the feminine. Where

the equality perspective associated with strongly modernist accounts like liberal and Marxist feminisms is inclined to argue that difference between men and women is either a myth or produced to perpetuate women's oppression and should be transcended. (46)

Gender difference is not always the sources of domination. It does not always foster the climate for oppression. If gender differences are abolished, women may not be totally free from the oppression.

Toril Moi has extensively dwelt upon the notion of female subjectivity. She, like other theorists, traces the formation of female subject in the socio-cultural milieu. Moi says "feminine represents nurture and female nature in this usage. Patriarchal oppression consists of imposing certain social standards of femininity on all biological women" (247). Thus a woman who refuses to conform can be labeled both unfeminine and unnatural. It is in the patriarchal interest that these two terms stay thoroughly consumed. Patriarchy, in other words, wants us to believe that there is such a thing as an essence of femaleness called femininity. If women are driven by the common purpose and goal and if they are sensitive to the suffering of sisterhood, they can face any challenge that comes on the way. In this regard, it is more relevant to quote Chris Beardsley who always stands in favor for woman to woman relation.

Beardsley says "If men/ masculinity is not to be inevitably valued, and women/femininity is to be acknowledged, even celebrated, then woman to woman relationships can no longer be viewed as of marginal significance" (77). In a social context, women are commonly characterized as engaged in a war among themselves over men. Women-centered feminists typically promote a counter- strategy in which woman to woman relationships are given credit and encouraged.

Beardsley points out clearly the core aspect of gender bonding. Feminism aims at reshuffling women's relation with men. The significance of woman to woman relation should not be ignored and marginalized. The collective sense of being the member of organized sisterhood is necessary in reexamining man-woman relation. Thus the important thing is that it is pretty difficult to launch revolutionary programs of feminist movement without strengthening woman to woman relation from certain viewpoint. Barbara briefly points out her viewpoint in the following extract:

Subjectivity is infected feminist movement in the west during the 1990s. This movement frequently promotes the idea that western societies have reached an era of post-feminism, suggesting that the goals of second-wave feminism have been achieved and or that this older form of feminism is now outmoded because it is overly focused on women's victimized status. (256)

Problems of women should be viewed in broader category. It is imperative to check the group status and position of women in society. Women are viewed as social grouping. Their problems are studied in terms of the loopholes of this social grouping. Certain uplifting measures can be taken to achieve the intended goals of women.

If discursive as well as non-referential matters are examined in relation with the politics of the matter, it would remain the same practice which promises many things but yield none of the significant conclusion. The narrator says "weeping perhaps or occasionally seeing the blood once more - but I will never again unfold my limbs to rise up and bare teeth. You can think what I tell you a confession, if you like, but one full of curiosities familiar only in dreams and during those moments when a dog's profile plays in the steam of a kettle" (79).

Nothing related with women is left as irrelevant and negligible. Critical attention should be directed by the gender feminists to the specific object of analysis. A helpless and unaided women's pathetic outcry is hardly attended by men but also by women. In the name of conducting inquiry over the household surrounding, only time is wasted. Months pass away; but the child is not found. Those women whom the detective Simon takes interviews twist the matter. Those women claim that Florence had been suffering from post-natal depression.

Rachel Bowlby has expounded some of the basic concept of gender subjectivity. Like other theorists, she is critical of the reform oriented ethos that has gained popularity in the recent feminist discussion and discourse. Bowlby's view adds further clarity to the method of the analysis of the text. Her view is mentioned below:

Difference theorizing involves privileging the marginalized, at least strategically. Subjectivity has meant revaluing the Feminine. Such thinking tends towards a bifurcated account of different social and cultural positioning. In the modernist identity politics versions of gender difference, this amounts to asserting differently constructed gender politics versions of gender subjectivity and experiences and mounting political platforms based upon the specific positioning of women. (21)

It is really difficult to maintain solid ground in the voices of women can be projected. Strategic approach is basic to creating solidarity amidst women. By raising directly the political voices alone, it would be tough to expect genuine sense of achievement. Efforts should be made to unite the fragmented voice.

Some women conscious of feminist movement embody both the rebellious and conformist conviction. The closer scrutiny of their activities and thinking yields a new level of understanding. Gender is the category which is the outcome of social happening and individual's interaction with social practices and institutions. But the lingering effect of an individual's immersion in gender category is really shocking. The political and apolitical advantages should not be sought for while executing some of the topmost agenda and prescribed goals of feminism. To make feminist vision far more viable, Benhabib has sought to bring the true reformist ethos from the plethora of confusion.

To the British, among whom many African women would be servants and slaves in the seventeenth century, freedom equated with being British, Christian, and endowed with material resources that could yield an adequate income. That is, one had to have enough resources to avoid having to sell her or his labor for self and family maintenance, as serfs on the manor or apprentices in the crafts. The following extract describes the point:

Thus freedom as we understand it in the 20th century was something quite different in the colonial mind. There was a perception of freedom among the landed gentry that was associated with religion, class and gender that had very little to do with race or national origin. There was the expectation that there would always be a servant class similar to European serfdom. And there was no tradition in place allowing freedom to women of any class: Women's freedom was restricted in early America in many ways. (34)

Typically, women were subjected to a variety of personal, economic, and legal limitations. As a general rule, without her husband's participation a married woman in early America could not write a will, sue or be sued, spend money she had earned, or sell property she had brought to the marriage.

Benhabib holds different kind of view regarding to the formation of female subject position. She holds patriarchy as the mechanism to foster exploitation of women by men. She holds different kind of view. She argues that social class of women is far more important than the concept of ideology. Her view runs as follows:

The concept of subjectivity is of social class is considered to be more important than the concept of patriarchy since the latter is seen as a form of subjectivity that stems from class exploitation. Women are not a sex class because the only thing they have in common is their sex - an upper class woman, for example, has little if nothing in common with a psychologically troubled woman. (72)

The idea of being an attractive woman capable of tempting man of substance should be kept at bay if and only if women are to be empowered economically. Without economic empowerment, it is pretty challenging to upgrade the working condition.

Monique Wittig a theorist who elaborates on the notion of subjectivity. Formation of subjectivity of women should be treated as a historically constructed category. It is relevant to cite the view of Wittig to reinforce the constructed nature of Alice's subjectivity. The following lines reflect Wittig's idea on female subjectivity:

Women are a natural group: a racial group of a special kind, a group perceived as natural, and a group of men considered as material specific in their bodies. What the analysis accomplishes on the level of

ideas, practice makes actual at the level of facts: b its very existence, lesbian society destroys the artificial fact constituting women as a natural group. (220)

A lesbian society pragmatically reveals that the division from men of which women has been the object is a political one and shows that we have ideologically rebuilt into a natural group.

Helen Cixous argues “what permits this elimination of the between nature and the interpreter is the extraordinary opening of the field of subjectivity” (231). In the light of subjectivity, the researcher explores essential elements from the novel. The theory of feminism particularly postmodern feminism and the feminism of Simon de Beauvoir focus on the fact that gender is a construct. In a patriarchal society, several practices, norms, trends and institutional cults exist to intensify the gender differences. To justify and buttress the patriarchal society and ideology, the notion of gender difference is mobilized as the basic to analytical task.

The rationale of gender difference would be proved and restated. So long as gender difference is fostered to fulfill the benefit of one group. The core essence of feminism is that gender is the socio-cultural construct. The dominant trends, customs, beliefs and ideologies have given birth to the notion of gender differences. So long as gender differences are abolished, it would be difficult to put into practice some of the revolutionary agenda and programs of feminism.

Chris Beardsley hints at women’s group identity. She contends that Union among women is a milestone to reaching the ultimate destination of liberation. Her view is mentioned below in a precise way:

Women suggest that women should be considered in their own terms. Hence, the focus is not on a universal human nature but upon positively re-valuing group identities like women/ the feminine. Where the equality perspective associated with strongly modernist accounts like liberal and Marxist feminisms is inclined to argue that difference between men and women is either a myth or produced to perpetuate women's oppression and should be transcended. (46)

A mother described her daughters as more like sisters. they like communicating that equality was an essential feature of their current relationships. They used the language of companionate ties. In addition to mother-daughter ties, "sibling ties can be carefully examined for further exemplification in female bonding. There is much evidence that sister-sister ties are the strongest ties that exist, out of the possible combinations of gendered sibling ties which are shared" (Greiner 125). The emphasis on writing notes and recording information provides an insightful commentary on the function of written language and indirectly mocks the national legislation created to protect black citizens' rights.

The willingness of women to work together for protection from hazards and threats like sexual assault, molestation, untimely dismissal and subordination exists as the striking issue in the text. Such feminist sense of solidarity ensures the chance of the success of Alice's movement towards maturity and freedom. By using the theory of female bonding and gender based feminism, the researcher probes into this topic. The mutual cooperation and collaboration of oppressed girls is the chief domain of this research.

Gender typically refers to the social process of dividing up people and social practices along the lines of sexed identities. The gendering process frequently involves creating hierarchies between the divisions it enacts. One or more categories of sexed identities are privileged or devalued. In modern western societies, gender divides into two. Gender in the modern west usually refers to two distinct and separate categories of human beings as well as to the division of social practices into two fields. "The gendering of social practices", according to Beardsley, "may be found, for example in contemporary western societies, in a strong association between men and public life and between women and domestic life, even though men and women occupy both spaces"(10). The more gender differences are narrowed down, the more optimistic scope feminism acquires.

If none of the significant differences between man and woman exist, men will automatically come in defense of the rights and freedom of women. Only in the space in which gender differences cease to exist, even the unity and harmony amidst women come to flourish. Only by destroying the patriarchal structure of society, women won't accomplish complete level of freedom and access to different sorts of rights. Thus that aspect of feminism which talks about promoting gender bonding and the harmony amidst women would be quoted and used in this research.

The people of the community have internalized the racially victimizing values and norms of white society, so the foundation of their action also rests on an illusion. The dualism between the Primitive and the modern civilized subject has always been a fantasy, and accordingly, everything based on it is fantasy as well. She had explained to him the difference between colored people and niggers. An entire chapter is dedicated to his background and his family history with a special emphasis on a "decaying British nobleman, who chose to disintegrate under a sun more easeful than

England's had introduced the white strain into the family" (167). Unfortunately, "due to the carelessness of some of the with comb brothers, it became difficult to maintain their whiteness, and some distant and some not so distant relatives married each other" (168).

Chapter III

Resistance through Female Bonding in Alice Walker's *The Color Purple*

This research examines how many Black female characters in Alice Walker's *The Color Purple* are double marginalized and how they fight off the double marginalization by means of female bonding and solidarity. Patriarchy and racism offend Black women. The only way to overcome the evil of double marginalization is union among sisters across culture, race and nationality. They are oppressed and marginalized in two ways. They fall victims to patriarchy and racism. But they do not lose hope to get rid of all oppressive measures. Patriarchy and racism are liable to the double marginalization of Black women including Celie and Nettie. But they have entered cooperation and solidarity in order to deal with any oppressive measure. A man with whom she has been living as her father raped her and impregnates her.

Alfonso is her alleged father who claims to be her protector. But he is casting sexual glance on her as she gradually flourishes into a charming lady. Worst of all, when Celie delivers his baby, he forcibly takes her baby without informing anything about the baby. One after the other injustices and atrocities are heaped upon Celie. But she cultivates a sense of bonding with other women of similar fate. It is her enfeebled and enervated condition of Celie that does allow her to express her dissenting voice. As the level of atrocities goes up, she does not remain silent. Throughout her struggles, the narrator goes through the long period of oppression and suffering. Her effort to preserve her self-dignity and distinct personality is repeatedly hindered by setbacks and obstacles created by racist practices and sexual assault on her. As young children, Celie and Nettie struggle with the pain of having been deprived of living with their biological mother.

Celie is fourteen years old at the onset of her journey to selfhood. She reflects on various dimensions of her life. The impetus for her journey conforms to the first stage of the female hero quest paradigm. The female protagonist is compelled by catastrophe, alienation, disillusionment, or anger to embark on her quest and to leave behind those people upon whom she has been dependent. She now sees as perpetuating the very conventions that oppress and subordinate her. She asks for a sign that will help her to understand what is happening to her. Celie's first letter has two-fold significance. It indicates her awareness, if only on a fundamental level, of power dynamics within her environment. She says "If Pa, a man, has the power to unsettle the world as she knows it then only a more powerful entity, God, has the potential to set it right" (1). Her letter also indicates her confusion about what has happened to her.

Celie has been beaten down by her step father. But she is not wholly broken. Her experiences have been limited to the sufferings that she has suffered at the hands of the men in her life. She is unable to imagine any other possibilities for herself. Celie's focus is survival. She states: 'I don't know how to fight. All I know how to do is to stay alive' (17). Before Celie can fight, she needs to understand more fully what she is fighting against. She has been forbidden to voice her experiences to the outside world. Her letters are an affirmation of her being and of her refusal to have her story told by anyone other than herself. Like Celie's letters, sororal or sisterhood bonds also pose a direct challenge to patriarchal proscriptions of the female self.

Women friends often serve as guides and rescuers for the protagonist. They model the attributes and provide the emotional support that the protagonist needs to persevere and succeed in her quest. As Celie embarks on her journey to voice and selfhood, she encounters several women who model alternate ways of being female

within her environment. Celie and Nettie in *The Color Purple* are affected severely by various racist practices like discrimination, fear of excommunication within black community and harsh patriarchal ideology. The fact the narrator is a female being makes her more vulnerable.

Her vehement passion to go beyond racist restriction and racially divided society clash. Resultantly, she gets handicapped miserably. The lack of moderation and self-restraint lead to the disintegration of an individual's role in society. The torturous effects of various events like her rape Alfonso is noticeably present in the novel. The society she lives in is dominated by racially charged norms. But union among women with the similar fate of seclusion and subordination is the most effective medium.

Integral to Walker's creation of myth is her womanist ideology. It is a visionary and archetypal doctrine of African American feminism. Additionally associated with the struggle of a woman for freedom from injustice, subordination and racism are the preference for women's culture, the acknowledgement and affirmation of women's strength, a commitment to the survival and wholeness of black people, male and female. Walker challenges and subverts the predominant myths and stereotypes that perpetuate the condition and treatment of women, in general, and black women, in particular.

Celie is under fetters by man-made institutions like marriage and also the Church. But Celie after years of being weighed down for years breaks lose all fetters. Her story starts when she is fourteen. She is stigmatized from birth for being born in a poor family. She loses her father. Celie's mother is bogged down in bed giving birth to several children in dirt and squalor. She cannot turn her mind on anything else. She

herself is deprived of family love, care, attention and the food for the healthy growth of any child. She is darkest of the lot and not fortunate to be a good daughter, and under the conspiracy of a step-father.

Celie's religion is that of a black one, where she is in direct communion with God. She feels safe in the heaven of God who appears to be white-skinned. "Maimed physically through rape, scarred psychologically through inhuman and beastly treatment, Celie has no one in her life except her sister and friend, Nettie and perhaps also God in whom she can confide and disclose all her emotion"(55). Celie stands in front of church congregation on Easter. She is unable to finish reciting a poem. She wears an unflattering altered dress.

The determination to come out of this scenario of suppression is very strong on the part of Celie. Celie fantasizes that one day she will wake up out of her "Although she was bent low to the earth, picking with great speed and industry, she had noticed that her baby was watching something" (34). Prior to this incident, when she is twelve Alfonso rapes her. Thereafter her humiliation and exclusion start. The harsh and harrowing effect of her parents' untimely and unexpected end of her parents is obvious in the following extract:

As she helped build the rack back up and replace the slices of meat on it, and as she washed sand off the pieces that had fallen onto the ground, Nettie felt something balloons up inside of her like a cloud. It was a strange, buoyant feeling-she felt that she could be lifted away by it. As if she'd held on to an eagle and been dragged up into the air! She understood what it was – pride. He was proud of what she had done.

(54)

The Store is the center of the community. Mother is one of the community's most respected residents. But the individual quest of the mother puts the life of Celie in confusion, alienation, and nightmare and anxiety attack. Celie wants to grow into a dignified lady having good social standing and exposure. In this society only the White color and patriarchal arrogance increases. Her passion and ambition remain unfulfilled. From one moment to the other, she is harassed and frightened by racist mentality and patriarchal arrogance.

Celie understands and sympathizes with Sofia. Sofia chooses to live autonomously. Even in her educational choice and reading activity, Sofia is doubtless about the writer of color. After her acquaintance with Sofia, Celie recognizes Black laborers. They are paid less. Celie observes:

Now that I know Albert hiding Nettie's letters, I know exactly where they are. They are in his trunk. Everything that means something to Albert go in his trunk. He keeps it locked up tight, but Shug can git the key. One night when Mr- and Grady gone, us open the trunk. US find a lot of Shug's underclothes, some nasty picture postcards, and way down under his tobacco, Nettie's letters. Bunches and bunches of them. Some fat, some thin. Some open, some out. (113)

The laborers never earn enough to pay their debts. They work in the same spirit as the White. For the same jobs they are deprived of making the same earning as a white man earns. Having seen this instance of deprivation and racist practice, the narrator is shocked. She asks a question to herself how Black people can hope to make their future better if they are collectively fated to endure such cases of deprivation.

Celie wants to go to the group of same children in order to minimize and soften the inner inferiority. Celie constantly hears from others that she is ugly. She has kinky hair and dark skin. She is large for her age. On the other hand, she is a small, graceful and attractive child? The following extract exemplifies how Celie is acutely aware of racial disparity and discrimination rooted in such disparities and discrepancies:

One thing he learned is that he is cute. Another is that he is smart. Plus, he can make money. He does not say who the teacher is. I had not heard so much hammering since before Sofia left, but every evening after he leave the field, he knocking down and nailing up. Sometimes his friend Swain comes by to help. The two of them work all into night. (66)

Celie imagines that people judge her unfairly by her awkward looks. They will be surprised one day when her true self emerges. At the time, she hopes that she will emerge as if in a fairy-tale as a beautiful, blond white girl. By the age of five or six, Celie has already begun to equate beauty with whiteness, a sign that the racism rampant in the society in which she grows up has infiltrated her mind.

Uprooted and sent away from her parents at age three, Celie has trouble throughout her life feeling that she belongs anywhere or that she has come to stay. Her sense of displacement arises in part from the fact that black people are not considered full-fledged Americans. On the contrary, she feels abandoned by her family. The following extract is an index to her growing agony of oppression, coercion and subjugation:

One white man on the platform in South Carolina asked us where we were going-we had got off the train to get some fresh air and to dust the grit and dust out of our clothes. When we said Africa he cooked offended and tickled too. Niggers going to Africa, he said to his wife. How I have seen everything. When we got to New York we were tired and dirty. But so excited! Lisen, Celie, New York is a beautiful city.

(121)

Celie continues to experience the emotions of this episode over and over again throughout her life. She says that growing up as a black girl in the South is “nasty. His father has gone away into his country but would return. When this great man did return, she taught his son to be ready” (69). She says that her displacement is an unnecessary insult. She prepares us to witness a childhood full of such extra insults. Maya manages to escape the critical, mocking church community and laugh about her liberation.

Celie’s experiences in the store tell much about black rural small-town life during the 1930s. The post-Reconstruction era, known as the Jim Crow era, witnessed “Mama howled with joy and threw herself on Old Tallow, who patted her awkwardly. Nokomis sat on the ground, breathing hard, weeping along with Omakayas” (81). The Jim Crow era also brought with it severe segregation laws that affected every walk of life. It contributes to the development of white racist organizations. This extract, cited below, is illustrative of the terror and trauma caused by formidable racist organization:

Well, we got here. And I thought I would never get the kinks out of my hips from being carried in a hammock the whole day. Everybody in the

village crowded round us. Coming out of little round huts with something that I thought was straw on top of them but is really a kind of leaf that grows everywhere. There are some measures to deal with challenges. (87)

Celie's remembrance of the white lynch mob serves as an example of the conflicted nature of many whites' acts of kindness toward blacks. His casual attitude toward the terrorization of the black community destroys any virtue his gesture might indicate.

In the context of the girls' ridiculous and terrible behavior, Momma's respectful address becomes ironic. But this sort of graceful endeavor ends in fiasco. As young children, Celie and Nettie struggle with the pain of having been rejected and abandoned by their alleged father. They also find themselves tormented by the belief that they are ugly and neglected children who will never measure up to genteel, white girls. Celie does not feel equal to other black children. At one moment in her rejected life:

It has been a long time since I had time to write. But always, no matter what I am doing, I am writing to you. Dear Celie, I say in my head in the middle of Vespers, the middle of the night while cooking. I imagine that you really do get my letters and that you are writing me back: Dear Nettie, this is what life is like for me. We are up at five o'clock for a light breakfast of millet porridge and fruit. (37)

Celie is gradually removing the shackles of her life. Celie earned financial freedom, by making "comfortable ladies pants from any range of light to heavy work and ultimately becoming a name in the common households"(141). She also feels jubilant and liberated, with conquering the soul of Albert's and making him a bit humane and

introspective about his past actions. He ultimately settles with friendship with Celie and even thinks of sharing a man- woman relationship with her.

A person not even having the liberty to be master of her own body, and dispossessed from her own self, ultimately wins freedom. Bonding also becomes the medium to cope with oppression and exploitation beyond race. Sofia is asked by the White lady. She is the jailor's wife. She wants to drive her to some place and enjoy with her family members. This is also some way of attaining liberation amidst chains from white domination as it is not to be expected from a white man.

Somehow fate had some other game and by accident as the car did not function well, Sofia again had to drive the white family back from town. For her, "Living with the white family and growing, learning, adapting her ultimately changed from the murderous person to a kind- hearted person" (176) A comparatively, weak personality, Mary Agnes, fondly called as Squeak and second love of Harpo, a character came, no sooner than Sofia was jailed. Squeak is a kind of pet to Harpo.

An "inwardly fragile character but good at heart is a person similar to that of Celie. Weak in spirits, she was regularly abused by Harpo" (187). But the good person in her made her does something can be expected only out of fellow-feeling. She takes charge of herself to find some kind of connection with the jailor only to liberate Sofia from the clutches of confinement, but, is used as "a prey by the jailor in a sexually, self- consuming extent. She sacrificed her self-respect and showed immense strength of character to liberate another oppressed woman"(179). She discards her diminutive nick name squeak only to gain individuality and identity. The following extract clarifies the point:

In the bleak, dark, world of the Blacks, Corrine is the only woman of courage, education, love, cleanliness, health, peace and a symbol of happiness for the black women. She and her husband Samuel took a revolutionary step to save the black race from torture and agony in any form. The couple in their initial search for freedom and a happy state for the black Africans is later joined in this zeal of theirs by Nettie, sister of Celie. (77)

The two children of Celie who are a result of rape by Celie's step-father are actually adopted by Samuel and Corrine as their foster children. Nettie knows the fact, but joining the Christian Missionary couple is more a matter of chance than choice.

When Celie tells her experience, she creates, at the same time, a tangible element. This gives meaning to her sufferings since they are in front of her eyes, she can read them and try to understand them. This certainly helps her to preserve her mental state from going insane. Since Celie's husband intercepts Nettie's letters, Celie does not hear from her sister for years. But when Shug discovers the letters and read them with Celie, Celie feels as if she was born again. Even if Nettie is physically absent, but for Celie, she is morally present through her letters. The importance of the materiality of Nettie's letters is evident when Celie introduce the first recovered letters with her own sentences. This letter I been holding in my hand.

Celie creates a beautiful symbolic and rich world which is different from the patriarchal world in which she actually lives. In her letter's world, Celie can do anything she wants, say any word she likes. This taste of freedom pushes her gradually into the repudiation of her real life with an eagerness for change. Writing plays a role in opening her mind; she becomes aware that she needs to change; she

acquires a desire for a more expansive daily existence. The most important example is the rejection by Celie of the Christian God. Letter after letter, Celie realizes that the white Christian God does not hear her sufferings nor her prayers thus she replaces him, as addressee, by her sister Nettie. Writing becomes, for Celie, a means of structuring her identity. And in fact, when we read the novel, we can notice that Celie has been transformed gradually she feels that she is brought to life again.

Transformation of the letters represents and parallels, to some extent, the growth and change in the lives of their writers. Celie's letters become longer and more sophisticated as she articulates a more reflective and complex sense of self. She feels happier in her life, and tends to express joy by writing more. In the aftermath of these oppressive, molesting and sexual assault, Celie endures the guilt and shame of having been sexually abused. She also believes that “Angeline passed around a basket of nuts- she was very smart about watching where squirrels and mice put their caches, and she raided them” (110). Her mother’s family accepts her silence at first as temporary post-rape trauma. But they later become frustrated and angry at what they perceive to be disrespectful behavior.

Several attempts are made to help Celie recover from psychic wound and injury. Sofia manages to break through Celie’s silence. This woman tells Celie to read works of literature loud, giving her books of poetry that help her to regain her voice. But such attempt ends in futility over time. Celie becomes aware of both the fragility and the strength of her community. The following extract illustrates her efforts towards recovery from the traumatizing memories:

They wrapped skins around their shoulders and set off in the tracks of Old Tallow, weaving slightly, praying for strength. Somehow she

found the will to follow them. When she was a tiny girl, the old woman had saved her and brought her to Yellow Kettle so that she could live. Nettie runs away and lives for a month with a group of homeless teenagers in a junkyard. She returns strong and self-assured. She defies racist hiring policies to become the first black streetcar conductor at age fifteen. (117)

At sixteen, she hides her pregnancy from her mother and stepfather for eight months and graduates from high school. The account ends as Celie begins to feel confident as a mother to her newborn son.

Celie confronts the insidious effects of racism and segregation in America at a very young age. She internalizes the idea that blond hair is beautiful and that she is a fat black girl trapped in a nightmare. As Celie gets older, she is confronted by more overt and personal incidents of racism, such as a white speaker's condescending address at her eighth-grade graduation, her white boss's insistence on calling her Celie, and a white dentist's refusal to treat her.

The black people talk about sexism. This talk militates against the acknowledgement of the interests of black women. The women talk about racism militates against recognition of black female interests. The black people talk about. The focus tends to be on black men. The women talk about the focus tends to be on white women. The compounded nature of their experience is absorbed into the collective experiences of either group or as too different. Sofia, Harpo's strong and physically imposing wife contributes to Celie's longing to come out of double marginalization.

Initially, Celie assimilates and views as definitive her sub-human status as a mule. She does not find "her husband's assaults problematic because she has been socialized into believing that as a wife, she is stubborn and that was what all women were good for (22). Celie accepts her inferior status and the right of a man over a woman's body. She also perpetuates this belief when she suggests to Harpo that he should beat his wife in order to control her. The resultant fight between "Sofia and Harpo like two men becomes a defining moment in Celie's transformation" (37). Celie finds that she cannot even sleep as she feels intense guilt and shame for having advised Harpo to beat his wife.

Celie overcomes the socialization that naturalizes the practice of wife battering and begins to view it as unjust. With the aid of Shug, Nettie and Sofia, Celie evolves into a woman capable of envisioning possibilities and therefore seeks to act upon rather than be acted upon. The following extract clarifies the point:

While the Celie that the reader meets at the beginning of the novel is a being who lacks ownership of her own body, the "bonds between women" help Celie challenge the stereotypes; in fact, they are crucial for enabling her to develop a more authentic sense of self. As the novel proceeds, she transforms. Celie is subjected to plenty of traumatizing events. She is encircled by racist obstacles and harsh constraints of patriarchy. (118)

Though she makes an effort to rise above these harsh events, she cannot go beyond these obstacles. Finally, she is fated to live a traumatized life.

Seeing her vulnerable position, the lecherous man mounts sexual assault on her whereby she is traumatized viciously. Her vehement passion to go beyond racist

restriction and racially divided society clash. Resultantly, she gets traumatized miserably. The lack of moderation and self-restraint lead to the disintegration of an individual's role in society. The prospect of transforming this world under the grip of racism is questionable. It would be really tough and challenging for people under the grip of racism to make life fruitful and satisfactory. This research is strictly confined in this area.

The torturous and harsh effects of various events like her rape by her mother's lover, her rejection in the community of other black girls and family disintegration. The society she lives in is dominated by racially charged norms. Discriminations, deprivation, seclusion, inability to express repressed feelings are all the effects of racism. Racial politics and various manifestations of discriminations give tortuous and traumatic agony. Being a black girl, Maya is subjected to various traumatic situations which arise in racially divided society. Since, the topic of the disruptive effect of late capitalism is untouched and unexplored, the researcher claims that it is the fresh, new and original topic.

A young black girl named Celie stands in front of her church congregation on Easter. She is unable to finish reciting a poem. She wears an unflattering altered taffeta dress. This dress is probably a secondhand dress from a white woman. She fantasizes that one day she will wake up out of her "Although she was bent low to the earth, picking with great speed and industry, she had noticed that her baby was watching something" (34). The harsh effect of her parents' quite not immediately and unexpected divorce is obvious in the following extract:

As she helped build the rack back up and replace the slices of meat on it, and as she washed sand off the pieces that had fallen onto the

ground. It was a strange, buoyant feeling-she felt that she could be lifted away by it. As if she'd held on to an eagle and been dragged up into the air! Left, she understood what it was – pride. It was so rare that Nettie ever showed that he was proud of what she had done. (54)

The Store is the center of the community. Mother is one of the community's most respected residents. But the individual quest of the mother puts the life of Celie in confusion, alienation, and nightmare and anxiety attack. Celie wants to grow into a dignified lady having good social standing and exposure. In this society only the White color and patriarchal arrogance gain ground. Her passion and ambition remain unfulfilled. From one moment to the other, she is harassed and frightened by racist mentality and patriarchal arrogance.

Celie returns home from school one day to see him. For the first time, Celie hides his handicap from two strangers who have stopped briefly at the Store. She understands and sympathizes with Willie. Even in her educational choice and reading activity, she is doubtless about the writer of color. The laborers never earn enough to pay their debts. They work in the same spirit as the White. For the same jobs also they are deprived of making the same earning as a white man earns. Having seen this instance of deprivation and racist practice, the narrator is shocked. She asks a question to herself how Black people can hope to make their future better if they are collectively fated to endure such cases of deprivation. The only children who do not respect Momma are poor white children. The following extract exemplifies how Maya is acutely aware of racial disparity and discrimination rooted in such disparities and discrepancies:

It seemed like the whole night was on fire. Hot winds from shore sickened everyone, and the smoke hung down in a choking mass. The grown-ups took turns lying down in the bottoms of the canoes, but they were cramped and could not stretch out. Quill, whose porcupine coughed on top of his head, slept sitting up with his arms folded for a while, then slowly wedged him into the front of the canoe. (66)

They will be surprised one day when her true self emerges. At the time, she hopes that she will emerge as if in a fairy-tale as a beautiful, blond white girl. By the age of five or six, Maya has already begun to equate beauty with whiteness, a sign that the racism rampant in the society in which she grows up has infiltrated her mind. Celie continues to experience the emotions of this episode over and over again throughout her life. She says that growing up as a black girl in the South is “nasty. His step father has gone away into his country but would return. When this great man did return, she taught his son to be ready” (69). She says that her displacement is an unnecessary insult.

The victims of unrestrained westernization and grand narrative ultimately develop disappointed attitude. The following lines demonstrate this sort of dystopian attitude:

I walked across the train tracks, took back streets, trampled on yellow autumn stuck to the pavement. A deep feeling of optimism surged up inside me. If only I could always walk like this, walking fast, without stopping, if only I could go on journey, it seemed I would reach the universe in the book. The glow of the new life I felt inside me existed in a far way place, even in a land that was unattainable, but I sensed

that as long as I was in motion, I was getting closer. I could at least leave my old life behind me. (11)

Celie's fondness for books happens to provoke optimistic effect in those who read. Typically, it has had positive effect, optimistic effect in the narrator of this novel. In the preliminary phase of reading, the book surely and undoubtedly produces positive and optimistic effect in readers. But this kind of positive effect does not remain unchanged. It remains fundamentally protean. It is fickle and ephemeral. The so-called illuminating effect of the book is a snare in which any sincere and innocent readers can get trapped.

Celie prepares us to witness a childhood full of such extra insults. Maya manages to escape the critical, mocking church community and laugh about her liberation. To cut the whole matter short, through this transformation, Walker suggests that the entire black community may transform to become a community where dignity is accorded to all its members—both men and women. According to Walker, the society that enables more fulfilling lives for black women is inclusive of transformed men. Female bonding is the instrument of avoiding any type of oppression that comes from the side of race, patriarchy and intra-racial structure of society.

Chapter IV

Conclusion

Walker's Vision of Racial Harmony

The core finding of this research is to examine how bonding among sisterhood in suffering paves the way for the resistance to dominations of various types. In Walker's *The Color Purple*, the first face of violence is appeared by the opening of the book when Celie starts to describe her family. She refers to her stepfather who beats her mother and proceeds to rape her. She lives in constant fear of him and hopes to protect her sister, Nettie from his violent wrath. The blacks are dehumanized and deprived of even the basic access to rest, peace, food, water and self-esteem. Female slaves are sexually abused and the males are subjected to backbreaking works on plantation. They give continuity to their tradition. The need of labor force on plantation and deep-seated racism compel the white to go to African continent and capture the black people. Those black people who are forcibly captured are dehumanized and tortured harshly. The white often produce the narrative that harsh treatment is necessary for those slaves otherwise their cannibalistic instinct can come out threatening the fabric of society.

Freedom is the most precious thing all the black captives give utmost value. They inwardly assume that only in the state of freedom, an individual freely gets a chance to think who he is and what he is supposed to achieve in his life. Lives of black slaves are devoid of dignity, security and self-esteem. The question of identity of the black captives does not arise in a full-fledged way. If slavery takes an institutionalized form, humanity gets shattered and finally dehumanization takes place at a high scale. In this situation, it would be really tough to deal with this evil. That is

why, search for root and identity is a must to come out of the hell of racism and slavery.

The narrative provides a counter-hegemonic narration of black identity. Celie has turned into an example of self-determination, proud racial identity, and a popular mythical forefather to the collective African American memory. Celie's ability to retain memories from his homeland and the family's original name is the central vehicle for a broader self-determination and for the elevation of Africa from a place of provenance to a symbol of racial pride. His knowledge of his African origins distinguishes him from the other Americanized. Blacks are proposed as an authorizing piece of memory. The legacy of racial pride and assertiveness are accordingly passed to future family generations.

In the early parts of the novel, Celie looks for God as her listener and helping hand, also she thinks that He is a completely separated figure from her world; so far Celie does not have a clear understanding of who God is. She only knows that God is a white patriarch. Her writing thrusts her into a rich symbolic life that results in her repudiation of the life she has been assigned and a desire for a more expansive daily existence. While her faith is strong, it's dependent on only what other people have revealed to her about God. Later she tells Shug that she sees God as a white man. She has this belief because everyone she knows has said God is white and a male, she says it doesn't seem quite right, but it's all she has. Shug informs her that God is not an old white man with a beard.

Celie and Sofia are the two most mistreated women in the novel. They form a deep bond; they are brought together by their suffering in strong solidarity. In the past, Celie has only known the importance of standing up for other women in her

family; she has willingly protected both her mother and her sister from Fonso's mistreatment by sacrificing herself. Another woman in the novel, who knows the value of women's solidarity is Shug . When she finds how Albert has treated Celie over the years, she loses her desire for him and permanently erases him from her life. Then she helps Celie and Mary Agnes to escape their lives of domestic abuse and drudgery. In the process, she gives Celie a sense of her own unique, beauty and spirit.

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