

PalArch's Journal of Archaeology  
of Egypt / Egyptology

**VEILED CHRONICLES OF RACE AND GENDER: RE-  
CONCEPTUALIZING INTERSECTIONALITY  
IN AMERICAN FICTION**

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**Dr. Humaira Riaz , Asfandyar Shah , Sajjad Ahmad , Veiled Chronicles Of Race And  
Gender: Re-Conceptualizing Intersectionality In American Fiction , Palarch's Journal  
Of Archaeology Of Egypt/Egyptology 18(10), 1283-1294. ISSN 1567-214x.**

**Key Words: Fiction, Race, Gender, Intersection, Self-actualization, Re-  
conceptualization.**

**ABSTRACT**

Re-conceptualization of race and gender as an interchangeable procedure of social practices hold significant position in the contemporary global discussion. The present study explores veiled chronicles of race and gender in American fiction by presenting a comprehensive analysis of Alice Walker's *The Color Purple* (1970) and Maxine Kingston's *The Woman Warrior* (1976). It highlights the role of fiction in the development of future perspectives. It primarily investigates the overlapping relationship of gender and race to emphasize the contribution of women writers of different origins towards self-actualization; raising the consciousness of women in general and 'women of colour' in particular. The term 'women of colour' focuses and refers to the socially created differences among Native American, Asian and Black American women. Qualitative in

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nature, the study uses Crenshaw's theory of Intersectionality (1967), which explains how different types of discrimination interact to create social hierarchies. Character analysis helps to refurbish the idea that social structures cannot be viewed in isolation. The study sets out to determine how fiction proves to be the harbinger of revolutionary changes in the social power structures. It also asserts the role of fiction writers in re-conceptualizing the intersection of race and gender as an inevitable social phenomenon. For future study, South Asian fiction written by female writers may illustrate intersection of gender and religious differences influencing lives of females in the region.

### **FROM THE PEN OF WOMEN WRITERS**

Alice Walker and Maxine Hong Kingston boldly assert gender and racial inequality in *The Colour Purple* (1970) and *The Woman Warrior* (1976). With a different approach to familiar themes, Walker's protagonist is a traditional domestic woman, whereas Kingston dramatizes the character of a woman presenting her in the 'ultra-masculine role of a warrior' (Chao, 2008). However, both depict the sensitive issue of competing with sex roles and behaviours. In their own peculiar ways, the novels present resistance and transgression of the 'women of colour' in the wake of racist and patriarchal conventions.

In the domain of literary studies, scholars acknowledge the conceptualization of intersection. 'Women of colour' have remained the preferred representatives of gender and race intersection particularly in the USA (Christian, 1987; Collins 1986; Ducille 1944; hooks 1984). Women status in China went under transformation as a result of the Communist Revolution in 1949. Particularly Chinese One Child policy illuminated its image as a flag holder of women rights, which for years have been blurred due to ancient conventions. The realization of women status sprang long before when issues such as sexuality, incest, domestic violence as well as the issues of inequality and patriarchal dominance became pivotal in the USA (*The Second Wave of Feminism* 1960). In addition, racism experienced differently by different groups held interpretation for the black people in the historical context of slavery, immigration and the history of 'indentured labour' (Jhajharia et.al. 2012), which shaped a distinctive historical experience for Asian Americans. For women, the experience of 'feminine sexuality' remained different mostly compromising their identity (Jhajharia et.al. 2012). For decades, they confronted social and racial injustice. The selected narratives convey the stories of oppression about women. Racial or ethnic groups construct masculinity in their own peculiar way. The narratives foreground Black American women and Chinese women at the crossroads of sexism and racism experiencing hostility from the 'white' Americans'.

Primary goal of the present study is to develop an understanding of knowledge production by Walker and Kingston. Both the writers rethought and conceptualized the African-American and Chinese-American experiences. Brief biographies of Walker and Kingston, help one to infer whatever they observed and experienced, they made public through fiction. Walker's parents were sharecroppers, suffering from inequity in the early twentieth century; they tended the land in exchange for living. The exploitation of the Black workers at their workplaces in early 20<sup>th</sup> century compelled them to lead lives of slavery. Walker remained always critical of the sharecropping system and considered it worse than slavery (Dunning, 2006). Parallel to Walker is Maxine Hong Kingston, a Chinese American, who also contributed to the feminist movement and discussed the issues of gender and race in women's lives in her own distinct narrative style.

They used figurative expressions to show sexism and American racism. The relationship between their activism and art is profoundly reflected in their works exposing oppression in the 20th century, setting examples for 21<sup>st</sup>-century women. They settle the scores by reporting the misdemeanour of sexism and racism. They end their works on happy notes to suggest that marginalized people must overcome oppression. They articulate mainly racial and gender despotism. This articulation transforms the entire terrain of social and academic discourses in the domain of literary studies.

### **AT THE CROSSROAD**

The contribution of literary works is significant in highlighting the debates on women's oppression. *The Colour Purple* and *The Woman Warrior* sparked considerable success and controversy at the same time. Readers welcome revolutionary thoughts. The process might be slow; however, history reflects the contribution of fiction writing in bringing revolutions. Fiction undergoes criticism for its unconventional approach. The writers rise above the conflict and confusion of their personal lives to construct reality in their writing. Their works are analogous to 'Chinese knots' in which various filaments are tangled weaving gender, race and woman into an intricate whole (Kingston, 1976). The texts give insight in to the writers' search for their position and security. In Kingston's opinion, men believed that the achievements of the minoritywomen writers were possible by 'collaborating with the white racist establishment', which was a one-sided argument as 'the women don't answer (Kingston, 1990).

Written by female writers, *The Color Purple* and *The Woman Warrior* are distinct in their forms. Technically both of them neither fall in the category of novels nor memoirs. These works of fiction are undoubtedly grounded in reality. *The Woman Warrior* shows no clear demarcation between the truth and fantasy. It is rather a fusion of both, which entertains as well as invokes thoughts as a sensitive account of growing up as a Chinese American female. *The Color Purple* maintains the similar peculiarity; written in an epistolary form, it reveals the inner thoughts of the protagonist. The present study views both the texts within the parameters of the theory of intersection based on the notion that oppressive institutions within a society such as gender, race and sex do not act independently of one another. These are instead shaped by one another (Crenshaw, 1989).

Both works reflect autobiographical elements. Walker married Melvyn Leventhal, a white and Jew. They were the first racially integrated couple to live in Mississippi, which reflected her inclination to fight the differences based on skin and colour. Kingston also featured her life's experiences by depicting different characters from conventional Chinese society. Characters in her narrative relate to her personal life in some way: her mother, her aunt (Moon Orchid), No-Name Woman, and mythical characters such as Fa Mu Lan.

Walker opens her book with Celi, the female protagonist, directly addressing God: 'I have always been a good girl' (p.1) invoking anticipation in readers. Likewise, Kingston's opening lines focus on a female character. She criticizes the patriarchal structure in Chinese society; 'as if she had never been born' (p.3). Her story is a search for her place within the community. She uses the art of mythmaking and creates a heroine who goes astray from the traditionally constructed gender borders within the Chinese society. By considering females as their main protagonists, Walker and Kingston portray the societal treatment of woman as a commodity. Kingston narrates reasons for breaking the silence about aunt in 'No Name Woman' (Chap I). It

denotes the fact that Chinese culture is deeply embedded in patriarchy and has never cared to give voice to a woman. Kingston is taking revenge for her aunt by penning down her story in sheer opposition to Chinese culture, which has always excluded the names of the females from the family trees; it has a blatant preference for paternity (Rulz, 2010). The title of the first chapter 'No name woman' in Kingston's work is suggestive of the ambivalence sustained by Kingston. Furthermore, she depicts Chinese society where men migrate to other countries due to economic crises and leave women alone at the mercy of traditions and culture. She expresses her anger at the injustices 'born by Chinese women'. At the same time, she expresses a desire to embrace Chinese tradition despite its imperfections. It connotes the dilemma of the immigrants where cultures 'leave marks on peoples' lives (Riaz & Babae, 2015). This is echoed in *The Woman Warrior*. When we read *The Color Purple*, we find Celi, a no-name girl, who has no identity and Walker depicts her as a woman automaton having no voice except her 'Dear God' who is 'white' and 'male'. Walker's story is also the bildungsroman as Celi walks on a path towards self-actualization. Her role is initially confined to a domestic voiceless creature who finally achieves independence and contentment. This "no name girl" transforms herself into a self-expressive and self-reliant lady. Kingston and Walker are remaking and defining 'selves' in response to sexism, immigration, and racism. Both the narratives portray females as objectified and caught in the strong cords of patriarchy thus illuminating cases of gender crossings in traditional sex roles and racism.

It is a historically admitted fact that gender and race runs parallel particularly in Western societies. If gender has been the core problem in patriarchal societies, it was reinforced by the societies of white domination. History is replete with examples in which non-white women are more marginalized with compromised identities. Woman is known by the names of her father, husband or son. Kingston challenges such conventional prospects through mother's stories by bringing the facts to light about Chinese woman as the pioneer of martial art (p.19). Walker asserts the productivity of Celi in her domestic chores that make 'Mr.' dependent on her at every step (p.25). Kingston's Fa Mu Lan and Walker's Sofia are both prototypes of warrior women. Fa Mu Lan fights gloriously and returns victoriously from war (p.20). Sofia declares war by saying 'no' to the mayor's wife, a white woman. However, the reason of her becoming a maid creates one of the paradoxes of this book.

### **IMBALANCE IN SOCIAL STRUCTURES**

Racism and sexism meet at a point to dominate and create an imbalance in the social structures around the world. Just as non-white people are marginalized due to their race, women are degraded more by virtue of their race and gender. In The United States, racial segregations have constituted a basic norm of 'how racism is organized' (Collins, 2000). From the black Feminist perspective, Sophia suffers oppression at the hands of white masters. Through her character, the predicaments of nineteenth-century slavery are brought to the light. The evolution of the black and white relationship is explored through her character. 'The forbidden' in both the books is consistently approached. White race is seen through Sophia's lens. The white family is dependent on her. She relates the truth as she sees it and acts as the reader's telescope. 'White' children when are raised, they behave like their parents, argue Sophia in the book (p.268). Women in both the books are not permitted to undercut the notion of patriarchy. Parallel to this is the situations, depicted by Kingston, of the immigrants treated as slaves. Immigration Ghosts 'stamping papers' (p.115) are Kingston's concern and reason of ambivalence as she is caught up between the two

cultures and reconciles with neither. This makes Kingston's approach to racism and sexism different from Walker. Of course, with the same objectives, the authors conducted experiments of exposing their thoughts in writings. Walker interprets racism in terms of the historical context of slavery whereas, for Kingston immigration unfolds the traumatic experiences. Walker herself, being a black woman, feels the strain of the black women. Miss Millie's plain refusal 'to be driven by a strange coloured man' signifies the racial attitude of the whites towards black people. 'White folk is a miracle of affliction', says Sofia (p.108). Sofia becomes the mouthpiece of Black women retaliating openly against the white authority who believed 'slavery fell through because of Blacks' (p.104). Walker has given a fictional exposure to paramount sense of racism that ruled the twentieth-century throughout America and beyond its borders. Kingston scrutinizes Moon Orchid's husband whose 'entry in the land of whites has made him indifferent to his own people (p.153). Masculinity compels him to disown Moon Orchid. For him, new life is so complete that his family in China had become 'people in a book [he] had read a long time ago (p.154). Moon Orchid's fear of the 'Mexican ghost' is denotative of the racial prejudice, which the immigrants fear (p.155). Hence, intersection of race and gender function to victimize females. 'Mexican Ghost' reflects Kingston's apprehension of the slavery embedded in the minds of the immigrants. That leads to their shallowness. They fail to absorb foreign culture. 'Living at the cross roads' of cultures, they are lost in the mainstream (Achebe, 1979). Their lives are spent in uncertainty and insecurity. However, their next generations are 'pulled away' by the novel life around them (Kingston, 1976, p.145).

Integration of racism and gender as exclusive categories of experience and analysis provide theoretical context to both the texts. In the works of Walker and Kingston, racism takes two forms: racism towards blacks and secondly, towards immigrants. These as 'elements of connection' are more reliable as 'precipitation probability' for the day after the night before the day (Jordan, 1985). Kingston uses a symbolic story of the girl "Fa Mu Lan" who spends years alone among the white tigers. Brave orchid spends her life as an immigrant and relates her life's time experiences in the wake of racial biases. Her struggle causes hallucination and revelations about the world.

Kingston's words 'woman warrior' appropriate the situation of the women in both narratives emphasizing the reformation of their characters and consciousness. Nurturing among inequalities, the battle is against sexist and racial injustices. Kingston was inspired by her community and strongly believed that the strength of a writer was in his/her ties to the community. She displays these thoughts through her mother stories. The social and physical environment shapes both the narratives. The way these fictional characters are treated by others helps to define how they see themselves. Celi's sex aspiration is highlighted in her interaction with the white clerk in the store who seemingly does not want her there, denoting the gap between the two races. Kingston's narrative battles the racist attitude of natives towards immigrants.

### **SEXISM AS A COMMON DENOMINATOR**

Both the authors explicitly speak about the weaknesses of their own races where sexism is the common denominator. The works received great criticism by the contemporary writers but both avenged society by reporting the crimes of racism and sexism.

Studies have confirmed that women fail to share a common vision of equality (hook, 1984). The conjunction of sexism and racism determines to what extent an individual can be discriminated, exploited and oppressed. Since men belonging to the lower class or non-white race are subjugated by the white race, they are likely to show an exaggerated expression of patriarchy such as the character in *The Color Purple*. Walker criticizes American society for being racist and sexist. She discusses its unnatural social hierarchy where black woman is pressurized by her own male family members and by the white race around. Hence, race is a feminist issue with as much relevance as sexism. In this regard, a 'woman of colour' is 'doubly' oppressed. The desolate patterns of patriarchy and the 'skin' marginalize her more as inferior beings. Women in Walker's narrative are mistreated in other ways besides being beaten. One of its characters is referred to as 'Squeak' instead of being called by her actual name, Mary Agnes. This shows the dehumanization of human character as Davis has shown in her short story by depicting the deformity in Debora's character (Davis, 1861). This also shows the complete lack of respect men show to women. She gains power after the white warden rapes her. Moreover, afterwards, she stands up to the rest of the people in her life who fail to recognize her as a person. 'She stands up. My name is Mary Agnes, she says'. She fights for her independence.

Walker and Kingston are among those writers who preferred to develop their own ideas about feminism rather than accepting the agenda dictated by white feminists. Women in their works are harassed. They highlight the need 'to end sexism or racism' (hooks, 1984). This question is rooted in the formation of 'self in opposition to an 'other' (hook, 1984). Celi's self is formed in opposition to her husband. Sophia forms herself in opposition to Harpo (her husband) and her white master (Mayor's wife). *Brave Orchid* actualizes herself in the wake of a new culture in opposition to the superior race. Race and gender intervene in the lives of these characters simultaneously.

Comparing both works, rebellion is found against the norms and conventions of supremacy. Furthermore, both the writers pen down social and racial discrepancies. Kingston recounts the Chinese American experience. Walker contemplates the situation within the black community, its contradictions, and its subjugation to the 'white' supremacy. Both transcend lives of insignificance into prominence. Both endeavour to transform them into significant illustrations for the benefit of their own kind. Kingston's *Fa Mu Lan* saves her family and community, ventures to be a 'woman warrior'. Her returns as a dutiful daughter is yet another paradox of the book as it denotes the bargains that woman does with patriarchy (Kandiyoti, 1982).

Voiceless women are given voice in the works. Celi in *The Color Purple* is silent. In contrast Shug, Sophia and Nettie escort her on the path of self-actualization. Kingston fabricates a story of a warrior girl 'Fa Mu Lan' who is left alone amidst the beasts where she learns to survive. Walker's Celi is treated badly by her so-called father, Alphonso. She succumbs to her situation because power hierarchies in society are mainly constituent of racism and sexism, which victimize the weak.

The narratives reflect gender as a social construction (Pinker, 2002). 'Some categories really are social constructions: they exist only because people tacitly agree to act as if they exist' (Pinker, 2002). *The Color Purple* and *The Woman Warrior* give us a chance to glance at the conservative American and Chinese societies. Both the writers have challenged the male authority; 'male-female role demarcation', through their personal experiences largely determined by external

forces (Chao, 2008). The raising of conscience among women is determined through Celi and Brave Orchid.

A woman has no home in conventional patriarchal societies. Yet, Kingston asserts that professional women reserve the right to use their maiden name rather than recognized by their male counterparts (p.77). Otherwise, 'she may have been either a daughter or a slave (p.77) Walker's narrative provokes the thoughts if woman will ever be free from the shackles of patriarchy. Celi's mind is a window to the twentieth-century woman who is domesticated and oppressed parallel almost to 'sadness and thoughtfulness'. (p.28) Celi's marriage is devoid of emotions. Marriage is a sacred ritual that regenerates love and affection. Both the narratives demonstrate examples of violation of this holy practice. Celi in *The Color Purple* is a victim of an unwanted relationship to only take care of her children (p. 64). Kingston highlights the fact through the relationship of Moon Orchid and her husband. Moon Orchid's husband has deserted her for a new life in America that entails her ultimate lunacy in an asylum. There she is surrounded by a woman of her condition. They are all women 'there' and they understand each other well (p.160). Both the works portray stories of resistance and reconstruction of femininity in the milieu of extreme racism and sexism. Walker invites the readers to question these norms that have dominated females most particularly the woman from an ethnic minority. Celi and Nettie receive no affection. Walker and Kingston point out a common identity that has been imposed (Jordan, 1985). Celi constantly suffers from her husband's 'battering rage' (Jordan, 1985). Kingston's portrayal of the dilemma faced by immigrants directs to make a connection between the immigrant and the 'strangers' (the indigenous people of America) to unify the 'ragged bunch of immigrants' to survive (Jordan, 1985). In comparison, Walker brings the component of sexual awareness intermingled with white racism. She touches the subject of homosexuality and incest to point out themoral corruption prevalent in the Black community. Celi has a desire to liberate herself; so does Brave Orchid. Being female and black Celi is exposed to various experiences that plant a seed of consciousness in her mind. Shug asserts in her the power to value her beauty. In the final pages of *The Color Purple*, we meet Celi as an individual who has both inside and outside self-awareness and she knows 'how not to mix them' (p.63). Consequently, she escapes from the amalgam of 'forced identities' (Hurtson, 1937). Transformation is the inheritance of revolution. For Walker that revolution had to start in the personal.

Racism and sexism are incorporated in *The woman Warrior* where the narrator talks about her academic excellence which was never acknowledged 'at school [where] there were dating and dances, but not for good Chinese girls' (p.196). Rather, she is advised to develop herself 'socially as well as mentally' by her American teachers (p.196). Comparing herself with the 'mentally retarded boy at school', the narrator points out the dehumanization of immigrants in America (p.194). Their identity is crippled. The revelation of 'pornography-naked magazines, nudie postcards, and photographs' in his two cartons exposes man's inquisitiveness to know and dominate a woman's body (p. 197).

### **RACIAL AND GENDER REBELLION**

Both books courageously represent a racial and gender rebellion. Kingston presents cases of female characters 'a no name aunt', 'a warrior', a 'shaman' and the narrator herself. In contrast, Walker chooses narratives of Celi, Nettie, Shug and Sophia. They are all connected; all subvert and transgress though may not be successful always. Kingston's desire for reconciliation to her community and land is given life through *Brave Orchid*. For her silence is a misery that causes

the pain each time she 'did not speak' (Kingston, p.166). Immigrants have no memories (p.167) they dwell in two worlds simultaneously; no world is their own. Walker and Kingston struggle to make their protagonists speak.

The narratives attempt to meet the challenges and devise strategies through descriptions for liberating and empowering women. However, both fail to free their sentences completely from the 'infection' the nineteenth-century female writers carried (Gilbert & Gubar, 1979). They endorse the domestic role of females at the end pages. This is the constraint of both books that main characters internalize certain masculine values thereby yielding to stereotypical gender roles. It was ultimately Alice Walker who coined the term 'womanism' (1983) and addressed the unique history of racial and gender intersection for oppressing black women.

Sexism revealed through the narratives' language is directed to expose the harms of American society. Walker's Sophia is emasculated by the white race although she is a rebel to Harpo; her black counterpart at the same time. Celi is compelled to follow the patriarchal role. The texts are portrayals of conceptualizing identity. Being a 'woman of colour', Walker and Kingston highlight the experiences of their female protagonists, as there is no better point of entry into a critique or reflection than one's own experience (Bannerji, 1992). The books thus certainly contain meta-narratives to show 'the integration of race and gender' (Sacks, 1989). There is no place where a woman of colour enters that does not consider this intersection (Giddings, 1984). Sophia's struggle (*The Color Purple*) is a unified one against race and gender. She rejects any notion of love and affection to Reynolds Stanley Earl (Eleanor's Baby). 'The coloured women that say they love yours is lying, 'she say. People of colour, she says, are so scared of 'white folks they claim to love the cotton gin' (p.269).

Mr. love for Shug is mainly because she is unlike the conventional female and he himself confesses that. 'Shug act more manly than most men' (p.273). Shug and Sophia fight and both are bound 'to live their lives no matter what' (p.274). Racial prejudices that Sophia points out her social position as a representative of the black race. Her rebellion shows her struggle for survival and social change. Nettie is another example who never judges her personal worth in relation to men. She marries when she feels herself a complete human being herself. These women inspire Celi to become confident and self-reliant. On the other hand, the warrior woman in Kingston is a symbol of change and deviation from the norms. The narrator has much to fight against Americans just like Fa Mu Lan. The narrator combats her identity at every step. Walkers and Kingston often act like native informers who reveal the inside stories of their own race and community. They are 'out-law knot-makers' (Kingston) who bring to the surface what evils are at the core; be it Black or Chinese. Besides, they are troubled by the internalization of patriarchy. Life for the female protagonist is 'samurai' who is gradually trained to self-discipline and a sense of duty towards the opposite gender. They carry contempt towards the family restrictions. Their positions differ not only physically but socially. Celi is scared of man; 'she does not look at men' (*The Color Purple*). Her inner conflicts eventually change her from a submissive creature into an independent rather rebellion woman.

The books are construction of male-oriented societies also confronted with a racial penchant. Kingston critically talks about American-Chinese girls 'whispering to make themselves 'American-feminine' losing their identity into the mainstream(p.172). At school, the



narrator's inclination towards Negro students specially foreshadows the universal dilemma binding 'people of colour' against white racism. Kingston use of 'ghost' for the people and county of America unfolds many layers of her fear and disappointment (p.164). Immigrants are 'in semiotic parlance floating signifiers' (JNU, 2009). 'They have their secrets to guard'. Disclosure of these could send them back to their countries (Kingston, 1979). This fact silences them forever. Kingston reveals the ambivalence of the immigrant through the narrator's voice. 'Sometimes [she] hated the ghosts for not letting [them] talk sometime [she] hated the secrecy of Chinese' (p.183).

Walker's narrative reveals an important experience: how a woman of colour is victimized merely by refusing the order of a white lady (p.87). Sophia does not exhibit proper etiquettes to the mayor's wife (p.87). These regimes of inequality are at the core of the book and shed light on how gender and race affect women in particular. The life patterns in the books are exposed through detailed description; these patterns determine the sustainability of race and gender as inter-connected forces.

In the life of Celi, race and gender converge because she is a 'woman of colour'. Her letters to God shows her subjugation through her concept of God, who is white and male. She internalizes the values of all who oppressed her. Hers is the story of imitation which ultimately works to her benefit.

Communication barriers, according to Kingston, create problems that limit the lives of the immigrants. Various patterns of subordination in the book, be it patriarchal, immigration, or language, are united to interfere in the lives of women. Indeed this is the imposition of one burden that interacts with existing susceptibilities creating other dimensions of subjugation. However, Walker identifies a correlation between domestic violence and the liberation of Black Americans. Her novel is an interpretation of 'intercommunity debate about the political costs of exposing dangerous violence within the Black community (Crenshaw, 1991). The relationship between a white woman and a black woman discriminatory from beginning to end is visibly illustrated in the relationship between Miss Eleanor and Sophia. As we see, Sophia's rigidity is intense. She shows no fine feelings to Miss Eleanor who demands affection from Sophia for the little one (p.269).

Females in both narratives live at the margin of 'feminism and anti-racism' (Crenshaw, 1991). They are vulnerable to men. The conceptualization of rape and imprisonment is shaped by patriarchy and racism in their lives.

## CONCLUSION

Walker and Kingston represented a situation of twentieth-century female characters imprisoned in the shackles of patriarchy and racism. Writers as female avengers pointed at the historical subjugation of women; objectified and silenced. Parallel to sexism was drawn racism in the form of colour and immigration, hence, further marginalizing the females. Race and gender were shown inseparable from the lives of those women as driving forces. The writers encouraged females to know their selves. The internalization of patriarchy and racism in 20<sup>th</sup> century American society was so strong that did not let those female characters to realize their existence. Publication period of both the books denoted the critical situation of the contemporary women, which initiated the major controversy of the books. Women were barred freedom. They were restricted to domestic lifestyle where they could not extend their horizon. Gender was

determined by society and integrated strongly into the social power structures. It did not work in isolation. Social structure created and recreated inequality along the axes of race and gender' (Merich, 2008). Articulation of the narratives of identity and racism changed the dominant social discourse that privileged men in general and the white race in particular. It also challenged the paradigms of maleness, whiteness and most of all western-ness. Hence, a simultaneous procedure to discuss the intersection of race and gender as oppressive force in *The Color Purple* and *The Woman Warrior* highlighted a standpoint that intersection created a web consisting of a variety of discriminations. Seemingly discrete, gender and race are shaped by each other. To conclude, Walker and Kingston depicted the legendary 'women warriors'. The female characters had much in common. They did not give up; instead, they battled for their survival. Sustainability was their marked value.

Through these narratives, readers find interpretations and definitions of the woman warrior in a web; oppression of females being a common and dominant element. Both books depicted the protagonist imitating certain characters to encounter marginality. Celi's models are Nettie, Sophia and Shug. Through them, she formulated herself stepping out of limits. For Kingston's narrator, Fa Mu Lan was an ideal and exceptional woman. Both books addressed sensitive topics. It revealed the insightfulness of the writers. They voiced the miseries of the voiceless. Changes occurring in the personalities of the fictional characters invariably led to a massive social change. The writers represented the challenging notions of race and gender within two societies. Walkers and Kingston provided profound knowledge of the Black and Chinese communities. They both in fact 'translated' the issues 'well' (*The Woman Warrior*).

Hence, the analysis asserts role of fiction bringing revolution in the social power structures. It also illuminates the role of fiction writers in re-conceptualizing the intersection of race and gender as an unavoidable social phenomenon. For future research, the study implies exploration of South Asian fiction written by female writers, which may illustrate intersection of gender and religious differences influencing lives of females in the region.

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