

The Dynamic Role of Ancestors in African-American Literature: A Study of Toni Morrison's "Rootedness: The Ancestor as Foundation"

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Abstract: *This paper explores the crucial role of ancestors in African-American literature as articulated by Toni Morrison in her essay "Rootedness: The Ancestor as Foundation". Morrison claims that characters antecedent are not only Isomorphic with historical facts but are woven into the fabric of the story; they become constants in the narrative, cultural referents, the bedrock upon which the modern characters are built. The purpose of this paper is to consider over the indications mentioned by Morrison and analyze the general and specific aspects of the themes, cultural role, and strategies in the context of African-American literature. It also acknowledges the applicability of the theme of ancestry in literature given that all people have ancestry and that it is a valuable cultural asset as well as a means of coping and fighting against oppression.*

Key Words: *African-American literature, Rootedness, cultural asset, oppression.*

1. INTRODUCTION :

Toni Morrison's essay "Rootedness: The Ancestor as Foundation" A review of the essay published in the collection of essays entitled 'Literature in the Modern World' by Dennis Walder sheds light on the importance of the forefathers in the American black literature. Concerning the concept of ancestors, Morrison is of the view that ancestors give form and context to people and the stories that form cultures in the present. The present paper intends to build on Morrison's idea, with the aim of further discussing the impact of ancestors being present in literature to establish cultural integrity and continuity, as well as to defy elimination and embody subjugation.

The introduction to Morrison's essay highlights a critical aspect of African-American literature: It can be said that the nature of ancestral spirits' presence was not just deep-seated but also multilayered in the overall culture of agriculture. Morrison firstly aims at explaining why ancestors' figure appears important in African-American culture and historical perception. She continues to make the audiences understand that myths are not mere relics of the past rather present day, proactive forces. This aforesaid concept does significant end to popular Western narrative philosophies emphasizing their assessments of history and heritages as either unchanging or inconsequential to the present world.

Morrison states, "The presence of the ancestor is central to the novelistic enterprise. There is always an elder there. And these ancestors are not just figures from the past; they are in the very fabric of the contemporary experience" (Morrison, 1984, p. 343). Implicit in this statement is the fact that ancestors are part of the daily reality of blacks' experience and presence in America, which makes the African-American life connected to a set of ethereal beings who are always around to offer counsel, knowledge or a distinct self-identity regardless of generational shifts.

Intertextual Analysis

Thus, it will be important to further explore Morrison's beliefs regarding the place of ancestors in literature in relation to other scholars and writers who analyzed the subject. For instance, Alice Walker does a similar thing in her book 'In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens' where she writes about such aspects as the influence of ancestors and culture, among others. In counseling, Walker observes, "We have been raised to respect our elders and listen to their advice" (Walker, 1983, p. 231). And with regard to many artists, the same can be said of their audiences: We have been socialized to revere our seniors, and to heed their words of wisdom. Both the aspects of focusing on ancestors and paying much

attention to the elderly are in terms with Morrison's statement about the ancestor's position as a main protagonist of today's stories.

Similarly, Bell Hooks, in her book 'Ain't I a Woman: Black Women and Feminism', presents the concept of heritage and culture, particularly the role of passing on knowledge from one generation to the next. Hooks writing that, "Our foremothers have given us a legacy of struggle and resistance, a sense of identity that is deeply rooted in our history and culture" (hooks, 1981, p. 118). This acknowledgment of ancestors' past endeavors of fight and rebellion is in a line with Morrison's statements that ancestors are necessary for comprehending the existing reality.

Besides, in one of her works, 'Beloved', the main character, Sethe, is a woman who somehow lies down with the spirit of her dead daughter, Beloved. This haunting is not simply in the traditional definition of the word as it denotes a ghost; rather, it refers to the fact that Sethe carries with her trauma and history. By employing this set of narratives, Morrison returns her readers to the concern for the continuity of the past as it informs the present, thereby reiterating what has been postulated in the essay.

2. CONTEXTUAL FRAMEWORK:

Using the SPR approach, it is possible to outline the proposed strategy for the development of a comparative perspective on the role of ancestors in cultural construction and identity in Africa while emphasizing the primacy of this concept. Ancestral spirit is highly regarded in most African communities and is viewed as a psychological and structural necessity in the communal societies. For instance, in his book 'African Religions & Philosophy' John Mbiti states, "The living-dead are the closest links that men have with the spirit world, and they are therefore in the best position to understand and appreciate human problems" (Mbiti, 1969, p. 83). As such, this belief in the ancestors' active nature in people's experiences provides credence to Morrison's assertion about their importance in literature and overall identification.

Morrison has persistently posed questions regarding the cultural significance associated with ancestral presence in literature as does this essay. By maintaining that ancestors can be omnipresent, she encourages society to reconsider its motivations for the preservation of culture and history. This perspective can be aptly applied to African-American literature whereby due to the historical issues such as slavery, blacks' marginalization, and racism, there is much that has to be dug up and studied more.

The introduction to "Rootedness: The Ancestor as Foundation" poses the conditions for a proper appreciation of what ancestors do in African-American Literature. As a commentator on African-American culture and history, she offers a vision of how ancestors can be conceptualized to provide for identity, remembrance, and survival. This exploration not only enhances one's understanding of what African-American literature is and the versatility of its themes and tones but also accentuates the primary role of ancestry as a critical feature defining cultural stories.

a) The Importance of Ancestors

Morrison also notes that for each ancestor term it is possible to speak not only about historical characters, but also about elements of the present that in one way or another remain in the characters of the novel (Morrison, 1984, p. 343). These are powerful figures that one can run to for advice and support, bearing in mind that they embody wisdom, experience and power from past generations. This link positively affects characters' present life roles and helps to develop identity and associated roles' meanings.

Toni Morrison's essay "Rootedness: The Ancestor as Foundation" argues that the ancestors are not mere historical characters existing in the past, but they continue to exist in the present and future making them affects the living and evidently the stories (Morrison, 1984). One of the main areas that Morrison elaborates upon to convey the meaning and context of ancestors is equally critical for examining their role in African-American literature and culture. In this part, Morrison presents more information and evidence to back up the ideas that she discusses, specifically regarding ancestors as the source of knowledge, protection, and connection to the past.

b) Wisdom and Guidance

As Morrison points out, ancestors are a source of knowledge and lessons for the descendants. The spirits of the dead or the ancestors, as portrayed in many a black American creation, are tradition bearers and authority figures. The representation of elders is in consonance with the cultural values and the depiction of the past in relation to the present is also viewed in the right perspective.

For instance, in the novel 'Their Eyes Were Watching God' by Zora Neale Hurston the main character's name is Janie Crawford and often she thinks and speaks with words which are Nanny's words as her grandmother gave her wise advises or some pieces of advice which are meaningful. Nanny St. Aubin, with her guidance, is a moral compass that gives directions to Janie, who struggles with the experiences that surround her. As Hurston, the black anthem of the modern era carries on to say "De nigger woman is de mule uh de world so fur as Ah can see. Ah been prayin' fuh it tuh be different wid you" (Hurston, 1937, p. 14). This line shows the constant influence that Nanny's outlook has made on Janie with the phrase of the loop that ancestral voices do not let a person change into an improved version of themselves.

c). Cultural and Historical Continuity

According to Morrison, having ancestors makes people recognizable and offers a clear connection with a specific history and culture. This exactly is useful in the conservation of cultures and in avowing feelings of belongingness in the society. More so, African societies greatly value their ancestors since they are considered guardians of customs, and historical information. John Mbiti in 'African Religions & Philosophy' has observed that "the living-dead are the closest links that men have with the spirit world, and they are therefore in the best position to understand and appreciate human problems" (Mbiti, 1969, p. 83). This perspective presupposes that ancestors are well aware of what is going on in the world and can, therefore, give stability and meaningful continuity to people's lives.

In African-American literature, this connection with the past is enacted mostly through storytelling and keeping of the genealogy, ethnicities and trends of the people. These aspects of folk epics and legends are depicted in Toni Morrison's novel 'Song of Solomon,' where Milkman Dead finds himself on the journey to search for his roots and, in the process, stumbles upon the great heritage left to him by his forefathers. This search for identity and knowledge is rooted in the very origins of existence, as Milkman gains insight into the trials and triumphs faced by his kin as well. The novice, a black woman, asserts "If you surrendered to the air, you could ride it" (Morrison, 1977, p. 337), so the message, the African-American's culture is liberating and empowering.

d). Powerful Icon of Opposition and Womanhood

Thus, ancestors are also represented as voices of resistance and strength. In a society that has been dominated by oppressive systems and exclusion of the black people, the virtue of ancestors allow for vindication of other marginalized groups in today's society. bell hooks, in 'Ain't I a Woman: Black Women and Feminism', Hooks emphasises the relevance of heritage and passing down of the cultural memory: "Our foremothers have given us a legacy of struggle and resistance, a sense of identity that is deeply rooted in our history and culture" (hooks, 1981, p. 118). This discussion of a history raised in protest resonates with Morrison's concept of ancestors as offering opposition and strength.

In 'Beloved', one of the specimens of the novels by Morrison, there is a woman named Sethe who is plagued by the ghost of her dead daughter named on the same manner – Beloved. It is not exorcism involving a ghost but the Black suffering and past embodied in the character of Sethe. By employing this narrative structure, Morrison reminds the readers that history is not over and it perpetually assumes social relations in the present; thus, Deepening the points discussed in the essay. By presenting Sethe and the still-vivid image of the Beloved as two sides of the same darkness, Morrison weaves a general story of the African-Americans' struggle to come to terms with the oppression that they suffered during the slavery era.

Toni Morrison's exploration of the importance of ancestors in her essay "Rootedness: Several of the stories collected in "The Ancestor as Foundation" illustrate necessity of the ancestors for receiving the knowledge, powerful recommendation, fortification, and cultural persistence. As seen by recognizing the presence of ancestors in the narratives, Morrison elevates the role of the ancestors as the means to define identity, to persevere, and to resist oppression. As the works of Zora Neale Hurston and Alex Haley and the critical evaluations of Morrison and scholars such as John Mbiti and bell hooks demonstrate in detailed analyses, ancestors in general have a powerful presence in shaping the present narratives about cultures of communities.

e). Reclamation of Heritage

According to Morrison, when ancestors are introduced in the novels, the action is considered as a return to the origin and a reclaiming of African-Americans' true roots. Given the historical context in which black experiences tend to be overlooked, ignored or forgotten, the spirits honored in this way offer continuity of African-American cultural legacy that contemporizes historical examples with multigenerational African-American life affirmation. This reclamation is particularly manifesting in the African-American cosmoses texts insofar as these reify 'history' and 'culture' to build an account of 'identity'.

For instance, in 'The Black Atlantic: In the chapter 'Modernity and Double Consciousness', Paul Gilroy talks about how black people in the Caribbean and the United States needed to rid themselves of any links to Africa. He says, "The memory of slavery and the on-going struggle for freedom are central to the cultural identity of the Black Atlantic" (Gilroy, 1993, p. 19). It is for this reason that the social link with kin is vital in building the social link with memory that goes beyond the geographical relation.

f). Literary Techniques

For example, Morrison describes how the writers portray the ancestors and how the ancestors are used in the African-American literature. They include appropriation of historical imagery, icons, rhetorical references to founders, and the incorporation of storytelling tradition and narrative approach similar to the voices of ancestors. These methods introduce new layers into the story and make the historical references have their layer of significance, which link the past and the present in the meaningful way.

This is exactly what Morrison herself does in 'Beloved' through the rich and complex work of weaving a new story out of the old one — the American story of slavery and the persistent ghosts of their violation. Robert Hellenga's chapter 'Literature in the Sixties' narrates how the character Sethe shoulders the burden of mourning for her deceased daughter Beloved, whose spirit Returns to plague her. Morrison says, "Beloved, she my daughter. She mine" (Morrison, 1987, p. 236), to clearly show that Sethe's current life is intertwined with her past, at least her past as a slave, in ways that cannot be separated.

g). Continuity and Community

Ancestors are also important to the extent that they are a stabilising force of a community since they bridge gaps of generations. They are the reference point and central database of all human groups and societies; they retain the practice and 'customs' of a people. This continuity is important for them to build their strength and be one solid team in African-American community.

In 'From My People: An excerpt from 'A History and Annotated Bibliography of African-American Folklore: 400 Years of African-American Folklore', Daryl Cumber Dance explains that tale-telling is a key means through which African-American culture is upheld. Dance has put it this way, "The stories and songs passed down through generations serve as a bridge between the past and the present, connecting individuals to their cultural heritage and to each other" (Dance, 2002, p. 15). This social integration of cultural value increases the cohesiveness of the group, thereby making the African-American people to be highly bonded.

Toni Morrison's exploration of cultural identity in "Rootedness: The Ancestor as Foundation" describes the crucial position of the ancestors in the establishment and defence of the African-American identity. In this way, African-American writers appeal to ancestors' voices and cultural heritage and thus: restore African-American people's cultural memory, guarantee their culture's survival, and assert their cultural subjectivity despite oppression. Other studies by anthropologists such as Paul Gilroy and cultural anthropologist Anand Prahlad, W. E. B Du Bois, and Morrison's other works, as well as other critics, such as Daryl Cumber Dance also display the effects of ancestors on cultural remembering and persistence.

h). Spiritual Connection

A key link to a higher spiritual order in a majority of African-American fictions is the focus on the ancestors reflecting a general African worldview where the ancestors are understood to have an active role in the lives of the people. This spiritual guidance is usually strange, and appears in many instances through such things as rituals, visions, and symbolism, for the purpose of offering characters directions and goals.

In 'Beloved', the author employs the effects of spirituality in the form of the character Beloved, who we later learn symbolizes the spirit of the dead daughter of Sethe. This haunting is not a supernatural shape or voice but the residue of the past which has kept Sethe and Denver Company. According to Morrison, the story was one that was not worth telling in the first place, so once the users of these commodities have retold the story in their own creative and decorative forms, they quickly discard it as one would discard a nightmare. Here this line illustrates the spiritual theme of the work since the characters are constantly haunted by Beloved's presence that represents their past which they will have to face one day.

In 'African-American Religion: Interpretive Essays in History and Culture', Timothy E. Fulop and Albert J. Raboteau also bring up the importance of such relationship of the African-Americans with the spirits of the deceased. They opine they, Thus they postulate, "The belief in the continuing presence of the ancestors is a fundamental aspect of African-American spirituality, providing a source of comfort, guidance, and communal identity" (Fulop & Raboteau, 1997, p. 103). Such a belief constitutes the notion that it is possible for the ancestors to be closely involved with the current living generation and even supporting and helping them spiritually.

i). Physical Connection

The grounded spirituality with ancestors also plays a major role since it also falls under the physical self-representation. Through possessing objects, through actions and spaces, the ancestors are remembered, and are present through spirit. In 'Song of Solomon', Morrison employs the concept of flying to paint the literal and metaphorical picture of the endeavour of the protagonist to regain contact with the source. Milkman Dead, the protagonist sets out on a journey of completing the search about his authoritative family history and, as a result, finds tangible physical existence of their lives. These memoirs are as follows: Morrison writes, "Now he knew why he loved her so. Without ever leaving the ground, she could fly" (Morrison, 1977, p. 337). This passage shows how these two types of connections are intertwined; the physical one is merged with the spiritual one as Milkman journeys not only physically but also discovers more and more about his heritage as he is surrounded by the concrete manifestation of his ancestors' existence.

Furthermore John Mbiti in his book 'African Religions & Philosophy' positively breaks grounds on the vital physical touch of ancestors within the African community. Mbiti has argued thus: "The living-dead are the closest links that men have with the spirit world, and they are therefore in the best position to understand and appreciate human problems" (Mbiti, 1969, p. 83). This view, therefore, supports the importance of ancestral relics and rites for spirit mediums as they seek to create kinship between the spirits of the ancestors and the people to support the link between the past and the present.

3. SYMBOLIC REPRESENTATION :

In her writing, Morrison addresses how those of the African descent employ symbols to illustrate ties to the forefathers in a both the spiritual and materialistic realms. Such media can comprise of static entities such as an object, a natural formation, and key actions associated with rites in particular cultural settings.

In "The Color Purple" by Alice Walker, courage and comfort through material and the word come from the spirit of the ancestors in the form of letter writing. Having written letters to God and receiving some letters from her sister Nettie helps Celie gain connection with her genealogy as well as the spiritual dimension. Here, Walker is well in touch with the language and dialect being used, by writing, "What I love best bout Shug is what she been through. When you look in Shug's eyes you know where she been, seen the world. She knows everything about what black people suffer in this country" (Walker, 1982, p. 59). The act of letter writing thus becomes a voyage of discovery for Celie as much as a means of liberation; and, in the context of the film, letter-writing becomes a spiritual as well as an epistemological exercise.

a). Rituals and Practices

In regard to the spirits of the ancestors, it will be seen that practices and rituals are fundamental in developing and preserving the spirituality or physiological link. The majority of these practices include going to prescribed places, feasts, narration of stories and any other activity that supports multicultural traditions which create a feeling of togetherness.

Thus, in the 'The Healing' by Gayl Jones, a character named Harlan Jane Eagleton applies the traditions of healing rituals as a prelude to come back to the roots and heal men's spirits and even their bodies. The author narrates, "Harlan learned the power of the touch, the power of the word, the power of the ritual passed down from her grandmother, and those before her" (Jones, 1998, p. 146). This passage provides an insight on the aspect of continuity and tradition through the indigenous peoples' wisdom and treatment to the land as a living record of human past.

Toni Morrison's exploration of the spiritual and physical connection to ancestors in "Rootedness: The Ancestor as Foundation" such relations are emphasized to reflect the world commonly known as a foundation of identity, directions and culture. Analyzing these connections in African-American literature as dual, Morrison shows that the ancestors are an integral part of present-day life, as they shape characters' behaviors, attitudes, and views on the matter of belonging

to a community. Alice Walker, John Mbiti, and Gayl Jones depict the relations to ancestors as the bears on the spiritual and the physical aspects of identity and culture, in addition to Morrison's own works.

b). Preserving Communal Bonds

To support her perspective, Morrison points out those ancestors are useful in that they act as relatable people who create similar experiences that keep communities compliant. The term ancestor is used in the book and again, as in other African-American literature, the calling together of ancestors of characters serves to accomplish their purpose, brings characters together. It is this common denominator that is crucial in maintaining and sustaining the African-American community during its continued fight against oppression in American society.

The subject of race is also prevalent in the novel 'Their Eyes Were Watching God' by Zora Neale Hurston where the main protagonist Janie Crawford's identity search is founded on the communal existence of Eatonville. It is stated by Hurston as, "They passed nations through their mouths. They sat in judgment" (Hurston, 1937, p. 1). This is especially because it shows that there was a diversification of people where they formed cultures and towns which need a common identity. The guardians are employed to explain that community elders are responsible for preserving knowledge, meaning the culture of ancestral voices' continued relevance.

In 'The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness', Paul Gilroy tends to focus on the question of intergenerational memory within the context of the black Atlantic. Stating that, Gilroy notes that "The memory of slavery and the ongoing struggle for freedom are central to the cultural identity of the Black Atlantic" (Gilroy, 1993, p. 19). This results in creating a culture of shared recollection that enhances associated communal memory and identity of members from different era and geographical regions.

c). Transmitting Cultural Knowledge

One of the greatest challenges that people face in their day to day lives is the process of passing cultural information from one generation to another as a way of ensuring that the cycle of life is always followed. Cultural practices as well as histories, perhaps, are passed through such literature-setting, where culture is passed through literary works that are shared by the community. This form of culture transfer is significant in nurturing culture especially with the help of symbols to prevent people from losing their identity.

In 'The People Could Fly: American Black Folktales', Virginia Hamilton recaptures popular folktales that has been funded down from generation to generation among the African-American people. Such stories contain ideas, knowledge, and spirit from the forefathers. Hamilton notes, "The tales were told for the old folks to hear, for the children to hear, and for the young folks to hear" (Hamilton, 1985, p. 3). Collectively and orally telling the story entails that cultural information ought to be passed from one generation to the next, hence the cultural imperative of community continuity.

Similarly, in 'Every Goodbye Ain't Gone: An Anthology of Innovative Poetry by African-Americans', Nielsen, DU's Prof of English Aldon Lynn Nielsen and Lauri Ramey, the editors of the book also explain the social importance of poetry as a means through which cultures pass knowledge. According to Nielsen and Ramey, 2006, poetry is a form of culture in the way that it functions as reference when the issue of cultural memory is raised, because it contains lessons that are passed from one generation to the other. This is why literature plays an invaluable part in the process of passing cultural heritage from generation to generation.

d). Oral Tradition

Oral Tradition plays an important role in the African-American's daily life and when incorporated into the literary piece, it acts as an agent of passing down of the cultural beliefs and practices. It encompasses aspects such as narration in storytelling form, folklore, and men's and women's everyday language.

Analysing 'Their Eyes Were Watching God' by Zora Neale Hurston, it is possible to point out that storytelling and dialogue are the means by which the traditions of the African people were passed on. The way the entire story is constructed and delivered follows the flow of interpersonal oral speech in the African-American culture of the time. This quote by Hurston suggests that, "Ships at a distance have every man's wish on board" (Hurston, 1937, p. 1). There is something on any ship at a distance that can be wished for by every man. This opening line is poetic, metaphorical – an invitation to join a story sharing tradition common to oral culture.

In 'The People Could Fly: American Black Folktales', Virginia Hamilton narrates folk stories that have been passed on from one generation to another. He narrates: "They say the people could fly. Say that long ago in Africa, some of the people knew magic" (Hamilton, 1985, p. 3). This is evidenced by the way the folktales employ oral tradition in storytelling, with a clear emphasis towards maintaining the rights of the spirits of the forefathers.

e). Stream of Consciousness

While stream of consciousness is a type of writing technique of presenting the interior monologue of a character about what he or she is experiencing in the character's mind. In turn, this technique enables readers to explore the deepest of internal perspectives and introspection of characters, wherein their personal fears, desires, and relationships with their own past are explored.

Morrison's 'The Bluest Eye' employs the stream of consciousness narrative technique to present the psychological world of Pecola Breedlove, a young African-American girl who struggles to find herself and dreams of having blue eye. As Morrison said, "Nuns go by as quiet as lust, and drunken men and sober eyes sing in the lobby of the Greek hotel" (Morrison, 1970, p. 12). This passage relates Pecola's dissociative mind inasmuch as it gives a representation concerning oppression and identity crisis working inside her head.

In 'Cane' Jean Toomer navigates the search for identity amid the societal systems and restrictions by utilizing the stream of consciousness technique. The wandering and beautiful language helps to convey the confusion and struggle of the African-American people, as well as the bond with one's heritage. He can hardly remain indifferent to the fact that using Toomer's words "November cotton flower. It is the human blood in the roots of the white folks' cotton" (Toomer, 1923, p. 16). This technique enables the readers to be in touch with the main characters by having pictures of what is going on in the characters' minds hence having a feel of their historical and cultural setting.

f). Magical Realism

Magical realism is an aesthetic mode that enables the incorporation of the marvelous in a realistic style so as to give the text a natural appearance. It is common to analyze the concepts of identity and memory, or the presence of supernatural characters, ancestors, and other manifestations of the indigenous culture.

In 'Beloved,' Morrison uses elements of magical realism whereby Beloved, a character who is considered deceased, comes back from the grave to confront her mother, Sethe. This is the supernatural aspect, which has been subtly planted in the realistic environment to underscore the unyielding imprint of history. The main character, Morrison, gives 124 the unkind nature of a spiteful baby stating that, "124 was spiteful. Full of a baby's venom" (Morrison, 1987, p. 3). This signifies the juxtaposition of the practical and the otherworldly, emphasizing that the house is haunted by history.

In the 'Song of Solomon', a novel by Toni Morrison, elements of magical realism are employed to show Milkman Dead's journey towards self-discovery and the establishment of his identity by connecting him to his roots. The main focus of this endeavor is the image of flight – and everything associated with it. Morrison said: 'If you surrender to the air you could ride it.' The reader could easily paraphrase it to 'If you submit to powers that make flying possible you could fly. Such realistic and spiritual aspects of their life imply that the spiritual and ancestral dimensions are crucial to the process of the protagonist's identification.

g). Literary Resistance Movements

In African-American literary scholarship literary movements similarly provide a basis for resistance and empowering action in countering oppression and reconstructing relations of power through literature. Such movements use and relate to ancestral animistic themes and experiences to encourage social movements and group catastrophe recovery.

In 'The New Negro: An Interpretation', edited by Alain Locke, the Harlem Renaissance is revealed as being not only a literary and cultural phenomenon but also as a groundbreaking cultural movement that celebrates the African-American past and present. As quoted by Locke "Negro life is seizing upon its first chances for group expression and self-determination" (Locke, 1925, p. 3). This movement is one of the most effective black power movements of the 20th century that aimed at changing social situation through art, literature, and music.

In 'Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches' Audre Lorde employs race, gender and sexuality to argue for the need to be empowered in the fight for social justice. Lorde also says "The master's tools will never dismantle the master's house" (Lorde, 1984, p. 112). This assertion helps me understand that the oppressed groups and the oppressed people of color

such as African-Americans has to write their own story as well as devise their own ways on how they can fight oppression and attain power.

h). Communal Resistance and Solidarity

Another mode of empowering is implied by communal resistance which also rises from the call to ancestors in a literature. Practical concerns of racial cooperation and uplift reveal how African-American writers use the theme of the community to assert the healing power of people against odds.

As presented in 'Mama Day' by Gloria Naylor, strong and wise African woman who started applying ceremony in order to heal her people and give them strength. Naylor accurately describes this as "The weave of power in the blood. The weave of magic in the world" (Naylor, 1988, p. 215). This passage highlights how people were not only able to change the political powers but also achieve communal subjectivities through recitation of ancestor's practices and solidarity.

Toni Morrison's exploration of resistance and empowerment in "Rootedness: The Ancestor as Foundation" proves the existence of the ability of the ancestral presence in the African American literature. Thus, African-American writers' stories' redevelopment, cultural retention, and communal unity help them define themselves and resist societal domination. The presented works of James Baldwin, Zora Neale Hurston, Lorraine Hansberry, Alain Locke, Audre Lorde, Gloria Naylor and Marry Ellison's work show how the themes of ancestors help people to resist injustices and fight for the recognition of their rights.

4. UNIVERSAL THEMES:

Specifically, Morrison explores Black Americans' relation to Africa, but she also hints seemingly in all people: the ancestors exist. It is contended that all societies have their methods of establishing links with their history, and the appearance of ancestors in world literature seems to answer an elemental human need of having roots and a heritage (Morrison, 1987, p. 349). Such universality strengthens the position that ancestors play a crucial role in the maintenance and continuity of the communities' cultural assets and the encouragement of strength based on cultural differences.

In Toni Morrison's essay "Rootedness: The Ancestor as Foundation," she introduces more themes that are not necessarily limited to the black experience but pertain to humanity at large, this however, with the subjects studied being informed by African-American literature. It is pointed out that they pertain to the most important existential issues and concerns that are pertinent to humanity including love, loss of loved ones, identity and survival. This section goes further deeply into these themes using the points mentioned in text lines with the appropriate references to other books.

a). Love and Relationships

Romance and coupledness are important topics in literature which are not restricted by the country or region. These themes focus on the relationship shades, affective nature of human interactions and relationship crux.

In 'Beloved', the theme of love is seen through a mother's love for her children, especially her daughter most known as Beloved. Crisis root source: Sethe's act of killing her Beloved baby in order to spare her from a life of bondage may be regarded as a true act of a mother who will do anything for her child. According to Morrison, "She threw her arms wide and gathered her daughter to her like a lover" (Morrison, 1987, p. 234). This passage is an excellent example of mother's love, the extent to which Sethe is willing to risk everything to protect her child, as any good mother would.

One of the most romantic pieces of the novel is the relationship between the chief character Elizabeth Bennet and Mr. Darcy in 'Pride and Prejudice' by Jane Austen. Austen's prose is, "In vain have I struggled. It will not do. My feelings will not be repressed. You must allow me to tell you how ardently I admire and love you" (Austen, 1813, p. 148). This declaration of love demonstrates how intimate relationships make the world go round, by changing lives and making us appreciate life and life alone.

b). Identity and Self-discovery

The themes of identity and self-discovery pursue the study of the person and demonstrate its search for the meaning of its existence and its place in the world. Such themes may be preoccupation, identity, and more importantly, the extraction of the past and construction of the present.

In 'Song of Solomon', different aspects of the protagonist Milkman Dead's character development and issues of race and identity are discussed. This is the main reason why Milkman ravens to unfathomed the mystery surrounding his

family lineage so that he can get a grasp of his feel and role in society. Morrison marks, "You can't fly on off and leave a body" (Morrison, 1977, p. 337). This line is interpreted as meaning that the Milkman has to face his past and establish a connection with his African roots to be happy.

In the book 'The Catcher in the Rye' by J. D. Salinger, the author deals with problems of identity as demonstrated in the behavior of the protagonist Holden Caulfield and his perceived alienation from society. The character cites these words: "Certain things they should stay the way they are. You ought to be able to stick them in one of those big glass cases and just leave them alone" (Salinger, 1951, p. 122) and Salinger writes this in 1951. One can only admit that such a reflection emphasizes Holden's attempts to save the essence of purity and individuality in a world that does not seem to care about this.

5. CONCLUSION:

Toni Morrison's "Rootedness: The Ancestor as Foundation" emphasizes the importance of ancestors in forming the ideology of African-Americans and the structure of their stories in American literature. Therefore, through emphasizing the presence of ancestors, Morrison makes readers and writers aware of the fact that people need to pay respect to the past as for some reason it will never cease to be present in one's life. This paper has intended to discuss Morrison's arguments about the appearance of ancestors in literature and the way in which it desires to use them to promote cultural identification, community continuity and resistance as well as a source of strength. Since the time immemorial, great importance has been focusing the act of telling ancestors' stories in the literature since it is considered as the key evidence that has to be used in order to help protect the cultural values and prevent people from being oppressed by some certain systems.

The conclusion of "Rootedness: The Ancestor as Foundation" The essay brings many facets of Morrison's ideas regarding the utilization of ancestral motifs to rebuild an opulent literary text and the prolongation of the African-American people. Morrison explains that calling upon ancestors in writing is not merely a way to name history and to remember but it is a fight against letting people disappear and struggle for power. They shed much light to human affairs, she notes of love, identity and justice among other experiences in the human lives.

Morrison asserts "By invoking the ancestors, writers of African descent retrieve some portion of a history which has been submerged, distorted, denied, rendered invisible by slavery and colonialism" (Morrison, 1984, p. 348). A perfect reiteration of her entire essay, this statement carries the author's thesis regarding the literary activism that literature performs in the quest to reclaim and save cultural histories.

In the literary work of Homer titled, 'The Odyssey', the last journey of the main hero Odysseus can be seen as a self-interpreting interpretation of human crisis of homeward and reconciliation. Homer who has written, "Sing to me of the man, Muse, the man of twists and turns driven time and again off course, once he had plundered the hallowed heights of Troy" (Homer, 8th century BCE, p. 1). This grand denouement points towards the concepts of endurance, such as are familiar to Middle Eastern people and the subject of the work, and the concepts of attainment of the ego, familiar to people of all periods.

The conclusion of "Rootedness: The Ancestor as Foundation" therefore stands as a call to analyse the themes and motifs explored in the essay. Morrison's books urge readers to think and reflect on other black American authors and their works' place in literary program.

In a collection of essays by Dennis Walder, "Literature in the Modern World" the conclusion brings out the ideas that literature still remains an influential force for peoples' cultural and identity formation and for changing peoples' perceptions of difference. Walder writes, "Literature allows us to inhabit other lives and other worlds, to understand ourselves and others better" (Walder, 2003, p. 390). This reflection reflects Morrison's depiction of literature as a tool for the articulation of culture and social transformation.

Toni Morrison's conclusion in "Rootedness: The Ancestor as Foundation' in a way that is optimally informative, thereby leaving with a richer and more profound understanding of the role of the ancestors' theme in literature and in extension a higher comprehension of the essence of their culture. Thus, the ancestors are being drawn to put African-American writers into a position to resist any attempts by others to write them out of their own history, give those messages of hope instead of despair, show them the way to power and sustain their own culture. Finally, Morrison provides a positive

implication of storytelling, where everyone has a responsibility to pass down the experiences and the history of their ancestors.

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