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Science in English Language Literature

**The Symbolic Representation of Male Violence on Women
in Alice Walker's *The Third Life of Grange Copeland* (1970)**

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DECLARATION

I, hereby, declare that this work has not already been accepted in substance for any degree, and is not concurrently being submitted in candidature for any other degree.

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The researching, preparation and presentation of the thesis have been undertaken entirely by the author.

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ABSTRACT

Male violence on women, as a universal phenomenon, has ever occupied a large room and consideration in fiction. The causes of this violence, however, remain puzzling. Therefore, the present study investigated the fundamental factors generating men's violence on women as they were represented through Alice Walker's novel *the Third Life of Grange Copeland*. Hence, questions like what causes wife abuse in this novel, what link this violence has with gender discrimination against women, and to what extent man's frustration affects his being violent on his woman, were raised. To approach these problematic issues, we hypothesised that men use violence on women as a way to exercise power and demonstrate masculinity. Applying a gender-based approach, we confirmed our aforementioned hypothesis while having discovered that man's frustration does not justify his violent acts, and that male violence on female partners is rather founded on gender inequality which ensures unfair power distribution between males and females and supports men's domination of and superiority to women. This study was basically structured into four chapters. The first chapter served as a theoretical framework that conducted the whole research. The second chapter tackled gender construction in *the Third Life of Grange Copeland*. The third chapter provided illustrative cases of this type of violence from the novel along with its bad effects. The fourth chapter suggested alternatives to help eradicate gender-based violence as they were conveyed throughout the novel.

Key Words: Male Violence on Women/ Black Male and Female Inter-gender Relationship/Power Distribution/Gender Inequality/ the Blacks' Frustration/*The Third Life of Grange Copeland*.

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DEDICATIONS

To all women of the world, I dedicate this work

ABBREVIATIONS

C.R.M: Civil Rights Movement

GBV: gender based violence

IPV: intimate partner violence

VAW: Violence against Women

CEFM: child, early and forced marriage

CARE: Child and Adolescent Resources and Education

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RESUME

ملخص البحث

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

We always ask ourselves what women miss in front of men, but we rarely try to search what men miss in front of women. And if we ever attempt to search for differences between men and women, we will certainly come across the fact that men are different in plus and women in minus. Woman is always classified in such certain and crucial place which indicates that she is definitely destined to admire man, to work for him, to have children, and so on. This makes one conclude that woman's suffering is her natural destiny. According to Daco (32-33), there is no 'superiority' or 'inferiority' when it comes to compare men and women. It is a question that seems rather nonsensical because these two qualities have to be measured under common criteria –which do not exist in reality, for these criteria may exist only at individuals' level. Therefore, trying to answer such a question will be –in some sense-- similar to inquire whether it is water or fire that is superior, gold or silver, the mountain or the valley. Besides, we always equate *handicap* with inferiority and *advantage* with superiority, and if women feel *handicapped*, hence it is society which is responsible for this feeling. Evaluated from this perspective, even individuals are all *handicapped* (inferior) and *advantaged* (superior) a hundred times per day. This is because we are inferior according to certain instances and conditions, and superior according to others. The battle between the sexes will continue since we will keep on according a moral value for the advantages (superiority) and the handicap (inferiority) for gender groups.

Women feel frustrated by the dominant codes of their societies and which assign different roles to men and women. Hence, writing appears as one way of defying the patriarchal order and of challenging all the stereotypes and myths related to the inferiority of the female sex. In order to attain recognition in a male-centered literary territory, women writers had to struggle ultimately hard. They, thus, vanquished despair and turned rebellious through writing.

Literature provides cultural literacy; it is part of the society's cultural heritage. Culture, too, finds room in literature to be taught to other generations and to other peoples over the world. Hence, reading and/or writing literature provides way to imagine and grasp another human's identity, feeling, lifestyle, mode of thought, and so on. A feature that

seems unique in literature --with regard to its being a means of instruction-- is that it requires from the learner (who is himself reader) to experience and to participate, making *learning* different from mere processing of information by making it an active issue. Learning from literature invokes the necessity of debating, analysing and synthesising the knowledge put forward by the text. Therefore, same characteristics seem to be shared by literature and thoughtful life. The distresses that literature tries to fight, like barbarism, cynicism and the denial of the humanity of others, whether inside or outside one's community, demonstrates life-literature cluster.

Reality merges with imagination to create the object of literature. The anecdotic meaning and the aesthetic formation together make and build up the object, or the body of knowledge in literature. Literature, therefore, exposes an object as a *represented object*. Therefore, all what fiction deals with is in some sense realistic. The facts extracted from the practical life intervene in literature and; similarly, literature can be an essential element of the practical life.

The social values and ethical dilemmas are highlighted through literature and the consideration of these traditional and cultural aspects has to be primary to the consideration of the formal and aesthetic aspects of works of literature (Gillespie 20). In other words, what have to be chiefly inspected in fiction are the people (characters), their concerns, desires, worries ... and not the techniques the author uses. This is because the exploration of human experience and human concerns is what stands at the core of literature. Literature is written and read mainly for this reason. How to understand oneself and others is what matters most to learn from literature, for while pragmatically grasping and critically considering "the questions of right and wrong they [readers of literature] face, justifiable and unjustifiable actions, admirable or antisocial qualities, choices and limitations" (Gillespie 20), actions that would raise their cultural consciousness to question the social injustices like the creation of gender and otherness, and women's subservient position in society.

One of the prevailing oppressions that women have ever suffered from is domestic violence. We live in a male dominant culture which condones intimate partner violence IPV and domestic assault by its creation of *gender*. Male violence on women is a common

issue shared by all cultures. *Same* causes across *different* cultures seem to bring about this multi-faceted plague. Women have also long suffered from social subordination and weakness. Throughout history, women have struggled and striven to adjust their place in society and improve their social status. They have, hence, rebelled against traditional beliefs that society and culture construct and condone to ensure women's weakness, inferiority, subordination and submission. Women's hard efforts and painful struggles have marked fruitful changes throughout time; although, they have not reached total gender equality with men when relating it to power, given that society still holds it that man is and should be more powerful than woman, i.e. he is still viewed as the leader of the family (a patriarch). Men –and up today—still think they have more authority and prestige than women do.

Hence, the representation of male violence on women in fiction provides –to a considerable extent- full understanding of this phenomenon as it exists in the real world. Almost all the issues in convention with this societal and problematic phenomenon are faithfully represented in literature. The causes, the possible consequences, and the human agents involved, each has its noticeable portion in the world of fiction.

However, it is ultimately urgent to refer to the fact that the image of woman as it is represented through literature is further accented as weak, inferior and subordinate to men. Literature, as it is the salient instrument of propaganda, serves as an ideological medium that provides consciousness which is not necessarily based on truth, for it can bear distortion. In literature, woman has been represented as a mother, beauty or a nurturer (For instance, as portrayed by Camara Laye, in his poem “To My Mother”, the mother *has* unarguably to be patient, resigning and self-denying).

Gender is one typical aspect of *otherness*. The concept of the *other* originated from Simone de Beauvoir's (a feminist philosopher and social theorist) interests in showing the relation of the self with the other as she applied it in accordance with gender and then her notion influenced all of Jean Paul Sartre, Edward Said, and many other thinkers and philosophers who found in her view an abundant source for their own theories.

Male violence on women has been devoted a considerable and noticeable share in the province of literature. Wife abuse enjoys a critical position in fiction throughout the whole world, and writers of both sexes are pioneers who take the initiative to approach and depict this very sensitive topic.

Literature is a vehicle for expressing violence against women as it is highly related to gender discrimination. In recent years, many investigations have been carried out to probe into the outbreak of the rampant and universal problem of domestic violence against women by recognising its causes alongside its drawbacks. Real social practices of wife abuse created a theme of violence against women in fictional works. Artists and writers of literature alike have fore-grounded this issue to raise awareness among victims (women) about their basic rights (as human beings and as citizens). They have also introduced tentative to provide an insight for the public to better the conditions of women so as to alter their bad situation and reduce –if not stop—violence against them—in an attempt of social reformation.

A crucial and important step for researchers to understand how a woman's sense develops is to grasp how a reader interprets the portrayal of male and female characters and the relationship between them in a given piece of literature. Most women characters –as introduced by fiction-- are often pictured in their traditional wife or mother role and as dependent on others for survival. Very few examples of women are represented as having a formal education or taking on masculine roles.

The black woman has experienced a more intense form of discrimination for being both black and female. No others have done justice to the black woman experience as Afro-American writers have done. Alice Walker, Toni Morrison and Gloria Naylor, to name only few of African American female writers whose art had been nurtured by their mothers' storytelling and creativity. These women writers (among others) explored the significance of being black and female; qualities that the white patriarchal culture underestimates and denigrate. They have also voiced the peculiar predicament that the black woman faced in America (during the second Renaissance which appeared in the 1970s).

As corpus analysis is the most appropriate technique to guide this piece of research; our material/data resource corpus analysis will focus on Alice Walker's novel *The Third Life of Grange Copeland*. Therefore, the present study is based on such views as Simone de Beauvoir's and Jane Butler's feminist and gender theories of how man and woman are constructed. Similarly, Elaine Showalter's and Patricia Hill Collin's gender-based violence theories –as opposing to frustration-aggression premise—also stand as supporting backgrounds applied to the work and will be of great use in conducting this study.

The majority of the research that has been accredited to male violence on women among the black American community typically acknowledges the frustrating causes which lead to the emergence of such violence as it appears in reality and in fiction alike. Critically, gender motives and issues are overlooked while reporting and reviewing the black wife abuse literature. Therefore, this dissertation will examine intimate partner violence in *the Third Life of Grange Copeland* according to a gender-based analysis.

Alice Malsenior Walker (born on February 9th, 1944) is a black American feminist fictional writer, poet and political activist. She won the National Book Award for her novel *the Color Purple* in 1982 (which was adapted as TV movie later on), and a year after, she won the Pulitzer Prize for fiction (1983), the same year during which she coined the term *Womanism* to refer to *Black Feminism*. Walker explained that *Womanism* included the call for the rights of women of colour, and hence, she has always considered *Womanism* in relation to *Feminism* as *purple* is to *lavender*. Born in Eatonton, Georgia (the same place setting of her novel *The Third Life of Grange Copeland*), and born to a sharecropper family, the roots of which many of her works draw upon, she endured different frustrations and segregations; and this was also a motive that drove her to write about the Southerners and their oppression. She also articulated and gave voice to the earlier silent generation of Afro American women. In addition, she was an active participant in the Civil Rights Movement which she utilised as a significant allusion to depict in her novels.

The theme of violence on women has enjoyed a fertile ground in Walker's fiction as she thoroughly and objectively depicts the suffering and the pains of the black woman at the very hands of her man. Walker strongly denounces the customs and traditions of her black community and which have always guaranteed a subservient position and a

marginalised existence of woman while denying her “the right of control even over her own body and mind” (Dayanand 130/131)

The opening of the story of *the Third Life of Grange Copeland* provides cues of time span that went to the 1920s when Brownfield’s aunt along with her children came to visit them from Philadelphia. The ending, likewise, can be inferred by the rise of the *Civil Rights Movement* in Southern Georgia as it is openly expressed throughout the novel, and which went to the 1960s as it is historically recognised.

The Third Life of Grange Copeland thus followed and shaped the outline of three-generation-sharecropping black family life in Georgia, from the 1920s to the 1960s. The novel traced the life cycle of black people as men perpetuate violence on their women and as this life mechanism repeats itself from one generation to another. Gender-based violence is reflected through different abusive acts on women like forced pregnancies, child marriage, rape and forced marriage –in addition to beatings and cursing and many other offenses directed against women for being females. The same scenes of wife abuse and male domination are reproduced through different characters and in different time settings. Walker’s predominant problematic theme she attempted to discuss through her narrative was the cause that engendered domestic violence among the African American community. As herself having experienced and witnessed intimate partner violence and as she was so fascinated and obsessed by this issue that she based many incidents, of the novel, on real cases in her hometown. “My mother’s mother was beaten by her husband, my father’s father was a batterer; an admirer of my grandmother, Kate, shot her down in a churchyard and she died in my [11-year-old] father’s arms. I wanted to understand why there was violence in the community –in all communities—and in my family” (Jaggi 5).

According to Walker, Brownfield and Grange (the male protagonists in *the Third Life of Grange Copeland*) are not only fictional characters but versions of real black men that she, as well as her readers, has met very often in the real life (Barr 375). The hyper-real aspect of Walker’s works stems then from her duplication of the reality of her relatives and neighbours in fiction. Teresa de Lauretis (1989) in *the Violence of Rhetoric* states that the real or the social world is inevitable for it provides empirical reality to understand gender and violence as they are depicted in fiction (246). On his part, Klepp reasons that “such

and violence as they are depicted in fiction (246). On his part, Klepp reasons that “such violence is quite frequently recorded in literature and other arts before it reaches public discourse, and realist literature is particularly well-focused medium that is sensitive to such a world” (117). Derived from social realities, the causes of wife abuse as it appears in Walker’s work are questionable, for the many possibilities they put forward to the reader.

Besides *The Third Life of Grange Copeland*, many works of fiction were picturesquely underscored by the theme of male violence on women. Yet, the study of male violence as it appears in fiction remains under-explored. The present study presents a multi-angled approach, for it is primarily based on Walker’s panoramic work *the Third Life of Grange Copeland* as it lies before the reader different possibilities of tackling the causes of wife abuse. “Though Walker published this work in 1970, scholars continue to discover new and relevant insight” (Barr 375)

Many significant questions seem crucial and inevitable while raising the problematic issue of wife abuse as it appears in *the Third Life of Grange Copeland*; most important of which are:

1. How is domestic violence –and more particularly, male violence on women– represented in *the Third Life of Grange Copeland*?
2. To what extent does *the Third Life of Grange Copeland* reveal *gender ideology* as responsible for the emergence of this type of violence?
3. Are the motives of generating this type of violence similar or distinct regarding to black and white communities?
4. What does frustration have to do with the occurrence of male violence on women?
5. Do frustrated women use gender-based violence on their men as a frustration-aggression response?

Scratching the surface of Walker’s novel through a primary reading leads the researcher to hypothesise the following:

1. Wife abuse is portrayed through *the Third Life of Grange Copeland* as a universal phenomenon that is based on male institutional power and domination.

2. Male violence on women springs out of a general stereotypical cultural conception of gender, of male superiority and female inferiority.
3. According to *the Third Life of Grange Copeland*, the same causes generate wife abuse in all both black and white families
4. In search of masculinity that has been denied for them in a white supremacist society, frustrated men (black men) resort to more wife abuse and hence use frustration as an excuse of their violence.
5. Frustrated women (black women) resort to more submissiveness in front of their men's and the whites' oppression.

The concern of this study is to probe the structures that might support wife abuse in *The Third Life of Grange Copeland*. Walker's novel offers a vista of the twentieth century black American society. The choice of this corpus has been due to the critical case it embodies while tackling domestic violence as it emerges among the *black community*, regarding the frustration and oppression that black men in particular and black people in general endure under the racial discrimination of the twentieth century America. The novel represents a very specific case because of the many and intermingled causes the novel suggests regarding this type of violence. The author provides a large room in her work to depict the hardship that her characters are living; giving the impression that this hardship is behind black men's violence on their female partners. Simultaneously, she does not mince words to portray the masculine and sexist drives of their violence on women.

One of the reasons that have led me to deal with Afro American women's subjection to male violence as it is portrayed in literature is their very unique case while living in a triangle of oppression; being black, poor and female. This minority women's victimisation caused by their very men is misleading because it shrouds its sexist reality. Thus, the aim of this piece of research has been an attempt to unveil the mystery behind wife abuse in the black community in *the Third Life of Grange Copeland*.

The specific objectives of our study are to demonstrate that wife abuse is an aftermath of gender creation, that it is an outcome of the false socio-cultural belief that woman is weak and inferior and should hence enjoy less power as compared to man, and that man's feeling of frustration is not an excuse for his violence on his woman.

To accomplish these objectives, this study has been basically divided into four chapters. In the first chapter, as the thesis theoretical framework, we have tracked the process of gender-based violence emergence against women; whereby we have focused on different theoretical backgrounds to understand different concepts related to gender and violence. The second chapter has dealt with male and female characters' gender construction in *the Third Life of Grange Copeland*, and to what extent both society and family impact men' being masculine males and women's being feminine females. In the third chapter, illustrative cases of male violence on women are given –from the novel-- in an attempt to demonstrate that this violence is an outcome of gender inequality and discrimination against women, and of men's zealously to dominate women. The fourth chapter has tackled the new perspectives and prospects of the 1960s women to erode gender-based violence as they are depicted by the author, while women start to shift from silence to voice.

Academic scholarship of domestic violence both in real life and in fiction has witnessed a considerable number of previous studies of which we select only few as a literature review for the present study. These valuable backgrounds will supply this research with theoretically grounded tools to explore a broader understanding of male violence on women in *the Third Life of Grange Copeland*.

CHAPTER ONE: THE EMERGENCE OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

CHAPTER ONE

THE EMERGENCE OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

“Like fish, we ‘swim’ in a sea of images, and these images help shape our perceptions of the world and of ourselves” (Berger 101)

1.1. Discourse and its Contribution to spreading ideology

Different forms of discourse –like literature-- are powerful means to convey social, historical and cultural mainstreams; they both fuel and are fuelled by society and culture to establish and widely spread socially supported stereotypes and in order to ensure their dynamics. “Discourses are the variety of different linguistic structures in which we engage in dynamic interchanges of beliefs, attitudes, sentiments and other expressions of consciousness. Discourses are underpinned as they are by specific configurations of historical, social and cultural power.” (Wood 14-15). Discursive practices influence and constrain individuals’ thoughts and behaviour. Hence, they constantly regulate and construct society and culture.

Part of discourse power is shaping ideology. According to Quinn (141), a thought that is an important basis for a system or a movement is called ideology. It is an idea, belief, attitude and practice related to a recognised social attitude. According to Dragas, “[i]deology refers to people’s general opinions about the world and their ideal concept of living. We could even say that ideologies are clusters of knowledge, attitudes, norms and values shared by certain social groups and exhibited through discourse” (75).

Hence, through framing and determining the society’s ideology, discourse as popular and cultural medium helps create *genderism*. Sommers (63) argues that boys or males are defined by discourse that equates them with aggressiveness, violence and underachievement. “Discourse is not just a way of speaking, or writing, but the ‘whole mental set’ and ideology which encloses the thinking of all members of a given society” (Barry 176).

Therefore, language use plays a significant role in the construction of gender in a specific socio-historical context. Power and power relations are articulated through language which does not only reflect the already-established views of the world about the two sexes, but rather deliberately constructs them. Language, not only represents but also values things. Proverbs too, as part of language and discourse, have such representational roles and this evaluative function.

As pinpointed by Van Dijk (9), we are constantly producing discourse about gender while expressing our ideologically based opinions through our speech as members of different groups and which ranges over a multitude of forms of *talk* and *text*. These ideologies have been transmitted to us from parents and peers, and from TV, books, schools, advertising, newspaper, novels, or merely from our conversations with friends. Ideologies present a set of principles and instructions to guide and control the attitudes, beliefs, norms and values of given group members. Discourses that claim and perpetuate women's inferior status are based on the idea that "this is how things work, have always worked, and must keep on working in given societies [And in so doing, they are] safeguarding and transmitting an immutable and invaluable heritage" (Pujar 7). Thus, discourses that deny women's rights and essentialise their inferiority (and which introduce cultures) must be seen (as mentioned in UNESCO report 5) as "*monolithic, static and ahistorical*" because no alternatives seem to have been pursued by these patriarchal cultures and no gender-based cultural practices have been discarded.

1.2. Genderisation

Before delving any deeper into the gender sphere, it seems crucial to establish certain theoretical framework through which some fundamental concepts can be clarified. Sex, gender and other concepts related to each cannot have clear-cut definitions yet, thinkers and anthropologists attempted to provide approaches to these complex, inferential, divergent and controversial terms.

1.2.1. Sex vs. Gender

Sex has to do with biological sex. It therefore refers to the usual binary, male/female binary. "Sex refers to a person's biological status and is typically categorized

as male, female, or intersex-atypical combination of features that usually distinguish male from female. There are a number of indicators of biological sex, including sex chromosomes, gonads, internal reproductive organs, and external genitalia” (Women’s and Gender Studies Center).

The quotation above lays a chance to other options beyond the normalised pair that is known as male/female binary, i.e. the intersex and which society does not approve of or allow. Any deviation from the recognised gender binary dooms the individual to societal rejection and eventually to frustration, isolation and depression.

As defined by Mc Cabe et al. “Gender is a social creation; cultural representation, including that in children’s literature, is a key source in reproducing and legitimating gender systems and gender inequality” (218). Gender is a made-up belief or a social construction the aim of which is to join certain roles to a particular sex. Gender is not something we possess; it is rather something we do (acts, behaviour, likes and dislikes). Gender roles patterns are transmitted from one generation to another; the fact that makes them a way of socialisation misconceived of as a natural process. Gender roles are socially acceptable and non-innate assigned roles for men and women. “Gender is a diffuse status characteristic (a characteristic that is not attached to a specific skill) in interaction. When activated (as it is in most encounters), it invokes cultural assumptions that men are competent and valuable and that women are incapable and not to be taken seriously; thus women are placed at a disadvantage” (Stets and Burke 195). While, on his part, Basow defines gender as “a psychological and cultural term, referring to one’s subjective feelings of maleness or femaleness (gender identity). Gender may also refer to society evaluation of behavior a masculine or feminine (gender roles)” (22).

Gender reinterprets physical features (sex) but through an imaginary, mythic formation. Butler points that clothing, physical skills and even emotional habits are all parts of gender performance. Colours and toys are also ready-made masculine or feminine connotations. (24-25). From an early age, male children are encouraged to exhibit male traits and female children feminine traits. Therefore, and according to Butler, gender is something we *do* rather than something we *are*. We generally refer to male/female pair as gender and to masculine/feminine pair as gender identity. In this vein, while sex reflects a

set of biological differences; gender is linked to social differences between culturally constructed categories (masculine/feminine).

Gender is created to lay the foundations for power distribution among males and females. Power distribution among the sexes is exercised through assigning different gender role identities for men and women. Gender Role Identity is a set of expected appropriate behaviour of one sex that is shaped by shared beliefs of society and that are oversimplified stereotypes. Gender role identity includes dress, interests, skills and activity choices (Cahil and Adams 518). Conventional gender role identity provides *prototypes* of *man* and *woman* to teach people how a typical man or woman should be, behave, and look like.

Being a socio-cultural construct, many people feel victimised by their gender role identity, and hence turn transgender individuals. Transgendered person is the one whose gender is not compatible with their sex; this implies that gender is not innate but a social construction and a cultural product; the fact that might create stereotypes and prejudices. As Paoletti admits, biologically fixed conceptions are constructed beliefs. “Transgender people [are] people whose assigned gender does not match their gender identity; [they] are the real proof that gender is a human construct” (Paoletti cited in Butler 59). It is also called *Gender Dysphoria* revealing the distress some people experience because of their sex and gender. (See Ruth’s reaction towards her body transformation). There are some people who could escape dysphoria by turning androgynous. Heilbrun refers to Androgyny as a “spirit of reconciliation between the sexes; it suggests, further, a full range of experience open to individuals who may, as women, be aggressive, as men tender” (x). It is a harmonious compromise between the male and female sexes to make it able to the individual to embrace traits and roles attributed for both sexes. In addition to androgynous individuals, transgenderism also helps generate gender-queers. Gender-Queer is someone who rejects the idea of gender binary, and believes in many other gender identities.

Men Are From Mars, Women Are From Venus is a title of a book authored by John Gray (1992) and which introduces men and women as extreme opposites. The author - being influenced by *essentialism*- notwithstanding, neglects the fact that there are other categories of individuals, other genders, i.e. not all men and women are *men* and *women*. Not all men can be purely masculine and not all women can be purely feminine; there are

other planets than Mars and Venus as pointed out by Anderson, M (2006) arguing and taking a strong stand against Gray.

1.2.2. Gender Stereotyping

Gender is based on stereotypes. According to Connell (2009), gender is “a topic on which there is a great deal of prejudice, myth and outright falsehood” (ix). Thus, a male or female character can be referred to as stereotypical if they behave as it is socially expected from them. A stereotypical character is the one that abides by the prevailing social norms related to his/her gender; that is, boys are expected to behave mischievously and aggressively while girls are supposed to appear more emotional, shy, peaceful and obedient (Ahlung 22). Butler (7) professes that there are socially fixed rules on how to be a man and how to be a woman. Yet, Connell (2009) states that gender is actively under construction. According to the aforementioned definitions of gender, it appears clear that it is a social and cultural product that design norms and standards assigning hence gender roles specific to femininity and others to masculinity.

A stereotype is “a generalisation about people, places or events that is held by many members of society” (Gamble and Gamble (67) cited in Bedore 14). Stereotyping obviously represents a magnitude of distortions, and for most of the cases, produces wrong generalisations which badly and negatively affect society. Stereotypes “are learned, widely shared, socially validated general beliefs about categories of individuals. While usually inaccurate, they are widely shared as truth and very powerful... They [stereotypes] are pervasive in family life, educational institutions and industry” (Turner-Bowker 461). Stereotypes are formed, reinforced, and authenticated by generalisation through different socio-cultural institutions and through the different media they provide. Likewise, being member in a specific group of population wrongly prejudices individuals with stereotyped characteristics and potentials.

Gender Stereotype refers to assumptions, beliefs or attitudes that are related to the traits, behaviours, physical characteristics and occupations that are appropriate to males and females. Gender stereotypes have a great impact on conceptualising men and women and therefore on identifying gender categories because these beliefs create polar selves and

others. Gender stereotypes influence the way men and women think of themselves and of others, and their evaluation of their behaviours as well as of others. (491).

Stereotypes affect targets and their behaviours; however, being aware of the stereotype makes targets alter, or at least reconsider, their intellectual, and other, tasks. However, people generally shy away from such threatening situations to their performance and which identify them as aliens or as negative stereotype of the group to which they belong. This stereotype threat menaces both *performance* and *self concept* of individuals. Therefore, men strive to challenge the likelihood of being identified as negative stereotypes of their group; the fact that leads them to adopt high-frequency-masculine activities and attitudes.

Stereotype threat negatively influences the stigmatised group's members because victims of stereotype are unconsciously bounded by fears of confirming the stereotype about themselves. Welter believes that "the attitudes of true womanhood, by which a woman judge herself and was judged by her husband, her neighbours, and society could be divided into four cardinal virtues –piety, purity, submissiveness, and domesticity" (313). Woman constantly reconsiders her acts and her attributes so as to conform to her femaleness, and to reach social approval. It is clear hence, that stereotypes and prejudices rule society.

Women help spreading the stereotype of their own inferiority. "You have simply *misused our sex* in your love-prate. We must have your doublet and hose plucked over your head and show the world what the *bird hath done to her own nest*" (Shakespeare 4.1.9) (My use of italics). This is the reply of a *female* character in Shakespeare's play "As you Like it", threateningly reproaching the heroine Rosalind's unnatural conduct while having disguised as a man and hence behaving in a masculine way. It is hardly fixed into women's minds that their roles are distinct from those of males. Shakespeare further extended this stereotype by depicting women as sexual property and an ornament for men to admire, and worse, as victimised and controlled by their men as way of displaying the importance of their power. Men in Shakespeare's play also do not appreciate women as capable of change. Gender-inequities are socially conditioned.

Everybody believes –as women themselves do believe-- in traditional female gender as it attributes, defines, and confines women's natural superiority into her tenderness and delicacy. According to the *true* woman as her traditional gender role defines her is the one who is weak, dependent and mainly submissive.

Brannon further demonstrates this notion while stating that women are widely “expected to be weak, dependent, and timid, whereas men were supposed to be strong, wise and forceful. Dependent women wanted strong men, not sensitive ones. These couples formed families in which the husband was unquestioningly superior and the wife would not consider questioning his authority” (Brannon162). Thus, women are generally believed to be pure, refined, passive, delicate, and hence dependent; while, men are supposed to be active, coarse, tough, strong and therefore, independent. These divisions appear according to solid social traditional stereotypes which construct and polarise gender identities and eventually, gender roles. Lee (350) argues that it is ironic that woman's very favourable traits condemn her to her very status of subordination and weakness.

Stereotyping confines males' and females' behaviours and traits; and in doing so, it describes how people should categorise men and women and by prescribing how these two should *be* and *do*. Stereotyping –along with the inexactness it lays—engenders certain problems like prejudice and discrimination. Thus, prejudice leads males and females to form negative images about and hence hold negative feelings against one another. Prejudice sharpens and extends the conception of otherness between men and women because it fosters the conception of sexism that is echoed between the two gender groups¹.

Children's gender identities are shaped and developed by these shared ideologies and social beliefs. Gender is deeply rooted in men's minds by the media. The attitudes, images, portrayals and concepts attributed to men by the media, personal interaction and other means are deeply rooted in their minds --as mindsets that they can never change. Hence, children are highly influenced by stereotypes because while trying to fit to this world, they minutely observe its rules and structures. It is notable that at this very particular period that the individual constructs their gender/identity and which will accompany them during their whole lives. One important tool –which seems impractical to

avoid while discussing gender identity formation --that transmits these stereotypes to children is children's literature.

Some variations exist across cultures for what concern gender stereotypes and their contents, hence, different communities/societies may have different views about men and women and how each gender group should *be* and *do*; i.e. each society decides on what conforming characteristics and activities are assigned to which gender group. For instance, some societies are likely to uphold *sexism* more than others (Brannon 182); consequently, gender inequity is highly noticed in these societies.

However, although conceptualisations of masculinity and femininity differ from one ethnic group to another and also according to different geographies, Brannon distinguishes six adjectives attributed to the male gender and three other associated with the female gender and which are said to be common to all cultures. According to him, men are commonly believed to be adventurous, dominant, forceful, independent, masculine and strong; while women are more sentimental, submissive and superstitious. In general, what is even more common between all cultures and societies is the universal division of activities and/or behaviours into male and female domains.

The patriarchal social system constructed and validated the inferiority of women. Patriarchy is an outgrowth of gender; and violence is an outgrowth of patriarchy; and gender derives from culture and the stereotypes it creates, validates and strengthens through media, each entails and supports the other. Koester (2015) and Kanter (1977) reason that the powerless positions women hold in society stand as the most important factor to create sex differences in power use. Women do not use violence in gender relationships because they fully grasp their powerless status in society.

Socio-cultural stereotypes are too important in forming views about others, but one should not underestimate the role of personal stands in stereotyping. As claimed by McRae and Costa (75), the pictures we get in our minds are those *coloured* by society, and fuse with personal views to produce stereotypes which determine the values and the behaviour of a given group or community, and are achieved through language and communication.

1.2.3. Gender Identity: Masculinity/Femininity

Femininity or masculinity --or else which is known as one's gender identity- is associated with the degree to which individuals perceive of themselves as masculine or feminine according to a set of certain social attributes to what man and woman signify. Salient identity complies with one's commitment to it. In other words, being highly committed to an identity makes of it a salient or prevalent identity that leads its holder to behave in harmonious accordance with it. Identities are sets of meanings attached to the self --these meanings provide references for individuals" (Carter 255). In this sense, identity is a set of internal standards that influence behaviour and which distinguish individuals from others.

Three components seem to be important for gender identity: a social location, a set of practices and characteristics, and has widespread cultural and social effect. Masculinity and femininity hold distinct features and practices that are responsive to legitimate patriarchy that institutionalises men's domination and women's subordination.

Masculinity and femininity are not only state of being but social practice as well, for they lay out a legitimating rationale not only for what men and women are and/or should be but also for shaping the social practice that influences social structure. As claimed by Garlick (235), masculinity and femininity --with their symbolic meanings-- provide a "technology" used to organise social practice that develops into legitimate male dominance over women (as individuals or as a group). Basically, it is necessary to focus on the complementary relationships between masculinity and femininity and which demonstrate legitimate inequality and domination through institutional structure and social practice. Thus, masculinity and femininity are the dynamic products of discourses that design what men and women and their relationship to one another is and should be.

According to Connell (*Gender and power* 98) and Zimmerman (126) and other gender theorists, masculine and feminine gender identities are not individual traits but social and cultural constructs that are produced and reproduced through social practice. He also emphasised that it is more difficult and uncertain to construct a masculine than a

feminine identity. This stresses that masculine identity is more complex, and that is harder to obtain or even maintain.

Gender is not a personal issue but an institutional one. Schrock and Shwalbe (280) pointed out that race and gender phenomena are questions of difference in terms of privileges, not of individuals; they are then social and institutional, not personal. Being male or female relies on society's decisions and traditions, i.e. society is the first responsible agent in designing gender divisions. The concept of gender identity is however different from gender stereotypes which refers to common view of males' and females' personality traits.

Based on one's gender identification, he/she will be aware of all the meanings applied to him/herself; meanings which give rise to and guide gender-related behaviour. Gender self-meanings motivate men and women to engage in attributes with either masculine or feminine signification. Society –culture—creates contrastive meanings of masculine and feminine. Stets and Burke (12) reasoned that to be masculine is to be not feminine, and vice versa. In this sense and considering social regulations which impose the masculine-feminine dimensions, dominance and violence are attributed to man while submissiveness and non-violence to woman. However, hegemonic masculinity, or characteristics and practices that are defined as manly, gives ways to femininity, or characteristics and practices defined as womanly, to occur. Hegemonic masculinity imposes femininity on women by ensuring and guaranteeing their subordinate position.

Masculinity and femininity presuppose each other. Genders are viewed as relative i.e. the existence of each is dependent on the other's. Culture has created them, and thus, institutionalised, structured and rationalised woman's subordination which dooms her to dependency –not necessarily economic-- and to powerlessness. Cockburn (44) believed that there is not any actual/rational difference between man and woman, and that even the apparent bodily difference is a social product. She further justified her stand by referring to women athletes who acquire a physical power which has always been thought of as innate in males.

These self meanings are both constructed and acquired in social situations through continuous interactions and through identification with parents, teachers, friends, and

others who may play significant roles in one's life. Societal institutions like religion and education serve as good examples of identification and acquisition of gender identity. "Once a child's gender identity becomes established, the self is then motivated to display gender-congruent attitudes and behaviours" (Stets and Burke 5).

Besides, since one can identify their 'self' through interaction with others; they cannot know who or what they are unless they know who and what the others are (Burke, and Reitzes 84). One comes to know his/her identity by comparing him/herself with others. Once the identity is identified, the individual will choose the behaviours which are more congenial to his identity. This is the starting point of being male and female and hence of guiding masculine and feminine roles.

Adapting gender related attitudes or behaviours (and indeed all other forms of behaviour) are also strongly and primarily associated with reward or punishment. Hence, the child adopts the appropriate behaviours and avoids the rejected ones. In this light, one discerns that what one *is* is totally separate from what one *does* or *believes*; gender identity is not biologically related to gender roles, attributes and stereotypes.

Gender identity is supposed to stabilise overtime; however, it sometimes changes according to different variables like settings and experiences that one may encounter in their lives (Burke and Cast 290). Given the type of people one engages with, and the situation or setting where the interaction takes place, one is likely to modify their attitudes and behaviours, and with time –and unconsciously—their gender identity. Therefore, *gender* is learnt through socialisation; this is an idea that is indeed ubiquitous in family and domestic violence researches which strive to explain how gender and gender stereotypes emerge and extend throughout the course of human life.

In the same vein, the anthropologist Ortner (134-146) believes that gender inequality is generated from cultural perception and addressing of women's biology. Women (or mothers) are likened to nature (for they give, care, nurture...); and this latter is seen as inferior to culture, and hence women are seen as inferior creatures. She also states that this constructed inferiority of women is what made them universally oppressed. Thus, women inferiority is linked to their biology; a notion that feminists strongly rejects.

Feminists collide over the idea that gender is natural and they attribute women's oppression to their subordination and to the social inequality between the sexes. Patriarchy is the origin of inequality between men and women, and it is fostered by the family as the primary source of socialisation.

Butler, J talked about *identities* as made to be accepted as culturally linked to *bodies* "...bodies are understood as passive recipients of an inexorable cultural law. When the relevant 'culture' that constructs 'gender' is understood as determined and fixed as it was under biology —is—destiny formulation. In such a case, not biology, but culture, becomes destiny" (8). This is because different social institutions strive to make sex appear as culturally constructed as gender; for gender has become regarded as biological product as sex, since sex was already expected to define gender. The relation between 'sex' and 'gender' refers to that the body is a mere medium to which a set of cultural meanings are linked. Hence, to deal with identity as a "practice", one should understand culturally intelligible subjects which are the results of a discourse which is the compiled product of culturally decided rules.

One's identity hence is made to be not a matter of choice; it is prerequisite before one is born. In this regard, woman's life is one without choice, it is a life of an appendage. According to the patriarchal culture and society, as De Beauvoir (in the second sex) argues women are the negative of men; women are rather cancelled (Witting 48). De Beauvoir's theory puts forward that the masculine is synonymous with the *universal, neutral, the norm*; and if it happens to have one category of sex, so it is the "feminine". Irigaray (84) too, assumes in her turn, that there is only one sex, which is the *masculine*, and which produces its *other* (the feminine). In all the cases, however, it is the feminine that is configured as the other, as the particular or the marginalised. In other words, "only men are persons, and there is no gender but the feminine" (Butler 26). Therefore, there is only one gender and which is the feminine; the "masculine" in this sense, is not a gender, and becomes as Butler explains "not the masculine, but the general" (20). The term is an ongoing process, 'a becoming', to borrow Butler's words; it is not an end, as De Beauvoir claimed "One is not born a woman, but rather becomes one" (1). She demonstrates that no one is born with a gender; gender is acquired. One is rather born with a sex which can

never be changed. Gender, on the other hand, is the variable cultural meanings related to a sexed body.

The biological *Sex* of the individual decides his/ her *gender*. As Handal admits “... because one has a certain sex (female) one must behave and think in a certain way (feminine), which means that gender is conflated into sex” (9). Social and cultural institutions render one’s behaviour and thought remodelled and reshaped in accordance with his/her sex. Very few people apprehend the authentic causes that led to those enormous differences existing between man and woman and that society foists. While, most of them claim that they are imposed by *nature* (or related to the anatomical sex) disregarding that these distinctions are nothing but a social and cultural product (Essaadaoui 50). Divisions among the sexes appear due to cultural groupings that are based on erroneous assumptions about what men and women are and what each should do in society. Therefore, and to encounter deleterious gender stereotypes, feminists are doing great effort to alter certain ideologies and institutions.

Masculinity and the privilege it guarantees for the members of the male gender group are hegemonic. Connell defines hegemonic masculinity “as the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees (or taken for granted) the dominant position of men and the subordination of women” (Hegemonic Masculinity 77). Hegemonic masculinity supports aggressiveness and toughness as it does not encourage vulnerability and emotional needs of men.

1.2.3.1. Family Contribution to Gender Identity Construction

Family shapes the self conception of children’s maleness and femaleness because it provides primary models to categorise others either as similar or different. Family and society contribute in --they are in fact fully responsible for—shaping conceptions of gender roles, or gender stereotypes, and this is through determining specific language, symbols and activities for men and women. These create internalised identity standards making it possible for one to compare the self to others through interactions (messages, cues...) and settings.

All socialisation patterns develop within the family as the first unit and context for children to have contact with. Men and women build and sustain their masculine or feminine identities through family interactions. From these primary group interactions, males and females are socialised, or polarised into traditional gender roles which are actually dichotomous. Parents with their different styles, behaviours and dispositions are the first and important agents to socialise traits and behaviours in children. They make their children engage in certain activities that help them develop a sense of social identification with a particular gender. These activities prepare them to absorb the norms and expectations of gendered behaviour (Care-taking and support are examples of norms associated with being feminine, whereas competitiveness, leadership and powerful social positions with being masculine).

Identity construction is a reflexive process. Male and female children will therefore establish all their interactions on the basis of their parents' definitions of acceptable and unacceptable behaviours. Gender standards are the meanings that male and female formulate (from recurring observations) about their identities and their expected roles at both private and public levels. If an individual behaves in dissonant ways, ways that are deviant from the standards of their gender identity as male or female, they will experience negative emotions --and even sanctions. In contrast, if he/she acts in ways conforming to their specific gender, they are supported, encouraged and reaffirmed in due course.

According to psychoanalytic theories of gender --mainly by Sigmund Freud (1930)-- the notion of 'internal conflict' that puts forward that we all have an unconscious motivating part of ourselves (and that we are not aware of) helps us understand how male and female learn gender from the family. Girls find it easier than boys to achieve gender identity because the cues they are provided with by their mothers which they --and contrary to boys--keep for their whole lives. On the other hand, boys are reset to determine their gender as the opposite of their mothers². "Boys learn masculinity as an oppositional construct to femininity more than girls learn what it means to be feminine by what is non-masculine... males are more apt to seek for cues concerning gendered behavior as they try to separate themselves from the identity of their mother", so wrote Carter (245). Although individuals learn gender differences in reference to the opposite gender, males are the most

to construct their identities against the alternate gender. That is, the process of identification with masculinity in order to attain the correct role, for boys, happens by rejecting all what stand for femininity. Men keep rejecting femininity standards from an early age and throughout their lives courses. (Leslie 156).

It is inevitable to note that both boys and girls regularly receive gender message from their parents. The behaviour of parents is an important factor in shaping and forming gender conceptions. Socialisation is shaped by the parents' behaviour for they reflect the lifestyles and values of the larger society (Carter 243-244). Both fathers and mothers play a significant role in drawing such a masculine male in their sons and the feminine female in their daughters. Families are gendered institutions; they reproduce gender differences and gender inequality among adults and children alike. "Families raise children as gendered actors, and remind parents to perform appropriate gender behaviours" (Kimmel 162). The family is then the field where children practice the gender theories they have both consciously and unconsciously learnt from society and from other institutions like the different sources of media. Gender differences and inequalities are reproduced in the family in an attempt to make children and adults behave according to their traditional gender paradigms.

How do norms normalize the family? How does the normalized family then shape the boy? How do norms move the cat's pains silenced and unthought? There they are before we know it, in our living room and without invitation. There they are on the playground in the brother's voice ('Dude, don't throw like a girl') in the nanny's nod ('that's right, defend yourself like a man') (Corbett 115).

Roles in the family are strongly attached to positions/roles in society, and thus reflect expected ways of behaving in the private sphere interaction. The greater power that is given to men in the public sphere will appear in his dominant behaviours in the family. Women's denial of power will also appear in the private sphere but in more submissive behaviours (Marks, et al. 13).

1.2.3.2. Socio-Cultural Contribution to Gender Identity Construction

Besides the family, societal factors are also of no less importance in gender identity formation while transmitting the norms that constitute the ideal male and female through language, religious or educational systems (Burke 1991 and Carter 244-252). When a person matches his/her perceptions of him/herself (as male or female) with the standards that underlie this gender identity, he/she is building his/her own gender identity, and that appears, then, as a feedback process. Therefore, men and women are frequently readjusting their behaviours so as to conform to male or female gender identity standards. They are constantly controlling their behaviours to support and reinforce an efficacious identity.

Accepting and embodying certain roles, and refusing and rejecting others in the name of gender; this is the flexible and endless cycle of *gendering* and *engendering* processes. Gender is created and perpetuated in practice. Males and females frequently build gender identities from the different roles they play (whether at home or in society as whole) Gender, thus, is learnt from the fundamental and institutionalised criteria that are transferred from one generation to another. Accordingly, women are encultured (since childhood) to be in charge of a range of tasks and which are assumed as feminine or as appropriate to the female gender identity. On the other hand, men are expected to be encultured to engage in certain activities which are thought of as appropriate to masculinity.

Social constructivism refers to the idea that we are the product and the function of social relations; who we are and how we --and even how others-- perceive us is not natural. "Who we are, how we see and understand ourselves, how we see and define our interests, preferences, and desires, are all shaped by various constellation of social and institutional practices, customs, organizations, and institutions that make up our social reality" (Hirschmann 13). Individuals establish their identities, their sense of selfhood, and construct their notions of maleness and femaleness from social norms and taboos.

Feminist scholars clarify that we live in a male-dominant society where women are subject to an 'oppressive socialisation'. Women are made as men want them be or made. Social construction is a process that can be fulfilled through three steps, according to Hirschmann (15) the first of which is 'ideology'. These knowledge claims are supposed to

represent *truth* about women, but they in fact, *distort* it. Ideology is so powerful that it is fully absorbed by all the community. Besides distorting reality, ideology also produces concrete effects on women; this is because ideology provides ways for structuring social relations and institutions aiming at sustaining this ideology. This process is the second step of social construction and it is called materialisation.

Discourse is the third layer of social construction. Discourse reflects the power of language not only in describing reality but also in producing it. The three layers together legitimise many social acts like domestic violence. Hirschmann (2007) provides a well founded reply to the causes of wife abuse, and he judges women abusers as fully guilty. “It would be naïve, if not simplistic, to say that when we see a particular man hit a particular woman, that act has not been shaped by a long history of discourses and ideological framings of masculinity and femininity. Legal rights of marriage, attitudes about the household division of labor... all construct the gendered character of power” (Hirschmann 15-16).

Social forces are responsible for assigning prestige and powers to certain individuals and imposing limitations on others. Ferguson argues that we are being *produced* –not only socialised; because the social construction not only does it provide limitations on who we are but it also distorts the *true self* through false constructions of identities, roles and self-understanding which become part of the self. Hence, theorists claim to be describing subjects, but in fact they produce them through discourse. Discourse creates new ideologies about the human condition and the meaning of humanity besides the elements of and their hierarchy in society.

In a patriarchal culture, all of political, religious, legal and educational institutions construct and reinforce expectations about men’s and women’s roles. Gender ideology is also issued through narratives, legends, myths about men and women and their roles in society. “Gender ideology is a systematic set of cultural beliefs through which a society constructs and yields its gender relations and practices” (Hussein 59). These beliefs, this ideology, victimise woman while standing as a ground justifying crucial differences between the sexes and as a system that shapes different lines for each sex by issuing different roles for men and women.

Given the labels, dominant and subordinate, man and woman start making distinctions among themselves. Hence, they keep using language to create stereotypes of *self* and *other*, i.e. Men use language that facilitates, justifies and maintains their dominance and even violence against women. Thus, masculinity acquires its meaning and power from the social relations gathering the two sexes and which reflect man's authority and higher social status in relation to woman. Man and woman visualise themselves according to these institutionalised traits and roles attributed to each sex.

1.2.3.3. Learning Gender from Literature

In children literature, language and images alike influence children's formation of gender roles because they define standards for masculine and feminine behaviour. In his earliest learning experiences, the young child develops his/her gender as a critical and most important part. The illustrations and language used in children books provide modals for gender roles. It is there where sexism manifests itself and governs the child's mind (Diekman and Munen 381, Peterson and Lach 188, and Turner-Bowker 487).

Picture books are considered as outstanding and abundant source helpful to the evolution of children's identities. They play a significant role in young children's gender role development and socialisation because many of gender-based behaviours and roles evolve from the person's identification with others whether real or fictional individuals. Besides entertaining, these books also articulate and transform the cultural and social norms from their fictional characters and/or pictures to children. In addition, illustrative pictures used in children literature can portray gender roles more accurately and more easily. One (a child) can consider his/her actions, beliefs and emotions with the characters and the events of a given work of literature that they read or is read to them. Thus, it is possible that *sexism* can be reduced by introducing egalitarian gender roles in literature.

Because literature imparts the society's culture, children's literature is considered a means that is so influential in transmitting gender stereotypes over generations as Bruegilles et al (2002) admit "Illustrated children's books are based on the supremacy of the masculine and the weight of the adult generation, that lead to the sexual hierarchy and to subtle differentiation of roles. As such they promote non-egalitarian social relationships between the sexes" (263). Children acquire knowledge about their gender (as well as about

the opposite gender) from reading literature. Picture books –and children literature in general—provide societal values that enable them to distinguish their gender roles from those of the opposite gender. This asymmetry and which was enforced at the level of humankind is what created the notion of gender and all the vices that it entails afterwards.

“Given this long-term influence of books, there can be no doubt that the characters portrayed in children’s literature mold a child’s conception of socially accepted roles and values, and indicate how males and females are supported to act” Kortenhaus and Demarest 220). Literature strongly influences a child’s conception of himself as male or female on the one hand; and it serves as a guide to the socially and culturally accepted norms for his/her gender roles.

Melvin Burgess (2004) and Wannamaker, A (2008) put forward that the representation of male and female characters in fiction implies limitation, inaccuracy and damage. What build a boy are cultural symbols and social orders that stand as back stories for him and which set ideas linked with the overcoming of fear that is demonstrated through risk taking and proved by winning.

Children learn actions and attitudes through literature and which are suitable for themselves and for society as a whole. Cornillion attests that we read literature “for answers, for models, for clues to the universal questions of what we are or might become” (1). It is via literature that readers understand themselves and others, because it introduces the *self* and the *other*. Literature impacts readers’ views of the world. It intentionally presents role models, for self exploration and for world exploration as well.

The parameters of choices are determined by literature and will therefore help the child or young reader of literature in defining oneself and recognising the other besides the nature of relationship that gathers them. The other here is, doubtless, the opposite of the self; and who is mainly woman. Children become able of defining themselves and recognising others, and hence, forming notions about gender and even the nature and parameters of gender relationships through literature. This notion grows into an ideology that accompanies them through their adulthood and therefore governs their whole lives.

An individual gains his/her sense of identity through dialogues with others and also through the discourses his/her society and culture produce and which transmit strong ideologies about the self or identity formation. Regrettably, biases have been introduced and incorporated into the works of literature, and hence readers consult literature for wrong answers, for answers that are not to be found there. Allen et al. (71) argue that children literature has always witnessed bias which is still prevalent. Therefore, we have been alienated from ourselves and from literature because of these biases.

Competence, achievement motivation and instrumentation are seen as highly desirable traits, and hence, are associated with masculinity. In children's literature, *males* are typically portrayed as competent and achievement oriented, that is active agents, while the image of the *female* is as limited and as less competent in their ability to accomplish things. Female characters are involved in few of the activities and assigned few of the characteristics or goals that are accorded prestige and esteem in society. In fact, literature enforces the idea that females always need help and support from others (man) to survive. They are always portrayed as caregivers, nurturers, and altruists who are concerned with getting nothing in return to their virtues (Frasher and Walker 39 and Ristau 30). Unexpectedly, even female writers used unequally distributed roles for men and women in their fiction (Gooden and Gooden 100). Even women writers resorted to the same depiction of males and females, and their roles in their fictional texts.

Gender dualism constitutes "Boys do, Girls are" as Key (422) refers to it; this is what literature reflects about gender roles. These stereotyped *genderisms* affect children's perception of how males and females should think, behave, and act and interact. Therefore, Children's literature does not provide any model for the search of the self and the harmonious combination of the two genders or for the search of wholeness. Therefore, "patriarchy has put boys inside a box, which Wiseman designates as "the Act-Like-a-Man-Box" that rules all their life..." (Feijoo 23).

Books serve as socialising tools that transmit the traditional values of the time to numerous posterities. Books with gender attributes started to increase by the late nineteenth century; hence these books provided literature that lectured children/readers on the behaviours which are appropriate for each gender. Books ascribed for boys focused on

leadership and action while books attributed for girls emphasized obedience and humility as extolled virtues (Peterson and Lach 188). Higher status standards and occupation roles are described for males (like leadership, independency, and action), whereas lower status standards occupation roles (like passivity and immobility) for females. These distinctive roles and which are appointed to boys and girls respectively are summarised by Key (cited in Turner Bowker 1996) *as girls are boys do*.

Literature is highly interactive, for it moulds and constructs individuals by introducing image models of themselves as girls/women or boys/men. Literature defines what it means to be male or female in society. What we read from literature constructs and makes us what and who we are (Fox 85). Consequently, children learn *right* from *wrong* as society evaluates them to be the one or the other; they distinguish admissible behaviour for them and for others alike. “Stories for young readers generate stereotypes that foster children’s beliefs in traditional gender roles. They assimilate the fictional world into their real lives because they have less differentiation between the fiction and reality” (Diekman and Munen 373). Gender biased literature has bad impacts on children and mainly girls. The effects of stereotypes learnt from children literature are referred to by Gooden and Gooden (89) as harmful on the young female reader’s psychology and on her perception of female gender roles because of the negative images they represent about herself and her roles in the family and in society as a whole. Girls, likewise, are deprived of alternative role models; the fact that prevents females from realising full potentials in them as human beings. Counteractive depiction of males and females negatively influences their self-concepts and self-esteem.

It seems rather antagonistic for gender policy adherers to have girls as critical readers. Finders, author of *Queens and Teen* audaciously declares that women have had their rights of education only to write and read their roles and relationships (12). During the time of obtaining the right of education for women, girls had been given a limited access to education with the aim of enabling them only to read books which foster and prescribe their female gender roles and which guarantee a subordinate position for woman.

Not only children literature that is heavily loaded with gendered messages; all forms of literature, in fact, convey notions about femininity and masculinity aiming at

confirming readers' images of conventional gender identities and at fostering gender stereotypes and inequality. Fox states "everything we read ... constructs us, makes who we are, by presenting an image of ourselves as girls and women, as boys and men" (Fox 85). The way literature represents genders has a considerable ability to influence the attitudes of young adults --and mainly their perceptions of socially accepted and appropriate gender behaviour. Literature is full of stereotypes about gender which consequently hinder young adults from achieving their wholeness as human beings with their full potentials. Gender stereotypes do not provide true role models and that would build up a healthy community.

The strongest stereotyped gender roles were found mostly in older books (Kortenhaus and Demarest 220) where typical traits as competence, achievement motivation and orientation had been attributed to men while submissiveness nurturing and dependency to women. Themes associated to fictional male characters like adventure, cleverness, courage... also revealed a bias against the other gender. Female characters had been and still are more attributed to victimisation and passivity. This is again what reflects *the Boys do, Girls are* premise. In terms of occupations, female characters had often been confined within the domestic setting ensuring --in this way--the nurse, child-bearer, or baker professions and which are labelled as 'female'. On the other hand, men are often presented as kings, fighters, fishermen, soldiers or knights; occupations which are socially more valued --for they imply more virtues. Besides, male characters occupy the biggest part in books' titles, central roles and even in illustrations. Hence, as Turner-Bowker (464) remarks, children's and young adult literature introduces female characters as "pretty dolls --to be admired and to bring pleasure". Thus, female reader tries to identify with this female prototype by looking beautiful and bringing pleasure to others (men). Kortenhaus and Demarest (219) profess that in contemporary literature, girls start to be linked to instrumental activities where they are still, however, represented with more passivity as compared to boys who, notwithstanding, preserve their *dominance*. Girls are rarely depicted as more active and capable than boys.

1.2.3.4. Learning Gender through the Different Media

All sorts of media, and among which books, are frequently bombarding us with images that transmit society's culture and ideologies. Gender roles and inequality between the sexes occupy a significant part of the culture transmitted by books to all people and to

young ones in particular. Males and females live up to society's expectations; they are greatly influenced by those misconceptions that they start behaving exactly as it is prescribed for them.

“Every form of media from film to advertising to popular music has been criticized for presenting insidious messages about femininity to society. Not only do these images shape and sometimes distort the way males view females in our [American] society, but also they can shape the way females define themselves” (Jacobs 20). While girls are pictured as vulnerable, weak and passive, boys are portrayed as rebellious and aggressive. Little girls, however, get so captivated by these beliefs about their natural weakness and passivity that they indeed become weak in due course.

Violence is among the normalised acts or stereotypical messages carried among boys/men by children and young adult literature. As Robinson (204) reasons male violence is condoned by the media (among which we may list young adult literature). Wife abuse stems primarily from the subordination and the lower status of women more than it does from the higher status of men. That is, it is because woman is viewed as socially and culturally inferior, weak and unsupported that she is abused and not because men are viewed as superior, strong and socially supported. This seems misleading; however, it is the stereotypical *inferiority* of woman which generated the *superiority* of man over her; and this can be clearly noticed through the elaborate and intensive portrayal of women – and not men-- in proverbs, the cinema, literature, myths and other popular sources of information in an attempt to accentuate and highlight her lower status. “The stereotypical inferiority of women has always been the ideological groundwork for their mistreatment and exploitation” (Hussein 76). Therefore, in this study, all the concern has to be devoted to woman –and not men- and her portrayal in different media.

1.2.3.5. Bad Effects of Gender Theory

1.2.3.5.1. Gender Discrimination/Gender Inequality

Gender roles as attributed to males and females, hence, exhibit what is called gender inequality which displays in decision-making power, and work distribution between males and females within the household.

Gender stereotypes gave rise to Patriarchy. “patriarchy [is] a system of social structures and practices in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women ... the use of the term social structures is important here, since it clearly implies rejection both of biological determinism, and the notion that every individual man is in a dominant position and every woman in a subordinate one” (Walby 20). Male violence, patriarchal relations in sexuality and patriarchal relations in cultural institutions are –according to Walby—types of the six structures of patriarchy. Patriarchy is a concept that supports the offender rather than protects the offended/victim.

Patriarchy can be seen as a structure where man is conceived of as having more power and privilege than woman; and as an ideology that legitimises, validates and condones this conception. Patriarchy refers to power relations system that subordinate women and their interests to men. The term patriarchy appeared in the 1960s, while feminists used it to describe the authority and power of fathers as the heads of their houses. It derives from a Greek word (patriarchhēs) signifying ‘Father or chief of the Race’, a family male head, i.e. man has the overall power and authority in the family.

As a result, gender stereotypes create *gender inequality* and hatred echoed between the two sexes and which is known as *sexism*. Treating the members of one sex as being inferior to one’s own is what we call sexism. “The belief or attitude that one sex is inherently superior to, more competent than or more valuable than the other... Sexism primarily involves hatred of, or prejudice towards, either sex as a whole, or the application of stereotypes of masculinity in relation to men, or femininity in relation to women” (Britain 236). A sexist is therefore any one –mainly a man—who regards his gender better than and superior to the other; the opposite of which may hence be *egalitarian*. Women, hence, face sexism both in society and in the family. If there was no notion of gender, there would be no sexism; as Ridgeway and Smith-Lovin admit “people automatically sex categorize (i.e. label as male or female) any concrete other whom they interact with even when other definitions, such as teacher-student, are available” (216). The process of categorising sexes happens in a fast, simple, and habitual manner. Another ambiguous term found within the gender literature is *misogyny* which generally refers to hatred of women. Misogyny is ingrained prejudice against women which occurs because of dislike of and contempt for women.

Masculinity chauvinism is also one outcome of gender stereotypes and which grant men with power, authority and superiority. According to the Oxford Tamil-English Dictionary, Male Chauvinism refers to an attitude founded on the belief that men are naturally better than and superior to women. A male chauvinist is a male who patronises or devalues females for the belief that they are inferior to men and they therefore deserve less privileges or benefits. What creates this male chauvinism is that boys are encouraged from parents, and mainly fathers, to comply with culturally estimate masculine ideals more than girls conform to feminine attributes; a sign that may introduce gender male traits and roles as more likeable and appealing than those related to the female gender. Adams and Coltrane (234) state that fathers enforce gender stereotypes more on their sons. They suggest that it is almost impossible to alter gendered behaviours since they are reinforced from a very early age; the fact that makes them seem intrinsic and natural in the individual. Schermer (59-62) adds that the gender schemata that children develop are acquired unconsciously without grasping that the culture where they live is gender stereotyped. What children unconsciously develop is networks of associations or gender polarisations and which will rule their whole lives.

Many social practices construct and maintain the notion that men and women are different, and what seems rather worse is they reinforce men's dominance in both a real and symbolic frame. Injustice seems to display at the level of male and female gender roles, and among which we may mention the sexual division of labour both inside and outside home as an illustration. Modern masculinity strongly and profoundly rejects femininity. In this sense, men show strong bias towards toughness, violence and aggression in their behaviours to be appreciated as 'real men'. In this vein, expressing aggressive attitudes and behaviour is made to seem necessary for man in defining and developing his masculine identity.

Men and women are not punished alike for the same wrongs. Mokhalisa in her work "The Underdog" expresses her vision towards the discriminating fate of women through the mouth of one of her female characters, Netsai, in the following verse:

Blessed is Adam
His deeds do not tarnish him

But Eve suffers open scars
Scoffed, scorned, and alienated
By family, friends and community
Blessed is Adam
His crime goes unpunished
But Eve, the underdog must face
Degrading law courts and rot in jail
What kind of justice is this?
Tell me (Mokhalisa 42)

The law courts that Mokhalisa refers to stand as an allusion to the cultural and social institutions that degrade the status and the role of women in society; and the jail that woman is supposed to be *rot* in is the oppression and ill fate she suffers because of these social injustices. Man is permitted to err, and even his wrongs -when done against his woman- are not seen as *mistakes* but rather as *duties*.

Women are affected by a culture that is saturated with social ideological structures and which define what a woman is. Therefore, trying to conform to certain ideals represents a heavy pressure on them because this generates an *identity conflict* due to the fact that the woman will be lost between the way *she* comprehends herself and that which has been constructed and imposed on her by these social and cultural conventions. “Gender role Stereotypes affect how children perceive themselves. Negative portrayals of their gender may affect their identity and self-esteem” (Alsaker and Olweus cited in Narahara 7). Hence, the concept of woman –that is the concept of the self- will produce a dilemmatic situation for the woman.

1.2.3.5.1.1. Marginalised Masculinity

The culture of gender and race creates discrimination even between the members of the same group of males. Black American men fall within the category of marginalised males for being black. Generalisations, misconceptions and stereotypes are attributed to Afro-American men like that of being criminals and hyper aggressive which are deeply implanted into American society and culture, although they are neither real nor applicable to everybody.

The manifested perceptions have raped our minds, directed our thinking, nurtured our suspicions, and fed into our fears about how the African American male should be socialized... Colleges and universities were, in effect, using every source at their disposal to discredit and marginalize African American in general and African American males in particular... Emotions of anger, frustration, along with rage, disbelief in himself, and integrated with other types of toxic and intoxicating feelings would manifest themselves while the African American male was living a schizophrenic existence in mainstream America (Rowan et al. 5-6-7).

These false myths and stereotypes and mainly those that encourage African American men's aggressive behaviours have negative impacts on their relationships with their women. These myopic stereotyping can be damaging to the African American male's psyche. He may believe that it is his sole attribute. Hence, "his masculinity may become more identified in terms of his physical prowess as opposed to his intellectual ability" (ibid 11). This false stereotype is also responsible for influencing the African American man to adopt a *hyper masculine* identity that is more related with physical power than with the intellectual one. Thus, the feelings of societal contempt, frustration, self-doubt, anxiety, anger, rage, deviance, disassociation, sexual irresponsibility, and constant questioning of one's masculinity; all contribute toward building a psychology of instability in the Afro American man's disposition. This is because their socialisation process has been inconsistent with their observation of others prospering in society (ibid 12) i.e. they become unsatisfied with their roles of advancement and development, as males, in society.

According to Goffman (303-304), West and Zimmerman (142), man —especially one belonging to a *marginalised social group* (like the blacks) —faces hard task to preserve his status and his membership in the dominant group (of males) in order to enjoy his full rights and his privileges as 'male'; in a word, to be accredited as a man, one should create, justify, maintain and claim a *masculine self*. The existence of different 'masculinities' refers to the existence of inequality among groups of men, i.e. the superiority of a category of men over another (and who are, in most of the cases, males from marginalised social groups); or rather the superiority of one masculinity over the other.

Marginalised masculinity in public spheres leads to hyper masculinity in the private sphere. Men who feel that their *manhood* is threatened feel weak and inept, and thus try to compensate for it by exaggerating violence. “Lacking one kind of resource for eliciting deference often leads to employing another kind of resource in exaggerated fashion” argued by Schrock and Shwalbe (285). They maintain that men with fewer economic resources –mainly belonging to poor and working class groups-- resort to other strategies like verbal abuse and physical violence to maintain control in a relationship. Controlling partners in intimate relationship is one way of regaining mastery of the world that they (men) may have lost for a reason or another. In this way they think they would achieve the desired state of masculinity by increasing their levels of mastering or controlling others (women). Men are more than women eager to dominate and control their environment, they are more motivated by great mastery and control of one’s partner; and this is due to the stereotyped beliefs linked to being male. These *compensatory manhood acts*, although they may be reconstructive for men while restoring their feelings of masculinity, are very often destructive for the victims mainly if these acts are associated with violence, regardless of its being physical or whatsoever.

One should also note that signs of masculinity or *masculine self* depend on certain variables related to the actor himself (his age, race, class...) and to the subject with whom he interacts (sex, race, class...) and even the situation that either hinders or enhances the act. Children learn *identity codes*, which symbolic culture exposed to them from an early age through media imagery in order to make them unconsciously and fully grasp the so-called logical conventional gender order; regardless of the immense role of the parents in transmitting these gender codes through gendered clothes, colours, toys and so on. As Pomerleau et al. (359) and Messerschmidt (94) reason, one is very likely to see little boys devaluing and strongly rejecting female identity signs so as to confirm themselves as males. For instance, they are too involved and devoted to aggressive and violent games as these qualities are rewarded attributes in boys and not in girls. This image develops in boys as they grow older, and they will learn to use more strength as a rejection of being bossed on as men.

The marginalisation and discredit of the black American male have been created by the different institutions and systems --like history, science, politics, religion and even

universities and social life—that help in the fabric of American culture as referred to by Rowan et al (6). This leads to generating uncertainty, inadequacy and inconsistency; the feelings that prevail most in black American man's psyche. Even after Emancipation, African American males keep victims of their sense of inferiority.

The American society ingrains in Afro American men the ideology that they are *males* and hence should display extreme physical power; simultaneously it indoctrinates them with the belief that they are *aggressive* but *inferior* because they are *black*, therefore, it limits the scope where they can practice their *maleness* into the private sphere alone, and hence it contributes in increasing domestic violence within the black American family.

African American males, who perceive lack of opportunity in mainstream society, are more likely to be expressing their frustration through aggression and overcompensation of masculinity, partly because of a positive male father figure... this alternative style of masculinity becomes a distortion of their reality. It is an attempt to cope with social, interpersonal, economic, and educational pressures (Rowan et al. 19-20).

Manifesting violent behaviour is nothing but one response to different stressors and pressures standing against African American males. Lacey et al. (8) reports that higher rates of severe violence tend to occur in Afro American families --by black husbands-- than in white families. African American males, being members of a subjugated group, try to counter the inner pain that results from the damaged pride, poor self-confidence, and fragile social competence and this is through wearing the mask of hyper-masculine self or hegemonic aggressive persona (Osborne 558). What the Afro American man ignores, however, is that the intimate partner violence he accomplishes is alienating him from the only being that stands by him and supports him and even protects him from the different ranges of racism against him (Collins 21 and Hill 20)

In general, there are two roles that are counted as basic in the male sex attribution and which are that of the breadwinner and of sexual subjugator; and if one fails to reach or preserve these two attributes, he therefore risks losing his masculinity. Based on this conception of masculine identity principles, the African American man --after the

Emancipation and towards the end of the twentieth century-- systematically failed to provide a breadwinner role that had been proscribed for them as males because of many impeding factors; the most predominant of which is systematic discrimination in the labour market. In part, as Blake and Darling (405) suggested, he is to be blamed for his lower economic status, for he fails in preparing himself to be accepted in a technological society. The African American man is both physically and psychologically destroyed, for he is socially rejected or because of choices he makes –like rejecting education and mistreating their women.

Over masculine men believe in their responsibility as family providers. If this provider model of manhood is obstructed (because of disfranchise as an example), men try to reconstruct a masculine image by enveloping other social practices that convey power – at the top of which appears violence on women. Any deviation from the typically gendered configuration of traditional masculine identity –and mostly the provider role—is likely to engender wife abuse (Zuo and Tang 40; Hill 7). Any obstruction that may hinder man from accomplishing his socially expected role as provider within couple relationship is very probable to lead him to re-establish his dominant position and this is mostly by engaging in violent acts against his female partner.

African American men’s violence on their women partially stems from a multiple of strains and frustration (like the strain of developing a masculine identity and the frustration of practising and expressing it in society). However, this does not stand as a real excuse for the black American man to abuse his woman, and this does not necessitate from women to be *quiet* or nonreactive in front of this violence (Collins 210; Hooks 45). All men (of all the races) exert violence on their female partners, but African American men are said to be more violent on their women; because, on the one hand, they are men and, on the other hand, they feel their masculinity and their manhood threatened because of the whites’ oppression. Hence, the black American man conceives that he can double prove his manliness through this violence. Afro American men “have access to the power imbued to them by patriarchy and their primary expression of this power is the violence they perpetuate against their female partners” (Smith, E. 176).

The way the black American male is perceived by the public consciousness –that is immoral, violent, rapist, athletes...-- is the way he sees himself and internalises his identity and his social role. However, being oppressed and subordinated by the white society makes him fall within a dilemma as far as his role in society is concerned. Black men exhibit more masculine behaviours since this is what is awaited of them. Richie (1136) concludes that black American women are consequently the most likely to experience the most dangerous intimate relationship, and lowest and most dangerous social positions.

1.2.3.5.2. Women Silence (submissiveness)

Women Silence is another outcome of gender stereotypes favouring women's submissiveness and self-effacing. Hine (239) and Broussard (375) argue that black women resorted to the *code of silence* which resulted from slavery era and the period following the Emancipation. This silence was the outcome of extreme sexual vulnerability and abuse. The impossibility to defend themselves from rape and violence both as domestic and social, forced them to maintain silence as a psychological respond. In wife abuse as well, silence becomes a code that helped black women survive and protect their men from feeling *unmanly*.

Deborah explains the phenomenon of women silence while stating that women indeed have *voices* but they *have been silenced* i.e. they do not speak because they are prevented from speaking “ either by social taboos and restrictions or by the more genteel tyrannies of custom and practice” (4). This indicates that silence/submissiveness is imposed on women by patriarchal ideology and that construct the value systems of society. If women are dependent, less self-confident and unassertive; it is because this is what patriarchy teaches them, or rather wishes them to be.

Women are thus born to suffer silently from their “different realities [which] range from being strictly closeted, isolated and voiceless..., subjected to floggings and condemned to death for presumed adultery and forcibly given into marriage as a child...” this is how Baden (3) summarises women's fates as females.

1.2.3.5.3. Limiting One's Freedom and Choice

Culture restricts both genders by assigning rigid roles for men and others for women. It is not bad to emphasise that men too suffer from emotional and/or physical troubles, from isolation. It is not bad that men hold hands and cry; what is really damaging is masculine stereotypes that lay down rigid sex roles (Branney and White 7). Both sexes suffer from these cultural confining systems; as women are denied power and domination, men are denied the opportunity to show or demonstrate their feelings. Boys are bound to the one-way vein of hegemonic masculinity. Parents who support outdated definitions of masculinity and femininity are therefore restricting their children and stifling their independence, and thus, withdrawing them from freedom and consequent happiness. An interesting point is that of Connell in *The Men and the Boys* (225) while highlighting that it is more advantageous to *reshape* gender than abolish it.

According to a study by Davies (150), fairy tales represent the male character as strong, potent, clever, adventurous and powerful. Female characters, on the other hand, are depicted as weak, passive, naïve and sweet; they are generally portrayed as compromising second sex themes like beauty, domesticity marriage and motherhood. In this respect, Tsao (109-110) reasons that these stereotyped portrayals of girls/women deprive them of a range of strong alternative models, the fact that reinforces their complex of inferiority. In the same way, boys/men endure strong pressures in concealing fear and other emotions in order to behave like men and in accordance with mainstream social conventions

Perceived in such a way, and as synthesised by Pleck (13) and Connell (58) the male gender identity becomes a source of problems both for individuals and society as a whole. Many men deviate from their role as they come to conceive it as strain and as harmful not only to others but to themselves too. These men get exasperated by their warlike situation and even admit its dangerous drawbacks. Hyper masculine men may evaluate these men as weak, unfaithful feminine, they indeed see them as ridicule, but they are in fact the strongest because they alone could vanquish and break the solidly based stereotypes enticing them to behave purely in a masculine way –that is violent, indifferent, daring and though—lest they will be identified as feminine.

Gender roles restrict one's freedom. Studies confirm that stereotyped gender roles coerced by society and culture may hinder children's development by limiting their choices, interests and abilities (Aina and Cameron 11; and Trepanier-Street and Romatowski 155). Stereotyped gender conceptions, in relation with emotions, roles and occupations, generally affect badly on both men and women. Taken-for-granted ideologies about their own gender attributes make individuals in constant fear lest they break the socio-cultural norms. For instance; the stay-at-home stereotype may generate a 'guilty conscience' for working women because they may feel as bad mothers for they spend less time with their children. Similarly, the bread-winner father stereotype also negatively impacts men who are economically dependent. Therefore, the individual is denied harmonious encounter with his/her emotions, interests and hobbies.

1.2.3.5.4. Women's Exclusion from Culture Content Making

Women's ostracism from their society's culture content decision making is both a cause and a consequence of gender discrimination. It is because women are discriminated against that they are prohibited from being active agents in selecting and deciding for the elements of their culture (notably those related to gender roles and domestic violence). Similarly, excluding women from making the culture content of their own community is a deed that discriminates against them; it is a sign of fundamental rights prohibition.

Popular culture is culture that is made popular by people and is defined by Milestone and Meyer (2012) as an anamorphous concept produced by a set of cultural texts the words, images and practices of which convey meaning. In the name of culture, no social group has ever suffered its great violation of human rights than women. Shaheen (quoted by Pujar⁷) admits that though the United Nations advocate for the universality of fundamental human rights, yet they recognise the diversity of cultural expressions, some of which basically refer to *accounts* justifying and legitimating gender-based human rights violations and which are discriminatory practices mainly performed against women. Pujar (6) explains that some tend even to perceive that gender equalities –among which the recognition of women's human and cultural rights—as disrespectful of cultures, traditions and religions and as threatening universalism; the fact that certifies the lower status of women. In this vein, gender-based differences and inequalities are justified by culture and traditions with the purpose of distracting people from holding accountable the real

institutions, authorities and actors and which lay down social norms and taboos behind these discriminatory rules. To highlight this and other similar notions, a set of quite adequate questions were raised by Shaheed (UNESCO's special Reporter in the field of Cultural Rights):

Who in the community holds the power to define its collective identity ... Why does not give all a chance to contribute to the definition of their community's collective identity which is not written in stone... How does the state of power relations between men and women (and more groups) in a given society shape their prevailing definition of gender and gender roles? (Shaheen cited in Pujar 8)

These were Shaheed's questions that she answered by referring to culture and gender as social constructions and which she attributed to fluctuating power relations. Her questions indeed invoke one's attention to that women occupy the lowest position in –if not discarded altogether from—the decision and participation in the identification and selection of the elements of their *society's identity and heritage* and which is universally acknowledged to be of *predominately masculine character*. Mockingly expressed by the UNESCO Report, the role of women in identifying (creating) and interpreting heritage is confined to “bearing and birthing the men who succeed to it” (UNESCO Report 34). This rare or inexistence of women in the nation's heritage –in fact—leads to a reinforcement of their discriminations and rights prevention. Although women, nowadays, enjoy a certain extent of freedom of contribution to their culture's heritage and creative expression; yet a lack is still conspicuous.

It is in this way that woman's activities have been traditionally relegated to the domestic sphere while men's have been identified with the public sphere (as more important, relevant and prestigious).

1.2.3.5.5. Violence on women

Not only do gender stereotypes generate sexism, gender inequality, and masculinity chauvinism, but worse, it leads to gender-based violence (violence against women). “Violence against woman is every action which is based on the different gender which causes physical, sexual, psychological suffering, certain action against independence in the

public or private life” (Mufidah 146). Hence, violence against women is an action that is incited by woman discrimination. According to UNICEF (2000), definition of intimate partner violence goes as “any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life” (UNICEF, 2000). Walby strongly confirms that “Male violence against women is considered to be part of a system of controlling women” (3). It is part and a consequence of gender discrimination and gender inequality.

Gender discrimination gives chance to wife abuse to occur. Discrimination against woman is not always followed by or interpreted through violent acts, but it always puts her in a subservient status that gives her chance to violence against her. Woman’s position is determined by men’s domination³. Women are also seen as not fully grown, as childish and immature. Adult women are often seen as silly; “Indeed in Igbo land, old women are accorded greater respect and granted more rights than younger women ... they have to grow to meet the standard already attained by men” (Oha 91).

Patriarchal society creates inequalities between men and women; it condones male domination, sexism and therefore violence against women. Hearn (3-4) asserts that gender discrimination supports women battery as it structures and assigns authority to men and other responsibilities for women within intimate relationships, because violence is a resource that demonstrates manliness. The performance of gender normalises the power and prerogative that men socially and culturally are granted, so that it would, in due course, appear rather natural than socially produced rights. This accomplishment of gender continually reproduces the cultural beliefs that constitute and are constituted by the social structures and which impose distinctions between men and women.

The American culture encourages aggression and violence in men --which is a learned behaviour by all males-- as the most easily recognised expression of masculinity. Aggression is highly valued in men, not in woman, because it gives way to dominance; and this is what is intended by the social patriarchal structure.

Although it may seldom include men as victims, domestic violence is based on the social subordination of women and involves any act (or threat) by men through which they inflict physical, psychological or sexual abuse under gender reasons. The root causes of gender-based violence and of wife abuse are founded on gender-based power inequalities and gender-based discrimination, that is, the inequality between men and women is the primary cause that gives rise to gender violence. This kind of violence is legitimized and perpetuated by most social and cultural institutions, and by traditional beliefs and norms, hence it occurs both in the private as well as the public sphere. Types of violence as they appeared in Prevention of Domestic Violence and Trafficking in Human Rights Training Manual by Bezpál'cha (2001) include:

A-Physical Violence: and it embodies battering, treating women as properties, deprivation of sources necessary for physical and psychological well being like: education, healthcare, nutrition, cleansing...

B-Sexual Abuse includes rape, sexual slavery, forced marriage, forced pregnancy, sexual exploitation and prostitution.

C-Psychological Violence: involves coercion, abusive language, neglect and control of women.

Involving these abuses, as examples, domestic violence serves as a violation of women's *human rights*.

The public generally considers physical violence a crime, and thus, a narrow definition seems to be assumed to domestic violence (while many other types can be defined as issues to this violence). Hence, physical violence is likely to be publically used interchangeably with domestic violence. Other forms of violence (as sexual and psychological ones) are hence usually regarded as non-violent acts.

Domestic violence is the wilful intentional intimidation or battery and which occurs within the family. It is any abusive behaviour that includes physical, emotional and/or sexual assault perpetuated by an intimate partner (mainly man) against another (mainly woman). It is a dangerous phenomenon affecting all communities regardless of the race,

religion, age, educational background and economic status of its agents. This type of violence, and which is also commonly known as wife abuse, is part of the systematic plot to gain domination and control over women who are (or were formerly) in dating, marital and live relationship with their offenders. However, research tries to prove that women with fewer resources or greater perceived vulnerability are more likely to experience higher tensions of domestic violence. Women who suffer more psychological entrapment, lack of social support, the fear of social judgment, are more exposed to the risk of intimate partner violence. Lack of feasible alternatives also stands as an obstacle rendering domestic violence more intense and more widespread. Domestic violence leads to common emotional traumas, like anxiety, depression and post-traumatic-stress disorder. These symptoms can generate other more serious drawbacks such as suicide. Domestic violence, therefore, makes victims feel themselves helpless and *isolated*. As claimed by Flood (11) though women's feeling of insecurity in their intimate relationships is tragic; yet, it is preventable if these women find support from their own communities. Communities have to address the factors that contribute in creating this tragic phenomenon.

Gender-based violence, domestic violence or wife abuse are used interchangeably with violence against women, because it is one that is mainly perpetuated against women. Women are mostly the victims of such violence, although men/boys can also be victims of it. Women are the most intended subjects of domestic violence because it has a gender purpose. It is “a manifestation of historically unequal power relations between men and women, which have led to domination against women by men and to the prevention of the full advancement of women, and that violence against women is one of the crucial social mechanisms by which women are forced into a subordinate position compared with men”; it is in these terms that the United Nations (cited in Sida 6) define gender-based violence. The ‘female’ or the ‘feminine’ is connected with weakness, inferiority and victimisation as gender norms which build GBV, for this latter is based on gender stereotypes which link masculinity to many ideals among which dominance and violence and which link femininity to submission and victimhood (Sida 6).

Feminist scholars argue that domestic violence is a gendered issue by which men attempt to maintain dominance over their female partners. Wife abuse is thus rooted in *gender* and *power* representing and demonstrating masculine gender identity. While, some

scholars –like Dobash and Dobash (ix) and Kaur and Garg (74) argue this is the solely root of intimate partner violence (IPV), others –like Tracy (579), Gelles (179) and Sokoloff, and Dupont (43) admit that these patriarchal ideologies and practices serve only one factor among many other causes. Gender inequality is socially constructed and culturally approved of phenomenon that eventually engenders wife abuse. However, gender inequality alone cannot serve as the sole cause for domestic violence. Many other systems of power and oppression (like race, class, and prejudice...) both directly and indirectly, consciously and unconsciously create different social contexts that are felicitous to the emergence of this type of violence. This notion is however seen by feminists like Yllo (48) as traditional because they reason that violence against women is a phenomenon common to all societies (in every race and class group because it is a generally accepted part of culture).

Domestic violence occurs when someone uses abusive behaviour to establish power and control over another in partner relationship; the causes of which vary yet it is distinguished as being always a result of power imbalance that displays between the sexes, and which occurs because of complex psychological and social factors. Intimate partner violence against women is tolerated and supported by society; the fact that helps this type of violence flourish. “Abuse of women is systematic ... receiving cultural and structural support. Women’s subordination is accomplished and maintained by patterns of interpersonal interaction prescribed by culture and social structure” (Bart and Moran 79). The ascendancy offered to man by cultural, political and institutional factors supports and tolerates his violent behaviour. It is a prerogative that is offered to men at the very expense of women. “This means that even within patriarchal ideology men can choose not to be violent and not to use their institutionalized power to coerce women into acquiescence” (Green 56). Thus, as Green reasons, violence against women is a male option and not a masculine duty.

The socially recognised power that men have over women has given rise to gender violence. This power is gained by “Cultural, political, and institutional factors [which] support and tolerate violent behavior” (Dobash and Dobash 7). The social construction of woman (the female gender) enables and generates wife abuse which has a devastating effect on woman’s self, identity and self respect.

Violence against women seems appropriate or rather normative in a male/female relationship. It has been historically and theoretically naturalised; this is what men –among whom the African American man-- come to learn initially from their childhood (by observing their parents' intimate relationships and watching their mothers battered, insulted, intimidated, humiliated... by their fathers against whom no harmful reactive consequences seem to appear). Therefore, family serves as an important setting from which one –a male child—socially and directly learns violence on women. Most abusive men who batter their women grew up in violent homes; they were either beaten or they witnessed parental battering. Staples (66) believed that spouse abuse in Afro American families became a normative expectation and as a natural and necessary issue, for it is condoned by the large community

Men batter women because they perceive that intimate partner violence is a welcomed male act and as strategy to establish control of women. Witnessing violence in childhood is a major cause for developing an aggressive character and becoming women abuser. “Boys who grow up in violent homes, particularly in homes where their fathers (or father figure) beat their mothers, learn potent lessons about IPV [Intimate Partner Violence] that they carry with them into their adult relationship” (Smith, E. 160).. Boys learn how to play a male role in their own family (Edleson 1; Eckert and McConnell 13; Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children 6). At an early age, they learn about the qualities associated with being a male from family and society together, and then try to adopt them as appropriate assignments.

Wife abuse, as it is widely known, nevertheless, brings about a multitude of negative drawbacks. Depression is one major consequence of woman abuse; it is the bitter fruit of continual physical and psychological victimisation. Cascardi and O'Leary (251) argue that most abused women show such symptoms as depression, low self-esteem and stress.

Members of each group hold certain shared beliefs, values, norms and practices which serve as criteria for accepted behaviour for these people and which help them perceive and evaluate the world (Idang 99 and Spencer-Oatey 3). The concept of patriarchy is problematic in gender relation studies (mainly gender-based violence). Patriarchy starts

with allotting distinct roles for men and women and with giving more power and privilege to men than to those assigned to women. Women, themselves, are aware that in order to optimise and promote their social status, they should start reconsidering –even bargaining-- first this ideology. They know well that it is the source of their cultural and social *fate* as a marginalised group. These patriarchal beliefs along with other gender role stereotypes are set so as to give men the right to exert dominance and even violence over their women; the fact that ensures the dominant position of men and the subservient position for women, and consequently more violence on women.

It seems rather alarming that the ideology of patriarchy is nurtured by women who show abundant obedience, excessive respect and submissiveness to their husbands. Therefore, husbands use, or show, more power in different forms, of which violence appears to be pioneer holding account that women have failed to fulfil their roles. Hence, women sink into more submission and dependence, and worse into silent *tolerance* of their men's violence against them. On the other hand, some men try to attribute their violent acts to an attempt to make their behaviours conform to patriarchal structure and norms (The Equality Institute 10).

Another important fact is that Societies that exhibit great inequality between men and women are the most likely to encourage wife abuse. Intimate partner violence has become a prerogative; an acknowledged right for men. Those cultural and patriarchal ideologies are so strong that some women are made to believe that they should tolerate husbands' violence, and should not seek outside help. Seeking outside help is supposed to bring only shame for women who will be believed to violate their natural duties (as those related to obedience and respect...), mainly because the task of preserving and adhering to traditional norms are placed mostly upon women.

For its severe and repetitive nature, male violence on women is seen by feminist researchers as “part of a system of coercive controls through which men maintain societal dominance over women” (Anderson 655), which culture supports and facilitates.

The patterns of men in positions of power and authority exist in all cultures and societies; however, social and cultural constructions of gendered identity are not

monolithic. Differences in meanings of masculinity and femininity are to be changeable according to racial or ethnic groups. Therefore, racial (and even socioeconomic) inequality has its own regulations in terms of the interplay between gender and domestic violence.

Violence, then, is a great resource used to derive power within relationships. Therefore, men with lower income, educational or social status are the most likely to resort to violence in order to ensure power within their relationships. Thus, Yount and Carrera (358) contend that a wife's higher resources provoke her male partner's perpetration of domestic violence. On the other hand, Dhungel, et al. 1; and Abramsky, et al. 13 notice that the more a wife is objectively dependent, the more likely her husband engages in violence against her. Accordingly, one can only come up with the notion that violence exercised by men on women occurs as a gendered and socially structured practice.

In this sense, Ehrlich (283) admits that masculinities belonging to working and lower-classes emphasise more machismo and aggression at home since they lack power and authority at work. This rigid and violent model of *masculinity* is assumed to compensate for the lack of authority and power which are important standards for the stereotypical notion of *masculine identity*. This is because man –or the husband-- is culturally defined as family breadwinner; and this, in turn, further legitimises male power and authority over his female partner. In the absence of other means to achieve social power, violence appears as appropriate to reaffirm or rather restore their challenged masculinity. Violence has then become a means to demonstrate men's masculinity.

Therefore, Violence is a means for constructing the *masculine self*; it is a means for doing masculinity. Male violence is supported by social discourses and processes that make it one form of societal dominance. "Status relationships between men and women and the use of violence are not gender-neutral; they are influenced by cultural views about masculinity and femininity" (Anderson 267). Social and economic status affect men and women differently and their likelihood of exerting domestic violence. Culture encourages men and *not women* to be aggressive in intimate relationships.

Female gender role identity, besides other reasons like lack of family support, impedes women from leaving abusive relationships. Feminist scholars also try to explain

that women who do not leave abusive relationships are bound up by cultural constructions of femininity which encourage them to be more nurturing. Hence, instead of leaving their violent men, they attempt to heal them through patience, love and submission (Anderson 656). They also try to demonstrate –on the other hand—that they are forced to stay in and accept their violent homes because of their limited economic, and/or social resources which can be best summed up in absence of strong shelter system. Abraham (904) views that family (relatives) plays a critical role in intervening or preventing wife abuse, according to her, *economic assistance* or *moral support* can decrease women’s vulnerability to wife abuse; and vice versa, for lack of this type of support escalates women’s isolation, that increases –in turn—her feelings of weakness and insecurity.

As far as the Afro-American woman is concerned and besides the lack of family or social support; Richie (1136) explains that the black woman who suffers from wife battery does not trust the criminal justice system to solve the problem; she may even think this would intensify it. Thus, interpersonal violence interrelates with state violence against women. In other words, domestic violence is deeply rooted in larger structural systems of oppression that generate inequalities and discriminations.

In this vein, domestic violence should not be taken as a family problem. In contrast, it is a product of male-dominated theories that support gender inequality and likewise perpetuate male violence against women in and outside family spheres.

Feminists argue that IPV is a result of the gendered power relations that derive directly from patriarchy. “Men hit women because they can (for reasons of empowerment or gendered power etc.), and because it is effective in getting women’s attention and sometimes in changing their behaviour” (Smith, E. 172). Therefore, racial discrimination and feelings of frustration are blameless of creating intimate partner violence among African American couples, but they help shape the distinct way of expressing it.

Green (77) reasons that gender violence laws do not introduce any protection to women, not necessarily because they are designed to oppress and discriminate against women but because they are loaded with certain assumptions and ideologies about women’s role, the nature of the family and even the proper male-female relations which

are more or less degrading for women. Gender violence stems from the way society sees woman and her role both in the family and in society and the way it designates the relationship that governs wife and husband. In this sense, a patriarchal ideology seems to shape gender relationships and monitor the behaviour of women.

1.2.3.5.5.1. Rape and Prostitution as Two Important Types of Gender-Based Violence

A-Rape

Rape and which is also known as *sexual abuse* is defined by Spies as “any action that violates and humiliates or exploits; or attempts to violate, humiliate or exploit, the bodily integrity or dignity of a person” (128). It is an unfair act of power exerted mainly on women as a result of their vulnerability as a subordinate group. Rapists intend to intimidate and subjugate women to maintain their supremacy under the patriarchal law. Rape is one issue of male’s systematic intimidation of women whereby men use their masculine privileges to keep them under constant fear and domination. Hence, the sex act occurs as a demonstration of male power and of humiliating women rather than as an uncontrolled or overwhelming sexual desire, the purpose of which is to dominate and control them.

In a novel by Emecheta Buchi, *Destination Biafra* (1994), a male character, says to a female character (a soldier woman) trying to rape her; “I am going to show you that you are nothing but a woman” (167). Two interrelated perspectives are likely to be grasped from his words; that a woman is man’s inferior and that rape is one means to intimidate and control women. His words and actions alike are rooted in cultural expectations of masculinity and femininity. A woman is not accepted to enter the male scope i.e. to take on the masculine role and identity. Subjectivity that is founded in cultural norms exposes women to despise and violence.

Child marriage is no less harmful than rape. Parents may feel obliged to give their daughters to older men, for reasons of poverty or otherwise; however, “girls who are younger than their husbands, and have little education and life experience, usually are in a subordinate role. They have little control over their lives and well being. This unequal relationship increases the risk that the child bride will be subjected to verbal or physical abuse by her husband” (Notes on Child Marriage 5)

Women generally feel ashamed and even guilty of rape that is forced upon them. Society itself lays blame on women in the case of rape. This is the same reaction of Josie's father who expels her from the family home after having been raped. Oddly acted, however, seeing her raped encourages him not only to refuse to help her but also to rape her himself. This proves problematic for raped women because of invoking social stigmatisation. As victims of rape experience, women face three forms of violence namely physically, psychologically and sexual (Darni 105).

Marital rape falls within the rape of *right* category; which is a type of rape that takes place when the rapist believes he has a proprietary right to the victim. This kind of rape is historically the most morally acceptable and least likely to result in any aggressive action, legal or otherwise by the victim (Good 17). In this sense, women also believe that they could not legally avenge marital rape –if they happen to recognise its appearance altogether-- for it is not an acknowledged right.

B-Prostitution

Women prostitution is another form of violence against women because- though temporary- it reflects women exploitation "...The buyer is in most cases a man and the sexual service he is buying is most often humiliating and revolves around power and contempt" (Bragadottir 25). Bragadottir maintains by referring to prostitution victims –also called as white slavery victims- as experiencing same pains of rape victims where the woman tries to disconnect herself emotionally from her body during the intercourse.

Both rape victims and prostitutes are exploited against their will. The only difference between rape and prostitution is, then, that the cause behind their absence of *will*. While rape victims are raped by force; economic need seems to drive most prostitutes to engage in this *painful trade* and turn their bodies into *merchandises*.

It is indeed a painful and humiliating trade because women who are entangled in this phenomenon suffer excruciatingly. Some prostitutes act as if they are enjoying their job while they are extremely repulsed by it (De Marneffe 107 and Farley and Barkan 47). Patriarchy in society must receive most of the blame for the phenomenon of prostitution

for traditionally supplying men with more power (mainly economic) that would eventually force woman to sadly sell her own body to survive or for other penalising reasons.

1.2.3.6. Women's Violence on Men

Hines and Douglas (9) also confirm that women very rarely initiate violence on their male partners regardless of whether their economic incomes or social class are higher or lower than their men's. While, women are not culturally and socially encouraged to resort to violence as a means to gain power in their intimate relationships, because neither violence nor power is believed to stand as a feminine standard. The prevalent standards that accomplish femininity are features like *passivity*, *support* and *nurturance* and which are same that discourage women from being tough and violent; violence by women convey a contra-doctrine of these qualities and which are declared feminine. Therefore, what makes gender-based violence a one-sided violence –that is male acknowledged and privileged violence—is a matter of unfair power distribution among the two genders.

1.2.3.7. Power Distribution as an Active agent in Creating Violence and Discrimination against Women

The concept of power is a much debated topic when it comes to feminist and gender theory. According to Machiavellian, Nietzschean and Foucauldian view of power, it is a systemic phenomenon that is a component constituted of *social* reality. Behind the concept of power, lay domination and control which may appear with a socio-economic and political goal –but not innate (not a biological one). power is a human activity; it is exercised, created by people and influences and/or limits them. We can talk about power only when we have two or more people involved; however, it is quality of whole social network and not individual, i.e. “it is a general matrix of *power relations* [of which *resistance to power* is part] in a given society at a given time” (Sadan 58).

Power has unpredictable character and is profoundly dependent on context. Hence, its appearance varies according to different variables like the actors involved and the setting where it may take place. In his *theory of community power*, Robert Dahl explained that power is exercised to cause those who are subject to power to follow the private preferences of those who possess it. The dominant group possesses “...power as the

ability to make somebody do something that otherwise he or she would not have done” (Sadan 36).

The concept of power as it is applied to sociological discourse has mainly been established by all of Lukes and Giddens. Foucault (1979, 1980, and 1996) linked and investigated the concept of power in other fields such as medicine, human sexuality, penology and psychiatry while he adopted the theories of Nietzsche about the connection between knowledge and power. He claimed that power is hardly interrelated and can never be separate from knowledge (even semantically). Others still linked power to semiotics, art, social history, and criticism of literature.

Power, from the viewpoint of Lukes, is an exercise of fallacy that is measured by the ability to implant in people’s minds interests contrasting their own good (109). This type of power is counter-development and counter-existence to identity; the one that men enjoyed over women.

Modern thinking about power begins with the writings of Nicollo Machiavelli (the Prince in the early 16th century) and Thomas Hobbes (Leviathan in the mid 17th century), and which are regarded as classics of political writing. While Machiavelli sees power as a means (that needs strategic advantages), Hobbes regards it as a cause (Read 521-522). Contrast that exists between these two foundation works –and which serve as basic theories— provides the two main paths for thoughts about power that we still have today.

By the end of the 2nd World War, power started to gain much interest of the social sciences; mainly with Max Webber who followed the same path of Hobbes. According to Weber (as cited in Sadan 35), there are three sources of power legitimisation: the charismatic (natural), the traditional (cultural) and the rational-legal (lawfully legitimate). After Webber, other theories appeared about power and which were more concerned with investigating illegitimate power that is disguised behind the veil of legitimate or bureaucratic power (Sadan 35).

Sadan (49) identified three circuits of phases of power in order to finally appear at the individual level. The first phase of power describes the field of power by identifying

advantages of the dominant/empowered group and limitations of the powerless/subordinate group. The second phase of power has to do with the creation of the central rules of social life. The third and last circuit of power reveals real acts of power.

Social Quiescence as Gaventa (3) called ‘the silent agreement in conditions of blatant conditions’ while he tried to fathom the reasons that kept oppressed or discriminated against individuals/groups from arising resistances against the rule of a social elite. Gaventa revealed that the social elite prevent conflicts thanks to their deliberate use of power mechanisms. If the subordinate group rebels as a sign of non-acceptance of the Elite’s power over them; their act will be evaluated as violation of this quiescence. Otherwise, the inactivity of the deprived/subordinate group (that emerges due to a number of assumptions and prejudices against themselves) makes the phenomenon (their subordination that is dichotomised by the power and domination of the dominant group) as non-social problem. In this light, members of the subordinate group cannot overcome this problem alone as individuals. On their part, Bachrach and Baratz identified the reason behind the non-participation in decision-making as stemming from fear and weakness rather than indifference. The subordinate group’s will is determined, shaped and influenced by the dominant group. Powerless people live within and internalise a consensus that is false as it is manipulated by the powerful --mostly about their weakness. A dominant “elite might be so influential over ideas, attitudes, and opinions that a kind of false consensus will exist –not the phony but the manipulated and superficially self-imposed adherence to the norms and goals of the elite by broad sections of a community” (Bachrach and Baratz 949).

It also seems inevitable to mention that the power dynamism has much developed and altered through time. ‘The transition from torture to rule’ as Foucault (1979) referred to power change is a metamorphosis “from physical punishment to psychic punishment of the soul and will” (178). The most noticeable cases are those of black slaves and women; they both moved from the physical enslavement of their bodies to the moral/psychological enslavement with the run of time. Black slaves won their Emancipation, yet they endured harsh racism by the whites ever after. Women too won certain rights –most women are not really physically abused or treated as before-- but are still victimised by men.

1.3. The representation of violence in literature

Literature reflects reality, for it mirrors society and its culture. To recapitulate what Domono and Sugihastuti have reported, literature does not appear from emptiness, however, it is affected by --and therefore-- reflects society and its culture, its norms and values. Fiction reveals the way society operates and it can also provide alternative ways of functioning for societies and individuals alike. “Literature creates the society, and the society bonds the literary work. Violence against women had and still has a big influence on literature; there is a close relationship between the text (literature) and the context (society) [...] Literature does not come from emptiness; it is influenced by the socio-culture of that society” (Domono and Sugihastuti cited in Darni 101). Literature is one form of socio-cultural codes and to comprehend it, one must relate it to the socio-culture that has produced it. Narrative analysis puts the text as a symbolic attitude or media that covers, defines and gives meaning to a real situation.

Thus, literature reveals and reflects the processes and constraints caused by historical changes. And hence, violence against women –as a social practice- creates a considerably vast room to tackle and represent in literature.

People recognise wife-beating as a part of marriage while any intervention is deemed unnecessary. Marriage is seen to be strongly associated with such ideas as women ownership -and which in turn- support wife abuse and marriage rape. Cousins testifies that “[Issues] such as wife beating, are not hidden and secret but they are all too often normalized” (1). Power imbalance between the sexes is much more encoded by marriage. Aidoo (1985) attests that “Throughout history and among all peoples, marriage has made it possible for women to be owned like property, abused and brutalized ...” (226).

To reveal the dangers of gender and wife abuse is one of the writer’s duties. Wife abuse and other morally unacceptable issues should be highlighted through different means like literature. Writers have to raise certain social predicaments as Ama Ata Aidoo (1995) (in an interview with Needham, A. D) who asserts in a pioneering way “I think part of our responsibility or our commitment as writers is to unfold or open for ourselves and our communities what exists, what is wrong, the problems ... and to state our case in such a way that would entertain, we would inform and perhaps if we are lucky to be that good, to

inspire others”. Re-reading masculinity and femininity helps us better understand the social concepts of gender and its construction. It is, therefore, the responsibility of writers to enlighten the consciousness of the black woman to see and recognise the reasons of the plague they all endure, to instruct women not to blindly conform to the socially prescribed female gender role.

1.4. The Representation of Woman in Literature and the Media

Discursive practices construct *subjects* and create *differences in meaning* between which would consequently affect differences in *power* and *position* between them. Insistent cultural views about femininity and masculinity continue to influence us and grow in one’s mind the notion of gender as being a natural issue. Woman has been universally depicted in a negative way through myths and legends where her image has been associated with wickedness and superstition. She has almost been not present or heard of in history; and even some philosophers like *Aristo* have had offensive and hostile attitude toward her. In language, history and literature, woman is defined as the second sex (Esseyouf 12). Virginia Woolf, in “A Room of One’s Own” (1992) raises a debate on this apparent discrepancy between woman’s positions in fiction and her positions in fact, insisting --by that—on the intentional misrepresentation of woman with the aim of ensuring her subservience.

Images of femininity and masculinity are created and reflected by literature and other forms of media, the fact that makes readers form their assumptions about gender. Individuals learn throughout their life cycles that --for example-- a sensitive boy is estimated as a coward while an audacious or tough girl is regarded as a tomboy. We socially and culturally construct notions of masculinity and femininity from “the music we listen to, the books we read, the television we watch, and the stories we heard growing up” (Wallowitz 27). Different means of media dichotomise male and female traits and roles. Besides the cultures’ values, the media try to project and express taboos and anxieties, bombarding us with gendered doctrines at an early age so that they grow engraved in us as adults.

1.4.1. The Representation of Woman in Literature

Literature does not represent women with due fairness. “Men have used books, for centuries to further the interest of the male gender. The image created of the woman in many of the books has been rather uncomplimentary, to say the least. Many myths and false notions were thus created about women...” (Ezeigbo175). Many misconceptions, distortions and deletions gained currency in male-authored literature and needs to be revised, reconsidered and falsified, and which even needs to be corrected by women writers. Since some narratives –and which have been written by men—misrepresented women, it was then ultimately urgent for many female writers to appear so as to re-represent and falsify any theory that had been appropriated by these *masculine* authors.

Osterhaus argues that men, male writers, have always been most well-known and most well-read throughout history. Many fallacies gained currency in male-authored literature and needed to be falsified and even corrected by women writers. This results in “images of women in literature that are products of a creative process that has a limited perspective” (Osterhaus 1). This focalises that all representations of women by male writers is false and distorted because man simply ignores what a woman really is, for he has never had an authentic depiction of her. What men know about woman is only the stereotyped definitions related and attributed to her through different social and cultural institutions. What man grasps of woman is the opposite of what and who he is; that is, his other.

Fiction is regarded as sociological datum, or social commentary that has an impact on culture. From a linguistic anthropological view, culture is a process of a conversation transmitted or mediated by language which is dynamic. Thus, Man and society live in constitutive relationship; individuals cause a big impact on their culture and culture brings a big influence on humans (Tyson 374).

Hence, negative images about women are depicted and overspread by literature like those of natural weakness and inferiority in order to affect people’s cultural conception of the female gender. For instance, Wole Soyinka (1963) in his play “the Lion and the Jewel”, and through a male character (a school teacher) who tries to convince the village beauty,

Sindi, of his natural superiority to her and of her need of his protection, enunciates the following; “The scientists have proved it. It’s in my books. Women have smaller brains than men, that’s why they are called the weaker sex” (Soyinka 4).

Patriarchy is deliberately condoned by literature as a *smooth* way that *harshly* position women into their subservient place, and hence, they can never achieve social justice. Male writers focus mostly on, for they uphold it, dependent domestic female characters, and they mainly represent assertive or independent women as doomed women. “It seems that the more women try to improve themselves in society, the more they are doomed in the pages of literature” (Udengwu 186). The more women’s power seems to rise, the more men fight it through literature.

The traditional gendering of those narratives emphasises the problems endured by a silenced and objectified woman pursuing a male plot and which can be better referred to – to borrow Margaret Homan’s words (6), *the liberty that imprisons women*. In other words, it is true that these male-authored fictional narratives make the oppression of women widely known and discussed but, they represent it in a way that would only condone it instead of eradicating it. “...description of how people *do* behave is in part a function of the theorists’ view of how people *should* behave” (Hirschmann19). Theorists, then, claim to be defining plague-like phenomena while they are –in fact--very producing them through their discourses. In this sense, they are rendering *ideology* into *concrete reality*. Their aim is to shape people’s lives by creating/producing roles and identities for individuals (males and females); what each is and what kind of life each *must* lead. Ideology and discourse mould the individual, familial, and social status for men and women. These latter are evaluated as inferior creatures, and their “unfreedom is thus in some ways the precondition for men’s freedom” (ibid 23). Freedom --in its own—should be thought of as a concept that is based on masculine experience because it is a male prerogative that is structured to defend masculine interests alone (ibid 22).

The majority of male-authored novels -and other genres of fiction- portrayed women as the inferior sex; while man always the overwhelming or dominant sex. Female writers occurred –at their beginning- so as to denounce the negative image of woman and even accused men to bias against the female sex while distorting the picture of woman and this

was by selecting the bad examples in their novels. Male writers are also convicted of repeating common rumoured traditional notions about woman that reduce and underestimate her value and her human worth (Wood, J. T 33). It should also be noted that distortions of the image of women in literature affect, limit and complicate not only women's but men's lives too. Some roles and qualifications are imposed on men while others are prohibited to be taken on by them, the fact that makes men feel controlled and restricted by gender.

Woman has been subject to silence and repression over centuries, according to different civilisations and cultures. Despite the temporal and spatial differences and the systems of production, there is a common thread combining these societies and cultures and which submits that the male gender is the peculiar one, the supreme and the dominant as the female gender is the subordinate and the submissive. Therefore, the qualities that are socially desired and expected from woman are pre-designed and preset for her. (Esseyouf10).

Feminist literary criticism is an approach to studying literature that focuses on female writers and their writings about gender. It also emphasises men's writings about woman. The discussion of life conditions and the status of women in a patriarchal society/culture are achieved by examining the portrayal of female character in literature. Therefore, Feminism fights against gross misrepresentation of women. Thus, feminist critics have always tried to search for signs of gender bias in male-authored literature for it reflects –and to a great extent -negative and stereotypical representation of women. The representative image of women is that of dependency and confinement. Prestigious or powerful women are depicted only as giving powerful support to their men. It is through this literature that these negative stereotypes are taught, intensified, and spread.

Gender-sensitive critics have, for decades, decried the negative image of women in literature. Works of literature are subjected to scrutiny by these critics for signs of gender bias in the form of exclusion of female perspective or negative portrayal of female characters, or stereotypical presentation of women at the expense of the changing role of women ... Such writings make it seem as if it is wrong, nay, a taboo to be free and independent (Udengwu 185).

Feminist criticism is necessary to repair and restore what has been distorted in literature by sexism.

Women are generally portrayed in literature as *silent rebellious* who are conscious of their victimhood and who eventually seek imaginative exile (to free themselves of the bondage binding them to the patriarchal society). Some female are depicted as caring much of nature (flowers, trees, animals, gardens...); this may appear as a sign of exiling themselves from the real life and its harsh truths.

In *The Open Door*, a novel by Al-Zayyat, a female character (the protagonist, Leila) sarcastically said and after having heavily beaten by her father for having participated in a demonstration against the British occupation in Egypt; “Of course I was wrong..., wrong to express my feelings like a human being. I’m only a girl –a woman” (9). Patriarchy and unlimited male control; this is what home is supposed to provide for woman in literature.

According to the traditional idea of womanhood, and in accordance with the way literature depicts woman, a thorough and minute definition of woman and her role in society would be expressed by Ngozi U dengwu as follows:

The one that must be dependent on a man to control her, the one that will not eat until she is given to eat, the one that will not talk until permitted to talk and must say what she is expected to say and not what she knows, the one that is hypnotized into believing she is weak and dangerous to men and so justifies her suppression, the one that does not aspire to achieve anything in life and so does not pose any threat to anyone, the one that receives the brunt of in humanity to man keeps silent, that lives in perpetual denial of who she really is and what she really is, that is totally and completely intimidated and brow beaten, whose every move towards self-realization and assertion is blocked and rewarded with dire consequences, that must suppress her own feelings and forget her own dreams in order that others will develop and soar high, that acts as a ladder for others to climb to limelight while remaining in the dark herself till death, that cares for all without anyone caring for her in return thereby living alone with midst of crowd (191-192).

The black woman, as having been herself the most subordinate of all around the twentieth century, has always been underestimated in literary representation. Mary Helen Washington in *Their Fiction Becomes our Reality: Black Women Image Makers* (1974) talked about the black woman as having been always portrayed in literature and the white media as the *strong Mammy* or the *One-Dimensional Rock of Gibraltar*⁴. She is strong yet not powerful; strong to bear the heavy burdens of others but one that is seen as inferior and subservient. Zora Neal Hurston (a former slave and writer) witnesses that, according to her status in the *world*, “De nigger woman is de mule uh de world so fur as Ah can see” (The nigger woman is the mule of the world so far as I can see) (Hurston 10). The black woman was considered as a superwoman as far as her physical strength is concerned; which is rather a mythical and stereotypical depiction.

Likewise, literature and all sorts of communication means manifest the otherness of woman and the patriarchal society perpetuates it. To reinforce this idea, John Milton –on his part– negatively depicts women in his Epic “Paradise Lost” (1983, New Ed.) while describing woman as half-woman half-snake to accentuate the sin she committed. The Middle Ages, and the medieval literature alike, showed conspicuous misogynistic characteristics which were followed by courtly love of women and which --in spite of its being a sin-free deed, yet–kept women in their crucial subordinate place. Even the renaissance period opened no different horizons for women, and the modern period did not either. Literature symbolically represents social conventions with the aim of reinforcing and perpetuating them; hence not only does literature mirror society but it also shapes and constructs it. Some literature representing male violence on women, for instance, is in fact and in some sense only fortifying the patriarchal structure.

Gender-based literature has been instrumental in spreading and promoting gender-bias ideologies which restrict and prevent girls from realising their full rights. Ruterana selects as an illustrative case ‘Ndabaga’ (2012), which is a rare and unique Rwandan fairy tale about a female fictional character, Ndabaga, who was driven towards disguising herself as a boy to fulfil her rights in society. Ndabaga challenges the traditional housewife life and succeed –by that–to carry out tasks that are not normative to the female gender and which hinders gender equality. Fairy tales, like this one, and by presenting rebellious female characters encourage female readers to fight against traditional gender roles.

1.4.2. The Representation of Women in Proverbs (Popular Culture)

People's everyday existence is interpreted and their ways of being are mediated through discourse. There are various forms to do so. Proverbs (as one part of people's culture) are regarded as one of the most influential mediums that impose strong-based ideologies. Hence, roles, statuses and identity of women are widely represented through proverbs mainly in asymmetrical constructed societies, the fact that reinforces inequality between males and females.

Proverbs from a linguistic perspective are a set of timeless figurative and metaphorical language that belongs to a given community's oral tradition, and thus they remain anonymous. However, they carry messages that are popular with all nations (with slight regional diversities), mainly discourses related to othering (based on gender or race); the fact that makes them true and valid in different cultural contexts (Sanauddin185). A proverb is a saying similar to metaphor, for it connotatively refers to something, using a simple but picturesque language. Thus, they are brief sayings loaded with morals contributing –in such a way—in multiplying the vividness and power of communication. They also serve as argumentative tools for assumptions that are drawn from experience and/or generalisation. According to Storm (168), maxims, popular sayings, dictums, and idioms can all be considered as proverbs. Proverbs serve as “powerful rhetorical device for the shaping of moral consciousness, opinions, and beliefs” (Fasiku 51).

From the point of view of Kerschen (3), it is much fruitful to understand what a proverb does (function) rather than what it is (nature), because proverbs are concepts difficult to define. It is very likely that not all proverbs represent *truth*, but they depict the rules, ideals and conducts of life as people hold them. Gender-loaded proverbs' obscure function is to 'brainwash' people. The moral readiness of the audience to accept the proverb helps the escalation and expansion of the stereotype it conveys; which in turn rises their rhetorical power.

Belfatmi (15) attests that proverbs are built on commonsense and practical experience of the community where the proverb rises; and hence their validity is unquestioned among the members of the same community and even to –if known or learnt

by—others, although they may reflect and represent a given society, its beliefs and conceptions. A proverb has a hegemonic authority which supports and legitimises certain societal issues, and therefore, prevents any possible controversy around them. Considering their short forms, proverbs are the most part of culture that can be easily memorized and to easily hand down from one generation to another. Hence, they are the first influential medium to spread ideologies about gender differences and biases.

Proverbs strengthen social traditions by providing individuals with acceptable patterns of life, moral truths and social values. Mieder summarises the functions of proverbs while arguing that “By employing proverbs in our speech we wish to strengthen our arguments, express generalizations, influence or manipulate other people, rationalize our own shortcomings, question certain behavioural patterns, satirise social ills, poke fun at ridiculous situations” (Mieder 11)

Women are typically portrayed as being useless and weak in proverbs (as social discourses that carry prejudice against women). More importantly, the negative point in stereotyping is that stereotypes may be right about some but not others. Kerschen showed that people are mostly interested in negative stereotyping than positive ones --which are very rare. The majority of these negative stereotypes “portray[s] woman as a sharp-tongued, long-winded, empty-headed, toy-like creature who is fightless to the man by whom she should be ruled and to whom she belongs like property or livestock” (8). These are the building block of proverbs and that shape the attitude shared by both men and women towards woman, and that result in maintaining men’s superiority and women’s inferiority in spite of changes in societies and the world.

Proverbs play a critical role in creating and perpetuating gender culture. Therefore, they stand as an important part of the social construction of *gender*. They are active agents that help construct gender identities (both the identity of men and of women). Proverbs about women are critical and harsh, and they are often said to transmit a negative image about women; and some even reveal women as having an evil impact on others. Proverbs carry a sexist and misogynous vision towards women creating –in such a way— an inferior portrait about the female gender by commenting on such qualities as intelligence and so on. (Jayawardena 645).

Proverbs reveal many hidden aspects of a people's culture and ways of thought. Although they are believed to express wisdom and truth, they may carry biases, false observations and prejudices especially when it comes to gender (gender discrimination). This is because they are often based on false generalisation and are embedded with negative messages. Culture in general –and proverbs in particular-- reflects and guarantees women's crucial secondary position. Proverbs are structured in such a way that reinforces cultural stereotypes about the inferiority of women. "Almost every proverb that touches on women contains a severe negation of the value of women in society" (Wolfrang 65-66).

In some English and African proverbs, women are portrayed as animals, plants, objects (property) and even food (Belfatmi 16). A woman is hence seen either as a man's property or as a sexual object to satisfy his pleasures.

There are –in fact—proverbs which represent woman in a *seemingly good* image like in these two African proverbs and that show women as motives for their men's achievement and source for their blessings, and which run as "Women are said to be behind the success of her husband" and "He who finds a wife finds a good thing, and obtains favour from the Lord" (Lensch 3). I believe that the positive image that these proverbs grant for women is but an impetus to lead them to be more caretakers and altruistic givers; it is only to stress and reinforce the feature of nurturance and support that woman is expected to provide for man. They are therefore founded on one traditional feminine trait, the fact that reveals it as a gender-discriminating proverb. There are others where wisdom, affection, empathy and nurturance are typified as feminine virtues. "It is not surprising then that even at the heart of the proverbs which on the surface convey a society's admiration of women, one may find men's vested interest and conspiracy to limit women to certain secondary social positions" (Hussein 71). Proverbs have been used so as to maintain gendered life. They are discursive means used to recreate and reinforce the myths of male superiority and female inferiority that have been long generated by the patriarchal system

Belfatmi claims that sayings like "A woman is the key of her house" and "A wife is nothing but a maid in her house" (18) are connotative and conveying a gender biased ideology to restrict women to the role of the housewife. One can notice that through

proverbs, girls are brought up to maintain the role of their mothers –that is to be limited to the domestic sphere. Girls are made to believe that their crucial or sole place is at home to prepare them to be good future housewives. The first proverb, here, carries a strong connotation, a metaphor that confirms a gender bias; woman (and not man) is loaded with the responsibility for keeping the home together and safe. In other words, if anything wrong happens, it is hence attributed to *her*. The other proverb likens women to servants – at the level of the private sphere. These two proverbs have been selected by Belfatmi among many which serve as a sample of proverbs and which are established to ensure the low position of woman both at the family and social bases.

Other significances of other proverbs studied by Belfatmi showed that women are evaluated or judged in accordance with their beauty (physical appearance) as an essential criterion for females. This idea, again, leads us back to the fact that women are not appreciated as human beings but they are perceived as objects; ornaments. There is no consideration for their minds, their intellect; “A woman is half a brain” (Befatmi 18). Thus, Beauty is critical feature for women as distinct from men who are measured according to their intelligence. This reflects that women are seen as innately stupid and as lacking logic. Women are therefore referred to as bodies whereas men as brains. Once more, through these proverbs, we turn back to Key’s notion of boys/men do, girls/women are. This assumed weakness and inferiority make women subject to dependency and to control by others (men).

Belfatmi further refers to two other proverbs; “If you want to relax, beat your wife” and “Women are like donkeys, one should beat them from time to time” These two proverbs reinforce violence against women (both as cue of domination and as comforting act for men). They highlight the fact that men have to beat their wives to maintain their submissiveness and obedience. Violence against women also makes them as property for men. The image of woman here is likened to donkeys –animals to humiliate her and underestimate her value. In general, proverbs depict man as agent of righteousness and woman of wrongdoing (Oha 93). These sex-biased proverbs are hostile to women and they express nothing but false generalizations, the intention of which is to devaluate and denigrate woman. Hence, they should not be taken as true aphorisms.

Women are depicted as evils in proverbs. Deborah (27) asserts that there are even some proverbs that severely assault women through verbal accusation and reference. Walker, C (124) notes that there are some proverbs that symbolise women as “the disorderly world of vice in which Satan attempts to rule”. Women are regarded as evil-natured and hence need men to tame and civilize them. “To marry is to put a snake in one’s bag” (Hussein 69).

Women are usually mocked, denounced and insulted through proverbs; and thus, proverbs victimise women while they help create their inferior position and condone male dominance in society. The image of women as evil creatures is shared between proverbs and myths alike. Women are viewed as destructive and wicked; “A woman is the master of devil”. She is also likened to snakes to symbolise danger; “A woman is a snake”. Storm mentions another Japanese proverb and which portrays women as evil, “In women’s hearts there dwell serpents” (4). This appears as a warning against women and their dangerous plots. Proverbs, like these, carry and maintain ideologies that classify woman in a subservient and subordinate status.

Japanese proverbs, too, represent women as inferior, stupid, ill-natured, talkative and meek. According to one Japanese proverb and which dooms woman in her submissiveness and subordinate position, “a woman does not have her own fixed home in the three periods of her life” (Storm 196); because she obeys her father when she is young, her husband when she is married, and her son when her husband dies. A similar proverb may run as “The husband initiates, the wife obeys”. Another sexist proverb which also calls for obedience and submissiveness of women transfers the belief that “Women do not have their own abode and thus dwell in that of men” (Hussein 4). Trying to socialize women, and men alike, towards grasping woman’s place and which is *home*, a proverb states “A man’s place is outside, a woman’s place is within”. These are only few among many besides the indirect and bad reference to woman through praising man like in “A man cannot be knocked” and “Man has no default but his pocket”⁵.

William Shakespeare’s works too showed strong stereotypes whether conveyed by actual proverbs or in his usual poetic language and which characterised his dramatic pieces. E.g. “Frailty, thy name is woman” (Shakespeare 1.2.5). This is a Shakespearean

proverbial phrase alluding to women's delicacy and unreliability. It conveys the alleged inherent weakness of women's character.

Therefore, Proverbs take part in the guilt of relegating women to a secondary position in patriarchal societies. They are counted as a patriarchal means that conveys a way of understanding masculinity and femininity to create, reinforce and legitimize the myth of male superiority, and therefore the inequality between the sexes. An Ethiopian proverb issues the following notion "Woman without man is like a field without seed" (Hussein 97), and "a woman and an invalid man are the same thing" (ibid 102). These proverbs—in turn—represent a belief that indirectly degrades the value of woman and arouses suspicion around her intellect. This is to stress masculinised power and female inferiority and invalidity in society. Sudanese proverbs also do not differ much from others in terms of devaluating women and their image; "A woman is like a hair that follows the neck" and "Woman has broken wings" and "Do not keep your stick any from these three: woman, drum and donkey" (Hussein 105), to mention very few illustrations. Hence, woman is perceived as needing protection from others; they are both physically and mentally infirm, women possess no independent thought and that physical and emotional violence is legitimised on them. A pinpoint Ethiopian proverb that lays arguments about the failure of women says "The leadership of a woman makes water flow upwards". This proverb depicts women as lacking the sense and initiative to lead and direct; and this is to strengthen the stereotype that regards leadership as matching only people of male sex because women are said to lack control of their own thoughts. Similarly, Kenyan proverbs contain many instances of sexist proverbs; "Women conceal only what they know not" and "Pride is not a woman's virtue" warning—by that—men not to trust women (for secrets), and socialising women and reminding them of their silence and submissiveness as signs of true femininity. In general, African proverbs consider a woman's identity as subsumed into her husband's; "the face of water is the earth; likewise the face of wife is the husband". Therefore, women build their identities in accordance with such internalised standards of what is satisfying and pleasing to society and mainly to their male partners (Devereaux 1).

The English proverb 'Men make houses; women make homes' contribute in spreading the stereotype restricting women to the domestic sphere, while defining men as economic providers. Many other proverbs foster this, and other notions of villainy of

women and legitimise wife abuse and women control, like: ‘You can get the real news from woman’, ‘Man beating is a rose beating’, ‘Shame on the owner of the cart who is lead by a cow’, ‘What would win the hero if not the woman and wine’, ‘The husband is the head of the family’, ‘the woman is the neck’, ‘The son from the mother, the money from the father’, and ‘The man is the outside, the woman is the inside’. These proverbs are illustrative language that supports wife abuse and domination.

Male dominance enjoys support by language and other cultural traditions; this is because the dominant group (men) controls and spreads ideologies that legitimise and perpetuate its power. Gender stereotypes badly affect thoughts and behaviours. “When he was allowed to whip whomever he can, the husband returned home and whipped his wife” (Hussein 74). Proverbs of the like provoke men to exercise violence on their wives. Proverbs help and support gender legacies and ideologies while associating manliness with strength, and femaleness with inconsistency, powerlessness and indignity. Any discourse based on sexist principles makes of gender inequality a-taken-for-granted issue in all the spheres. Therefore, any behaviour by men showing dominance is never questioned.

American proverbs that go as ‘A woman, a spaniel and walnut tree –the more you beat them the better they be’, ‘A widow is a boat without a rudder’ and ‘When a man is fool his wife will rule’ –among others mentioned by Kerschen (8) also encourage control and domination over and violence against women. Discriminatory mindsets or stereotypes defining women as nurturing, affectionate and caring and which are classified in contrast comparison with man’s authoritarianism and competitiveness expanded the popular perception that they are not fit to be opted for leadership positions.

Another reason that is likely to highly appreciate men than women was demonstrated by the following Oromo proverb which stresses that “Males are the Iron pole of the house, while females are the outside gate that belongs to others” (Hussein 70). The proverb reveals that male children are true kinsmen; on the other hand, female children belong to their husbands and their families in law. Male children are also expected –in almost all societies-- to hold the name of the family and extend their fathers’ masculinity (Hussein 13). Not only do this and other similar proverbs emphasise the worth of men, but they also directly separate men’s and women’s criteria of existence.

It is "through the production of truth" (Foucault 93 cited in Hussein 98) that the dominant groups perpetuate their superior status and their power over the subordinate groups. *Truth* as it is seen and produced by the dominants creates the vicious circle that the subordinates fall within. In all types of human discursive practices, *men* are seen as the normative model of humanity forwarding a multiplicity of stereotypes, among which the one referring to women as socially and emotionally dependent on men, the objective of which is to ensure the weakness and subordination of women.

By producing and reproducing the so-called *truth* (through language and other cultural resources), the dominant group maintains their power (control and domination) and safeguard its legitimacy over the subordinate group. Women often unconsciously participate in naturalising their subjugation by using and maintaining these proverbs. As Freire argues the oppressed or the subordinate become convinced of their inferiority and their worthlessness, for they have been repeatedly told about it through various discourses (40). This feeling of worthlessness may be revealed in excessive obedience, fear of authoritarianism, and fear of independence. Women themselves contribute in perpetuating sexist proverbs, although they carry dangerous effects on them; this is because "appreciating the beautiful imagery of proverbs and their functions, one would neglect their sexist tone" (Oha 94). One necessary part of gender stereotypes spreading are women themselves who fall victims to.

Sexist Proverbs from different cultures interrelate and validate one another. They are linked to general stereotypical beliefs that intensify the idea that women are innately weak and inferior. It is important to note that there are proverbs that keep the same socio-semantic ideologies even in different contexts and under different circumstances. Social structure dictates different statuses and roles for men and women. Sexist proverbs stand as ideological and rhetorical weapons to persuade individuals (mainly women) of their assumed weakness to legitimise exploitation and control of women, and to guarantee their exclusion. This reflects negative attitudes about women and their positions in society.

Language which is constructed in patriarchal culture has been masculinised in the sense that it is used by man to exclude woman, to allot her the position of the *other*, and to emphasise and maintain his dominance. Therefore, women are usually portrayed as foolish,

unreliable, unfaithful, jealous, sexual objects and seductive; the fact that makes them regarded as unworthy and inferior.

Proverbs depicting women convey –to some extent—the power relationship between the sexes, provided that the speaker and the listener share the same schemata, otherwise they cannot make out the meaning of a proverb. They are used to reinforce hegemonic masculinity and male chauvinism. Hence, women get subject to sexual humiliation through gender-based oppression and because of male assumption of power over women (Hussein 60).

Regrettably, however, there is no evidence to demonstrate that these taken-for-granted proverbs (and which negatively depict women whether directly or not) are nothing but man-made sayings that are created to *destroy* woman.

1.4.3. The Representation of Woman in Myths

The ideologies and notions that ancient myths hold are daily, and up today, exercised and transformed through folkloristic practices. To be a woman became a badge of shame and inferiority, this is one among many myths which men promulgate while believing that constructing myths against woman is the best way to control her. According to Simone de Beauvoir, especially men who define themselves as ‘the self’ and women as ‘others’ are likely to experience more masculinity threatening, and hence think that in order for them to feel secure, they have to oppress women. Therefore, the first task they start to accomplish is to create symbols and myths to ensure their subordination and inferiority. Women, on the other hand, get institutionalised and hold it as a destiny to which they are born; this limits them to fully realise their potential at an early age.

Akca and Gunes (1) state that, according to Greek Mythology, the “damned race of women” --as ancient myths appeared to call it-- raised out of the mistake of Pandora⁶. Another source from which the myth of women’s inferiority was derived is the belief that God created Adam first, and Eve was extracted from him; the fact that many view it as a sign of inferiority and weakness for women. Besides, she is also considered to have brought about the greatest collapse for the humanity because of her own weakness⁷ “The

creation of Eve was secondary to and dependent upon the creation of Adam” (Akca and Gunes 2) and thus this has been and remained her *natural* doomed position.

Woman was believed to be mainly driven by her libido and as a consequence she was blamed for the first sin ever committed in the sanctuary of Eden (Weitz 4). Indeed, all women are linked to *Eve* or *Pandora*; the image /identity that is inherited from mother to daughter. These portrayals of women make her perceived of as weak and inferior; and as nothing but the *other*.

Thus, and as far as the representation of women in myths is concerned, woman is “both vulnerable to temptation and a tempter herself, a threat to the moral welfare of mankind ... In consequence, woman, her sexuality, and her reproductive function must be controlled by man ... Thus [the] story of the creation and fall becomes the basis of patriarchy” (Akca and Gunes 2). As a consequence, Women are victimised by their own culture, for it is culture that assumes women as a minority by the stereotypes it instructs the community with through creating myths and many other institutions.

Anthropologists and sociologists, according to Kerschen’s report (1985), see that many stereotypes and proverbs are outgrowths of ancient myths. They are utilised as a tool to maintain the mythical patriarchy that has been established since the beginning of humanity when the caveman –as a powerful hunter and protector-- thought of his power as superior to the cavewoman. Likewise, and since then, *brawn* has been preferred to *brain*; a preference that has labelled the world with a violent history and has worn it the mask of patriarchy codifying male dominance into its law.

Earlier philosophers, on their part, and among whom Aristotle depicted women as men’s natural inferiors; and they related this inferiority to logic and reason (Parker 89-91; Weitz 3). Scientists, as well, had their significant contribution to the myth of woman’s inferiority; Charles Darwin –for instance—defines woman as “constant companion, who will feel interested in one, object to be beloved and played with –better than a dog anyhow –home, and someone to take care of the house” (Darwin 232-233).

1.4.4. The Representation of Woman in Movies, TV, and Newspapers

The portrayal of women and the representation of minority groups, in general, abound on television and other media are stereotypical and are so powerful that they damage them. The messages delivered by cinematic misrepresentations of women are extremely persuasive, and have total power to influence judgments and construct various prejudices against them (Murphy 6). Therefore, it is the main means of indoctrination through its representation and reinforcing of gender inequality.

According to Dragas (67) discourse is a form of social action that is controlled by the mass media and has an ideological function that constitutes society and its culture. Gender duality that is based on traditional views of man and woman is created and reinforced by Media. The different portrayals of males and females in TV and other means of Media are founded on stereotypes (like those portraying men as being born to hold leadership). By way of illustration, Wood (21) argues that newspapers headlines often use word play or catchy words not only to encourage customers buy their products, but also to influence readers to accept certain ideologies; like those related to gender discrimination. Wood maintains that American newspapers virtually represent women as physically and mentally inferior to men.

A case in point may be that of Ike Tuner (a former American singer and musician) who was represented in a US newspaper article headlined as “Ike Turner: Macho Man Beat his Wife to Death”. According to Dragas (73), the article actually reported the news of his death at the age of seventy, with a very slight reference to his having been battering his wife when alive. The title selected for such an article does not objectify its contents. The headline was then misleading but determined and purposeful of expanding women’s weakness and wife abuse legitimising stereotypes. US newspapers, in general, try to persuade readers of men’s social power, dominance and authority over women. (Dragas 75-76) contends that even in great democracies like the USA, the print media still tend to represent women as weak, inferior and sexual objects, and that the news media coverage misrepresents and under-evaluates women.

The strict political and claustrophobic patriarchal family structures generate the psychological and physical violence which blocks and creates obstacles against women's progress in society; this is what the media strive to normalise; "this is the theme of films such as "Touchia" by Benhadj (1992) and "Al-Qual'a" by Chouikh. (1988)" (Bouzid-Discacciati 37).

In movies and other media, women are depicted as trying as hard as possible to conform to their traditional gender traits and roles.

women are [also] represented as striving towards being as beautiful as possible ... they also show traditional traits as well, they show a lot of more emotion than men do, they sometimes are portrayed as feeling guilty for putting their own needs first. A lot of emphasis is put onto being physically attractive and staying young, they also seem ashamed when their relationships do not work very well and this happens when they are portrayed as feeling it their fault for not doing enough to please their men (Ottosson 39).

Viewed in such a way, women are reduced to body, to physical object that is subject to possession. These negative images of woman and that are portrayed through movies, TV shows, magazines, newspapers, books; and so on wreak havoc on the psyche of women. The extensive exposure to stereotypical portrayals make women believe they are indeed as it is rumoured, and consequently start to imitate and live up to the attributes associated with them. Bell Hooks contends that the feeling of powerlessness is learned through media mainly because people are watching without any critical eye (We Real Cool 131).

"Surprisingly, or rather unsurprisingly, post liberation Hollywood films' depictions of women adhere to patriarchal structures, but with time, have masked these messages under the façade of female empowerment and independence" (Dutt 3). As declared by Dutt women were portrayed in Hollywood's films in accordance with the patriarchal standards and structures, and later on these movies started to veil these gendered messages under women's seeming independence and empowerment. Men are often interested in women's beauty rather than power or intelligence. Therefore, fictional heroines created by male writers are usually beautiful. Throughout film construction one is able to conceive how

men and women are depicted and how women are rather objectified for *male gaze* as Mulvey (4) came to use this concept.

The concept of *Femme Fatale* is an archetype which flourished in the 1940's and 1950's, and which referred to woman who transgressed her conventional role of devoted wife or caring mother to a merciless woman who breaks the mainstream norms, but only to build up her own final destruction. This new paradigm of woman is introduced in movies to reveal her final failure as an attempt to discourage women from transgressing tradition. The representation of *Femme Fatale* in 'Film Noir', only aims at sustaining the actual social order by making woman shy away from adopting any act that seems defying to the patriarchal structure. Contrastingly, around the 1970s and 1980s, film production (in Hollywood) was mainly marked by hyper masculine depiction of man's power through the exhibition of muscle obsession as a sign of power and admirable strength.

Dutt (9) affirmed that the image of the "empowered" woman in contemporary films representation requires from her to incorporate male and female characteristics (which is not the case with men) i.e. woman (female character/actor) has to be strong, independent but *beautiful* and *sexy* too. It is important here to note, however, that the strength that woman gets through these movies should not be gained at the expense of man but rather for his own sake. A woman's success in business for example will be a source for her man's pride among his male peers having her as female partner.

Media represents this uneven distribution of gender relation of power through the stereotyped depiction of men and women. Media is the framework for interpretation and messaging of society, and hence plays an imperative role in enhancing or impeding gender equality. In an interview with Tom Sherak (2011), president of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences (best known for their Academy Awards, also referred to as Oscars), he declared that movies can be counted as the most influential cultural products in contemporary life

According to Benedict (21) and Ray (1) woman is portrayed as a sex object, glamour girl and the alluring siren, or as carrying out domestic tasks and/or as a victim who is the natural recipient of harassment and assault in most common visual media like television programs, newspaper, comic books, magazines, film and advertisements. In addition, the

media present women's passivity, dependence and indecisiveness as being rewarded; while characteristics like forcefulness, tenacity, independence... and which are evaluated as good in men are depicted as being prohibited and even punished for women (rape, myth and portrayal of woman in media).

Individuals establish their identities, their sense of selfhood, and construct their notions of maleness and femaleness and this is through media and the different materials of culture they provide; like television films which strongly sway their perception of different issues related to gender, race or class. The female character in films "reflects and perpetuates the status and options of women in today's society" (Kord 1) and thus plays an active part in creating female role models. The responsive reaction of the audience towards the patriarchal ideologies that work at legitimating social inequalities put forward by film producers ensures their circulation in a cyclical process (Dutt 7).

Therefore, misrepresentation of women by sexist movies and which pictures male domination over women and present women as sexual objects helps strengthen and spread the patriarchal culture.

To further illustrate the sexist policy held through drama films, *Orlando* (1992)⁸—and which is loosely based on Virginia Woolf's fiction (1928) where the protagonist's sex changed into a female while believed by the others to be dead—seems a good case in point. This notion mainly appears in the officer's attempt to justify the executer's confiscation of the immortal Orlando's classic and luxurious house: "One, you are legally dead and therefore cannot hold any property whatsoever. Two, you are now a female, which amounts to much the same thing". A *female*, therefore, is estimated as a *dead male* by the patriarchal policy, the fact that signifies subordination and absence of rights. Seen as a feminist work, the film, nevertheless, further extends the assumption that woman 'has a lack' the minute it pictures the same status quo of women rather than reshapes the myths that have been constructed against the female sex.

1.4.5. Women Portrayal by Politicians

Politicians, too, did not miss the representation of woman to discriminate against and underestimate her, and to encourage her inferiority and subordination to man. As described by Strindberg J.A, fiction writer, historian, essayist and politician (1895),

woman is inferior to man; to begin with, her blood is not to be compared with man's, for it resembles that of the child and of the embryo; her spine, too, approaches theirs in formation... woman's skull is closely akin to that of the child and the negro, and the gray matter of the brain is not so dense in the female's as in the male's. *On the other hand, her nerves are much stronger, whence the capacity for supporting physical pain with comparative stoicism* –a capacity which she shares with the savage, whose nervous system is similar... Woman, if she wants equality must drag man down to her level, for she can never attain to his. *The complete success of the emancipation movement would mean struggle against nature* (My use of Italics) (Strindberg cited in Mall 188).

Though too ancient, yet Strindberg's definition of woman serves as a doctrine from which many recent contemporary stereotypes have flourished and are still strong as before. The presence of stereotypes of the like is awkward to women and even paralyses their personal decisions in life as a whole. Although the concept of gender develops and changes according to different socio-cultural contexts and times, it constantly exists in society and continuously laying out the same-but-differently-moulded discrimination against women. The conception of gender is repeatedly reshaping and reinforcing men's dominance.

1.5. Feminism, its tasks and its social reformations

Feminism is a movement and a belief that there exist some injustices against women that seek protest and alteration. Thus, feminism contributes in making complaints that men try to achieve masculinity at the expense of women (Harris 785). Feminists' primary aim is to bring about social change and to end the unjust treatment of women including 'domestic violence'. "Feminism is a method, a way of conceptualizing social relations that reveals aspects of social and political life that are otherwise not seen; such as power dynamics in the family, or the ways in which the denial of equal rights to women is

a more profound denial of women's humanity" (Hirschmann22). Feminism --and until the 1970's-- embodied the philosophy of equality between the sexes.

The term feminism means female-centred with a French origin stem deriving from 'Femme' meaning 'woman', and the suffix 'ism' meaning a social 'movement' or 'ideology'. Feminism, as a literary theory, "examines the way in which literature reinforces or undermines the economic, political, social and psychological oppression of women" (Tyson 90).

Feminists have tried hard to demonstrate that social inequality between the two genders is not ordained by God's or nature's laws, but are rather the result of societal and cultural conditions or ideologies that can and should be altered (Hinding 13). According to feminists, women should be allowed --because they have the right to--lead their lives that conform to their own talents and interests "rather than accept those imposed on them by family, church, or stereotype" (Gassman 9). Feminists may differ in terms of scope, priorities ... but in the end they all seek to achieve the same goal which is equality for all women.

According to Anderson, M.2006, one of the concepts that Feminism attempts to eradicate is 'essentialism'; an ideology supporting the idea that our innate nature determines men as behaving as *men* and women as *women*. Nature is responsible for sex and hence for gender differences. Essentialism gave rise to sex/gender *dualism* which divides the world by presenting contrasts between man and woman. The successful task of Feminism is undeniable in diminishing the gap between the sexes that had once been ever vaster. However it is also unquestionably true that women still suffer from gender discrimination --for instance --as Johannsdottir (8) demonstrates-- women are still regarded as sexual objects, subordinates and weak among many other still -in-use stereotypes. "There have been many important changes in [the American] state policy towards gender relations over the last 150 years but these also include some very significant limitations. The state is still patriarchal as well as capitalist and racist" (Walby 171).

Throughout history and under the shade of patriarchy, and despite the seemingly liberating changes for women towards equality; woman's subordination only altered its

images. Although Feminism marked significant fights against different institutions supporting patriarchy and gender, woman's subordination and marginalisation still exist but under new shapes. "Throughout the years, patriarchy has traditionally had the effect of developing and even controlling our views and ideas. This has been done through the mass media, TV, the fashion industry, etc, where ironically men have been the more powerful gender" (Johannsdottir 31).

Women's rights are still neglected. After the 2nd world war, women were claimed to have gained full equality with men but the truth was different as Storm, H argues, "Equality between men and women has been in the legal sense only. In reality the status of women remains quite different... Most women accept this situation as the way things are, and thus end up relying on men" (Storm 175).

As paradoxically stated by some feminists (like Bianchi et al), more gender equality is apparently gained over time but men and women are nevertheless still unequal. More plainly said, however, gender roles have gained more equality throughout time. Yet, it is women's rights that have risen to meet those of men; not men's reduced to women's; a reasonable thinking that may run as women have become the equals of men while men are still not the equals of women because they are simply superior. In this light, Bianchi, et al affirm that:

Gender roles have become more equal over time. Nevertheless, actual changes have mostly taken place in male-dominant roles, but not in female-dominant roles. Thus, women are nowadays more represented in traditional 'male' roles (e.g. financial support), whereas men's responsibilities did not considerably increase in traditional 'male' roles such as household or child care. (Bianchi et al. Cited in Diekman and Munen 375)

Nowadays, people expect girls/women to adopt traditional male attitudes and attributes, and not vice versa; both in fiction and reality. Thus, females have become more involved in male instrumental activities like financial support..., while males take part only relatively in few female activities, like cooking. Females have bypassed to be pointed at as *tomboys* if behaving as or having the likes and the dislikes of man, while males are still

labelled as transgender if they show inclination towards women's exclusive activities or adopting aspects of feminine gender roles.

Womanism is a term that has been conceptualised in a multiple of ways. "Alice Walker coins the term womanism in a need of some powerful variant for feminism. It was needed to present the issues of black women which were neglected by Feminism" (Discourse of Womanism in *the Third Life*). It is an umbrella term involving different concepts as Peterson states: "A womanist is 'a woman who loves other women sexually and/or non-sexually and has a great appreciation and preference for women's culture', 'women's emotional flexibility', and 'women's strength'. 'Walker further emphasises that a womanist is dedicated to the 'survival and wholeness' of both men and women' " (7). Women's survival and wholeness; it is this last conception of Womanism that Walker stresses in her *Third Life of Grange Copeland*.

1.6. Women Writers, the Voice that Annuls Women's Silence

Women are bound to the unspoken world (silence) that cultural/social institutions force on them. Not only do cultural norms and taboos silence women but also stand as a 'wall' that blocks them from viewing the world around them. These social norms and structures influence women's and men's lives. In order for her to socially secure herself, woman has to endure massive suffering. The female writer uses writing as discreet weapon to destroy this obstructing wall to rebel against the construction of these rules on inter-gender relationships (Nkealah 34).

However, the woman writer suffered constraints by the patriarchal structure that limited her to enunciate what she sees and knows about reality, about the man/woman relations. Woolf, V. (2002) asserts that this patriarchal ideology caused a great loss of woman's artistic talent at the beginning of her writing journey.

Not only writers (female writers) who stood firm against the misrepresentation of woman in literature but young and educated women too strongly reject negative stereotypes that fuel it. Stallman (1998: 50) guided a study that showed that young women too reveal resistance to women in abusive relationships as portrayed in literature. Good

questions are raised by Stallman while examining the literary responses of young women:

1- How does a young woman view stereotypical roles for female characters in traditional American literature? What kinds of roles is a young woman able to imagine for female characters? Does what woman reads as well as the way she reads impact her view of the world and of herself? How are her viewpoints about herself and the world mirrored in her literary responses? These questions help understand how young and educated women regard gender and how they mainly view the concept of woman. According to Stallman, young educated women reject traditional female gender roles that are condemning to women's individual achievements.

What troubles most is not masculinity as a trait, but as a male practice that reinforces the belief that males and females should be seen and treated as different kinds of people, and which eventually, engenders and ensures women's subordination. In this respect, Martin (473) proffers that we should cease to consider gender as an 'attribute' or 'trait' assigned for different persons according to their sex, and shift to evaluate it as cultural practices that impose serious differences between men and women and which eventually create men's superiority to women. However, the more dominance women try to engage in, the more violent their men would turn on them. "The problem is that in acting to compensate for their weaker status by behaving in a dominant fashion, women may unwittingly be reminded by men of their weak position" (Burke and Stets 15). Women seldom do inflict serious or fatal violence on men, and if this type of violence occurs, it is usually in response to years of abuse and oppression by men; which is not the case with male violence (Archer 5).

1.7. Conclusion

Designating behaviours, actions and lifestyles is what is meant by assigning different genders and gender roles. Qualities associated with masculinity and others with femininity are assigned to men and women respectively as two distinct genders. These attributes, however, are divided and classified according to gender to create the discrimination against and the victimisation of women. Therefore, despite the creation of gender and gender roles is generating limitations for both groups, it is discriminating against women.

Providing the hard interrelation between fiction and reality and the way Walker raises the issue of male violence on women in *the Third Life of Grange Copeland*, by revealing its motives, consequences and even suggesting solutions, the novel invokes approaching it as a discourse about the real life. Therefore, many parts of this thesis appear to be –to some extent-- interdisciplinary.

Gender construction, gender role polarisation, power dynamics within the family; women's inferiority and submissiveness, men's superiority and independence, male dominance and other issues and that lead to wife abuse and male violence on women in general; all governed a great area in Alice Walker's novel *the Third Life of Grange Copeland*. Each of these issues has been raised and tackled by Walker in an attempt to debate the causes leading to domestic violence phenomenon. The novel, therefore, serves as a well-covered research material for this study.

NOTES

1. Sexism exists among each gender group against the other; however, the most hostile sexism is the one oriented towards women.
2. Mothers are the natural and primary source and figure to socialise children of both sexes at an early age.
3. In the Arab culture, the term *wlia* /^{Wlia}/is a stereotypical and connotative label conveying the weakness of women and their dependency on and necessary need of male guidance and protection. Woman needs to be protected and controlled by a *wali* /^{Wali}/, and which means a *guide*, or a *protector*. These types of unfair epithets wrongly coerce women into their subservient position.
4. Strong of back, long armed and incapable of destruction.
5. These proverbs are Japanese translated by Storm (1992)
6. According to the myth, Pandora is the first female god/goddess of fertility who was sent by supreme god Zeus to humankind accompanied by a sealed jar (others said box) and which he warned not to open; and which she however opens in her way because of curiosity. Opening the jar, she released –by that—many evils into the whole world (among which poverty, illnesses, and old age).
7. Eve is considered by many misogynists to be weak for her easy temptation by Satan to eat from the forbidden fruit --of the forbidden tree that he proffered to be the tree of life and knowledge—and so, and in her turn, she tempted Adam to do.
8. Written and Directed by Potter, S; Produced by Sheppard, Ch; Schneid, H (ed); 1st acted in Venice).

Chapter Two: Gender Representation in the Third Life of Grange Copeland

CHAPTER TWO
GENDER REPRESENTATION IN THE THIRD LIFE
OF GRANGE COPELAND

“One is not born woman but becomes one” (De Beauvoir 1).

In terms of power relationships, *the Third Life of Grange Copeland* --as a feminist novel-- seems to be heavily weighted in favour of men. In this novel, as well as in other works by Walker, the author tackles the predicament that women encounter in a patriarchal society. Through an excellent portrayal of male characters’ masculinity and female characters’ femininity, the author has well depicted gender discrimination against women, and the low and subordinate status of woman as dictated and imposed by her society. Hence, a critical question seems imperative and which can be expressed as: to what extent are men masculine and women feminine in *the Third Life of Grange Copeland*? This question, however, implies a range of other crucial and important questions that we are going to discuss in the present chapter.

Through a primary reading of the novel, all male characters seem to be dominant and all exhibit different traits of masculinity, while all women characters seem subordinate and inferior and hence reveal different traits of femininity. If we consider men characters as demonstrating hyper masculine identity, what is then behind this masculine attitude? Moreover, if we consider that this submissiveness and this weakness of the female characters as signs of femininity; hence, answering a multitude of questions will seem necessary --such as, to what extent are they submissive to their men? What really causes female characters’ weakness, subordination and submission? --these are questions among others that the critical reading of the text regards as necessary.

Distinction devoted to discriminate between gender roles of men and women seems to yield rational explanation to the questions raised above, yet confusion would necessarily encounter one while trying to applying it to Walker’s text because of the various and possible interpretations they can detect out of it.

One may not fail to notice gender performativity in *the Third Life of Grange Copeland* where men enjoy higher status and more privileges than women do. What distinguishes black men's lives are power, domination, and superiority to women; and thus what highlight black female characters' lives in the novel are weakness, subordination and inferiority. Female characters undergo subordination and subservience both in the private and the public spheres. Is it her role in the family or in society that lays as a primary source for woman's subordination? This is a crucial question that raises unavoidable debate over men's superiority and women's inferiority in *the Third Life of Grange Copeland*.

2.1. Gender Construction in the Family

Although the concept or the theme of gender is universal, it seems necessary to historically and geographically contextualise it while dealing with male characters' masculinity and female characters' femininity in *the Third Life of Grange Copeland*. The novel can be read as a feminist discourse pitted against gender discrimination and male domination among the black American community in the era from the 1920s to the 1960s; it is a critical intervention of both black masculinity and femininity.

Out of the black American family dynamics as they appear in the novel, readers can figure out how the characters become gendered. All male characters strive to prove masculine, while all female characters confirm traditional female gender roles. They learn from an early age to submit to their fathers' violence, to male violence; they learn to be feminine. "She [woman] has to think and eat and live in the shadow of men. She may be patronised and spiritualised. Still she --identified as a daughter or a mother or a wife but not as 'she'" (Pushpanathan 66).

Walker uses a vivid depiction of daughters living under the oppression and tyranny of fathers through Josie's childhood, and that of Brownfield's daughters. Their miserable childhoods serve as a catalyst for experiencing another form of violence (which is male violence) in their adulthoods. Home violence, patriarchy and father's tyranny, this is in general the atmosphere surrounding daughters in *the Third Life of Grange Copeland*. Brownfield neglects and tortures his three daughters; Mem's father abandons her and refuses to recognise her, or acknowledge his paternity to her; and Josie's father commits incest on her, tortures and refuses to help her. Each illustrates the discouraging start of

black women in the novel. What is rather odd in the case, however, is both of Josie's and Mem's fathers are preachers. They preach and appeal for good relationships between all people "love thy neighbour" [they are used to say], "*but did they dare to learn why they had no love for themselves and only anger for their children*" (154). They preach for goodness, virtues, equality and love; yet, they hate, torture and dominate their women (wives and daughters).

Pressures exercised by the family –and mainly by fathers- on daughters are responsible for developing such a deteriorating behaviour in them. "The increasing pressures on girls to assume feminine gender roles limit their aspiration, behaviour, and conceptions of the self to those congruent with their future roles of wife and mother and therefore, lead females to be more vulnerable to depression and anxiety" (Barrett and White 453). The family leads girls to take on feminine gender roles and attitudes, i.e. they are provided with no other possible options that may help them develop great potentials; and make them achieve a whole, healthy and balanced personality. Girls are born to follow only one single grid to build up their *wholeness*; and which is that of *femaleness*. Therefore, they are supplied with only one *part* to create their *whole* identities.

All female characters experience bad relationships with their fathers. As children, they are physically abused, abandoned, or badly treated in general. This father-daughter relationship gives the impression of how black fathers in *the Third Life of Grange Copeland* lower their daughters' self-esteem and increase their submissive characters. Fathers and their bad treatments to their daughters help create and develop the *female gender* in them. They provide them with terror, hatred and indifference while they need compassion and support. Brownfield who, "*had given them [his daughters] weakness when they needed strength, made them powerless in front of any enemy that stood beyond them*" (227). Fathers, therefore, grow in their daughters the grains of fear, of feeling 'small' in front of him, in front of any white oppression, in front of man and society as a whole.

'To remember daddy when he was good'¹ is the favourite game Brownfield's daughters usually play in secret. The game refers to their lack of affection, to their need of

love. They need a supporter, or in a word, they require a 'father' with every single sense that the term may connote or convey.

The dream they keep having and that of killing their father also conveys their strangled freedom and their suffocate personality. This recurrent dream (both as day and night dream) also implies that –besides fear- his cruelty and violence generate hatred and revulsion against him. Fear of and hatred against him merge in his daughters' tiny hearts.

Fathers and daughters are portrayed as strangers in *the Third Life of Grange Copeland*. No beautiful feelings seem to be exchanged between them, for fathers do not hold any affection, nor do they show any other beautiful emotions towards their daughters. At the graduation ceremonies, "when Rossel sat down again with them she looked as if she might like to fling herself into her father's arms. Father and daughter gazed at each other with eyes like closing doors" (190). Daughters, then, feeling fatherless, lose self-confidence, self-esteem, and the feeling of security.

Fathers –like Brownfield- blight their daughters' lives. Daphne, Ornette and Ruth deeply wish it that their father would fall on a knife so that they could jab his heart out. This refers to his excessive oppression on them, to their feelings of weakness in front of him, and their assumption that they can do nothing but "*dreaming in chilly exactness of killing that would set them free*" (92). Woman, hence, associates every necessary reaction needed from her with dreams, thoughts, and she never tries to show it in 'actions'. She never makes her 'rebellion' a reality. Her freedom and rebellion find room and live only in her imagination, they are never to find any other exit to reality, and thus, woman can never vanquish her fears and impotence.

Josie as any other black female child in the novel experiences all kinds of abuse by her father –both as emotional and physical. Her father neglects, batters, and tortures her, and he eventually rapes her. Not only does he deprive her of his empathy and affection, but he also expels her from home at the age of sixteen. Realising that his daughter conceives, he discards her from his life altogether.

The bad treatment that Josie is subject to by her father during her childhood weakens her personality and makes her lose the sense of self-confidence. The nightmare she keeps having (even during her late adulthood) may represent how this cruelty and violence affect Josie psychologically, and how it lowers her self-esteem. Likewise, the deep psychological vulnerability that Josie develops reflects the torturing childhood that she led because of her father's violence. As it is clearly mentioned in the text, and as Walker's omniscient narrator reports, it is her father who strangles her every night in dreams. He appears to her as a demon riding her in the dark. Stewart (281) clearly stated that the demon or vague pressures that attack people in dreams really represent the parent's cruelty.

Josie escapes her father's actual violence only to return to it while pursuing her in dreams as an adult (and indeed as an old woman). Dreams generally reflect what people really think; they are copied images of the psyche (Grotstein xxvii). Hence, Josie's recurrent nightmare illustrates her feelings of fear, of weakness, of being dominated, insecure and unfairly treated; and above all, of being failed by her own father. Josie dreams every night of the last night that she spent in her father's home and which she considers the cruellest. She feels her father "*racing her heart with fear ...It was her father who rode Josie, stifled through the night*". (38). As an old woman, Josie still sees him strangling her in dreams.

Weak and unbalanced personality; this is in general what the author alludes to by employing the character Josie –as a black woman subject to her father's torture. Consequently, she and all the other female characters come to convey the absence of self-confidence and 'fear' of fathers (and men in general). Every violent treatment, every show of contempt and of neglect by fathers makes daughters feel 'unwanted' and 'unworthy'. Thus, Josie, being expelled and even beaten by her father, feels wronged and failed by him. Mem too, feels small and unprotected because of her father's neglect². Mem, likewise, could get no better image for a father, for a male in general, than that of a cruel monster. Both cases (of Josie and Mem) convey –more or less- the same notion; daughters' need to their fathers' help and support which is responded by fathers' refusal of their daughters, and their torture and violence on them on the other hand.

Women's feelings of defencelessness (both as physical and moral) in front of 'man' expand through the whole text. It is basically noticeable in Josie and her exposure to relentless rape that is followed by horror and distress diagnosed by the terrible nightmare which currently recurs to her. Josie wants to escape rape (which is one type of physical violence exercised by different men on her), she therefore, asks for help and support from her father who refuses her, and who tortures her in front of his guests by harshly pressing and beating her belly, which has been big with a child (though he widely welcomes the money and the presents she offers him and which she lately gains from prostitution). How would he protect her and he himself was one of her rapists? How would he protect her and he intends to destroy her? Josie and all the other female children in the novel are meant to bring up so as to destroy and subordinate. They are prepared to grow into weak, unimportant and submissive wives; into *feminine* females.

Brownfield institutes legal proceedings against his father in order to regain his daughter's custody, to create a miserable life for her especially after her mother's death. His intention is to own her, especially that after the death of Mem, he does not find any subordinate creature to oppress, for her sisters too have left him³. In the court of justice, and being conscious of her father's malicious plots against her, Ruth desperately looks at her father and refuses to be brought up by him; by "a father who'd never wanted her by a man who knew and cared nothing about them. Any of them. Just a man who was allowed to play God" (245). Walker, here, shifts to a more powerful language to refer to man's extreme authority that is obtained from and justified by unfair social codes of gender. The distribution of power between the two sexes is unfair. The expression, "*Man is allowed to*", reflects that hegemonic masculinity and patriarchal violence is systemically and institutionally established, allowed and condoned.

The rather powerful articulation, however, that Walker lately resorts to is that of *playing God*. This, and other enunciations in the novel, represent the higher status of man; Walker's expressions are used to voice the fact that the world is *man's*, to say that his power is and should be *extreme* and to clarify the fact that his domination is absolute. Hence, *to play God* is a discursive unit in *The Third Life of Grange Copeland* which clearly depicts the fact that men have the right to dominate and own women.

Gilligan and Brown (5) reason that young women who are subject to their fathers' violence respond and react by losing voice and confidence in their thoughts, and therefore, become withdrawn and silent. Their vulnerability to physical manipulation and psychological penetration make them lose their identity as human beings. Silence and submission are the best labels attributed to women. Thus, fathers in *The Third Life of Grange Copeland* try -by all the means- to make their daughters learn their *right* position, i.e. to correctly conduct themselves in accordance with the accepted norms of society. Patriarchy and social institutions have militated against women's expression both in society and at home.

Witnessing their father's humiliation of their mothers rests as an alarming message about their own inferiority and weakness. Female children characters grasp their subservient position from their family atmosphere. Mem's daughters' reaction to their father's humiliation of their mother makes them grow in constant scare of their future as females.

Gender stereotyping is acquired and developed over childhood as argued by Barrett and White (454). *Genderisation* is productively associated with socio-cultural factors. It is thus strongly interconnected with witnessing such social and cultural facts like family violence. For instance, male children who witness wife abuse (violence that their fathers commit on their mothers) are more likely to become wife abusers in adulthood (See chapter one). Brownfield and Grange -as father and son-fit as the best demonstration of such a notion, regarding that being a son of a masculine father, Brownfield grows into a hyper masculine man himself.

Margaret's excessive and exaggerated obedience and submission to Grange is so apparent that her ten-year-old son (Brownfield) likens her to their dog (5). She could never achieve a level of independency from her husband that gives her enough power that is necessary to make her rely on herself and to survive whole. Josie, too, is very submissive to Grange. Even Josie's mother seems to obey her husband abundantly though she -in reality- never agrees with his stands or decisions.

The black female character tries to gain her partner's compassion to reduce his violence on her. "*Women attempt to heal abusive men through their love, understanding and patience*" (Anderson 656). This is, generally, the strategy adopted by women in *The Third Life of Grange Copeland* to deal with male chauvinists. While he afflicts her with different types of assaults, she reacts with patience and abundant kindness. This is how Walker describes the black woman's submission to her man who exhibits himself as a misogynist opponent and who rather requires challenge than compassion.

The repetition of the same strategies through different incidents and different characters makes the reader perceive that women know that nothing supports them; nothing is there to protect them. Men consider women's valuable characteristics or deeds as malice. This is actually what happens with Mem, Margaret and Josie who are always kind and submissive and who are always punished. Whatever these women do, it incites violence against them. All male characters, not notably Brownfield, feel that their women are trying to challenge their authority and thus they punish them for a wrong they have never done. Women's subordination which has been socially constructed entails their eternal suffering.

This view is further demonstrated by Dobash and Dobash (137) who claim that "For a woman simply to live her daily life she is always in a position which almost anything she does may be deemed a violation of her wifely duties or a challenge to her husband's authority and thus defined as the cause of the violence she continues to experience". In this sense, male dominance is due to man's belief in woman's crucial inferiority. Man considers any attempt by woman to show any value as striving to rise for power (which is forbidden by society), and therefore demands a hasty reaction from him to turn her back into her right position.

The novel also tackles the issue of forced marriage while Josie unfolds her story with Grange to Brownfield. Josie reveals to him that she has always been a lover to Grange and since their teenage, and that his mother, Margaret has been a victim of forced marriage. Although she starts loving him after marriage, Margaret has been forced to have Grange—who shortly afterwards turns into a monster-- for a husband. The author does not seem to be so generous as far as providing details about the relationship taking place

between Margaret and her father; the only incident reported is that of the arranged marriage between her father and Grange's family, to which she has not agreed.

Hooks, B (1982) insists on the fact that dominating violence begins first with violence parents (and mainly fathers) do to female children and develops into male violence against women. I believe that it is this dominating violence that brings about women's weakness and self-effacement. It is what destroys their self-evidence, stifles their rebellious spirit, and increases their feelings of 'worthlessness'. Radu (4) admits that the nature of the father-daughter relationship has a considerable impact on their daughters' male-female relationships (with their future husbands). Fathers' violence on daughters prepares their very exposure to husbands' abuse, to male violence. Father's mistreatment and contempt of their daughters creates their vulnerability to other forms of humiliation by others.

Socio-economic discomfort, along with racial discrimination, distorts black male characters' identities. The world where young Brownfield inhabited was surrounded by poverty, indifference and violence without any safety net. It is, hence, so easy for one to be drawn into a web of violence when everybody that is able to help is involved within this violent world. The patriarchal society where he (and every other male character) lives is mirrored in his family setting. Grange's physical absence, therefore, does not change anything, for he supplies neither financial nor emotional support for them. "For all men and boys fatherhood can potentially be a contradictory experience; good fatherhood practices are described as incorporating both financial and emotional investment in children" (Gill 189).

Grange—in his first stage of life—appears as one supporter of masculinity through being a bad father to Brownfield as an act revealing toughness and as opposing to women's nurturing role. Walker clearly represents Grange—in his first life-- as reinforcing gender stereotypes in his family while strictly polices determined masculinity through treating his son Brownfield—who was noticeably feminine and who gradually learns to be masculine until he turns into a male chauvinist. Long before Grange deserts his family and heads North, Brownfield has felt himself fatherless. Grange's indifference, and his unwillingness and inability to interact with his son imply that Brownfield is effectively living far from his

--or else, without a-- father. The father-son relationship enjoys no opportunity to survive in *The Third Life of Grange Copeland*. Grange never acknowledges his son; “talking to his son was a strain, a burdensome, requirement” (5), for he believes it a sign of nurturance that is associated with femininity and as a threat to his masculine identity. He then strives to hide all his emotions lest this would make him be viewed and seen as feminine. Financial and emotional investments, these two qualities are absolutely absent within the scope of father-son relationship while referring to Grange and Brownfield as father and son. Grange could afford nothing to his son; and hence, he represents nothing of a good father. Out of this type of family atmosphere, Brownfield learns to grow, himself, into a tough, uncaring and violent father on his own children.

Although, fathers neglect and are violent on their sons too, they prefer to have boys rather than girls as children. Men are highly valued than women that most families (parents) would rather have sons than girls for children. Newport (2011) explains that “if Americans could have only one child; they would prefer it to be a boy rather than a girl, by a 40 % to 28 % margin, within the rest having no preference or no opinion on the matter. These attitudes are remarkably similar to what Gallup measured in 1941, when Americans preferred a boy to a girl by a 38 % to 24% margin” (1). In some regions of the world, son preference is a prevalent issue. It is assumed to occur primarily in China, India and South Korea, but in fact this phenomenon exists everywhere in the world.

Son preference is a form of gender discrimination and based on the belief that it is more socially, economically, religiously and politically advantageous to have sons and not daughters. Son preference is a common characteristic of most cultures and countries. The strength of the preference varies by culture, class and point in history, and can be expressed in overt and subtle ways, ranging from more familial support and approbation for boys to less food, education and health care for girls. Son preference includes a range of attitudes that can lead to gender biased beliefs and actions, and that are premised on notions of the existence of only two genders. At its core, son preference depends on stereotypical ideas that boys and girls are limited in what they can do based on their biological sex. (Jesudason 2).

2.2. Subordination Brought by Society/The social Construction of Gender Identity in *the Third Life of Grange Copeland*

Man/woman, male/female, or whatsoever; the names vary to differentiate and to distinguish between the two sexes, so what about the roles? If they are to be considered as two distinct statuses -assigned for men and women-, then is one born with specific roles in society or is it society that assigns different roles for different sexes? Who is the subordinate, and who is to be the dominant, the cracker? Who or what draws this barrier between men and women's roles?

Several traditional gender roles as assigned to men and women can be detected from this novel. Through every-day practices, socio-cultural norms convey sex and gender assumptions which reveal inequalities that are *androcentric* (Pérez 33). Gender roles that black female characters accomplish in the novel are all reflecting shared social expectations about traditional female gender roles and behaviours. Typical female traits and roles that can be noticed throughout the different passages of the narrative in regard to female characters are portrayed through describing women as being responsible for cooking, washing the clothes, cleaning the house, caring for and supplying the children with love and warmth, gardening , and responding to male's sexual desire.

Approaching these problematic issues from a gender-based notion means to evaluate the Afro-American society as patriarchal, and to view Grange and Brownfield – the main male characters of the novel- as sexist and as misogynist. This would be the overall perspective to be followed in this chapter. Gender polarisation creates patriarchy which produces a world where male values are the predominant and female values are peripheral. Does the pair 'Dominant, Subordinate' refer to fitting labels to polarise different roles for men and women in the family or rather in society as a whole? This is the question that proves controversial throughout different previous generations.

In *the Third Life of Grange Copeland*, the conception of 'masculinity' appears to be overloaded with strength, privilege and with societal protection. Puzzling over her father's oppression and tyranny on them, Ornette, Brownfield's daughter, wishes "*to be a man and protect her [sister]*" (91). Her wishes (and her dreams alike) reflect the fact that society

deprives her, as a female, of different social advantages that warrant men with strength and power (for being males). She recognises the fact that all what her father does reflects his maleness; he does it because society supports him and condones his actions and attitudes. As long as she, her two sisters and her mother too were born female, they could not escape; they could ensure no societal protection from oppression. Ornette's wishes portray *man* as a symbol of strength, authority, and mainly violence. She reasons that were she a man she could meet her father's violence with the same violence and hence she would set herself, her sisters and her mother free. Trying to be a man is a woman's attempt to escape from femininity that brings her fear and depression. However, women's being females remains a reality whether they like it or not; the fact that creates a permanent contradiction within themselves and eventually sadness and suffering. Many women constantly believe that they are inferior only because they are women (female), this further reflects *feminine slavery*. Whereas, no man would say 'I am nothing but a *man/male*', on the contrary you may hear him say, and under certain circumstance 'I feel inferior because I am not a man'. This feeling of inferiority, however, is not permanent because it does not correspond with what he really is (man/male) (Daco 35).

Leary, et al. (155) and Eagly and Karau (576) accuse society and its culture as loading the subordinate groups (mainly women and blacks) with negative conceptions about the deficiency of their minds and bodies. In this sense, women –as females- try to behave in accordance to what their sex prescribes for them to do. Young women in the novel (like Daphne, Ornette, Ruth, and Josie –the young Josie) receive negative messages from society about their bodies, their minds and their worth, and they consequently start to feel weak, and in the worse cases, worthless.

A good illustration seems that of the *History* book cover of Ruth's class at school, on which she notices a drawing of "one old man, smoking a long feather-covered pipe. Some women were sitting next to him making beautiful rugs and pottery and baskets" (186). The drawing content is designed to teach school pupils at an early age (like Ruth) of gender differences and gender role distributions. Inferiority and subordination to men; this is what young girls come to learn from their culture.

To create their inferior status, society excludes women from culture-content-decision making. Regarding the legitimacy of gender ideology and notions of patriarchy, good questions were raised by Greiff; “but are these practices really part of an ‘authentic’ cultural tapestry? Who is speaking of these ‘cultures’? Whose interests do they represent? And where are the voices of women themselves when it comes to culturally and religiously justified VAW [violence against woman]?” (3).

Greiff provides answers for her questions declaring that women have no voices in their own culture tapestry. Culture is a social product that is constructed and reflected through interaction between all the members of the same society. In accordance with the aforementioned, women are deprived of the right to speak up or defend themselves and their rights as members of society. What mostly matters here is power, as key concept for the degradation of woman and that is caused by gender inequalities. Traditional messages are the societal beliefs and practices and which relate men to power and authority that subsequently engender imbalances at the level of gender equality and which legitimate the use of violence on women.

Throughout the different passages of her novel, Walker tries to transmit what society states a woman is. Society dictates the identity and the role of woman. “A woman must call a man Mister” (77), “she wishes to be a man” (91), and many other statements enunciate the social instructions and definitions of the conceptions of man and woman. Women characters are startled by the idea that –as women- they are weak, unprotected and even useless. This takes shape explicitly in the fear of Ruth, the adolescent girl, of her being a woman, of her being defenceless. She starts to conceive that her femaleness makes of her owned, dominated and easily and legally offended “*against her will, and her mind*” (193). Her defencelessness allows rape –not only on her body- but also on her *mind*. She is forced to believe in her inherent weakness (162), which indeed scares her and really tortures her mind. Walker seems to well implement her enunciation ‘*Against her mind*’ as the woman’s *mind* is *terrorised* by false assumptions that condemn and castigate her. Most importantly, woman is constrained to abide by all the attributes stipulated to her as a woman.

By the expression *inherent weakness*, Walker points to women weakness as non-innate but as being a *legacy that* grows out of stereotyped ideologies foisting on women

the inferiority and worthlessness of the female gender. Being, or seeming, strong is shameful to women because this would introduce them as boyish girls –*tomboys*-- to the world. Therefore, Women do not find any other alternatives but to consent to these cultural prescriptions because no one would do them justice. Abuse and weakness, marginalisation and victimisation have become woman's *history* and *legacy*.

Feminine identity is imposed on women characters in Alice Walker's work. Women are living with an identity that has been forced on them by culture (through family and society). Their people and the heritage that has been passed on to them as Southern black women lay a legacy that makes them emotionally and mentally confused and unstable (and which become part of their identity and identity crisis). In her request of the self, not only the legacy of being a woman that hinders the black woman to match her real identity; but also the physical, sexual and emotional abuses by men and which make her not knowledgeable about who she really is. Identity confusion makes it difficult to fight oppression or even recognise her rights and distinguish her needs in a male supremacist society.

Weakness and obedience are two symbols of the image destined by society to determine and conceptualise the picture of woman, one generation after the other. '*Inherited weakness*' implies the contribution, or rather the conviction, of culture, of society as imposing such a position and such a status for woman, particularly for the black woman. Likewise, black female characters' notion of a 'woman' seems to be the same as that of their men. It is a general societal belief that men condone and that women are forced to accept and submit to.

Hence, every black woman in this novel avoids showing any apparent strength or superiority in front of her man. She resorts to weakness; inferiority and submissiveness because nothing (not even society) is there to support or uphold her superiority. Neither society nor culture approves women's ascendancy. Therefore, women abide by these societal prescriptions, whether willingly or reluctantly.

"She [Josie] was big-hearted, generous; she could have love in spite of all that had gone wrong in her life" (156). Big-heartedness, love, nurturance, forgiveness; these are in

general the qualities that –not only Josie, but-- all Walker’s female characters seem to embody. This is because, and according to the traditional female gender, a woman has to be virginal and pure; otherwise she is viewed as a curse (Carabi77). All the cultural and social institutions surrounding her impose gender stereotypes that women believe them as female duties. “Her inherent weakness, covered over momentarily by the wretched muscular hag, had made her ashamed of her own seeming strength” (162). Women are made to believe, even socially and culturally brainwashed, that their natural position is subordination and weakness. Mem is ashamed of her natural strength, and hence she does her best to further humble herself. Consequently, she resigns her education, her profession as a teacher, and even switches her formal speech with a black rural one; the minute she feels them reporting a kind of superiority that is threatening to her husband’s.

Femininity is also an inherited identity that passes on from mother to daughter. “Inherent weakness” (162) refers to the fact that Mem learns *weakness*, which is the core trait of femininity, from society and mainly from the family. It is not woman’s physiology or biology that creates her feminine identity; it is a matter of socialisation which is mainly based on social imitation (the observation of the behaviours of other significant people in her life) that dooms her and all the other women in the novel as weak and feminine.

Thus, masculinity and femininity are two concepts that should be identified at the level of discourse --and which guarantees this inherence of gender-- than individual embodiment.

Men are however supposed to inherit strength from society. Brownfield is too obsessed by his being a male and he is rather engrossed in proving his manliness. He thinks, and this thus hurts him a great deal, that he –as a black man—is denied the privileges of being and acting as a man that other men enjoy. A vivid illustration for Brownfield as a chauvinist male rests in his saying “‘How come we the only ones that knowed we was men?’ Leaning heavily on his pencil, Brownfield wrote m-e-n, then waited glumly for the word to rise and beat its chest. ‘Well, that was us’, he said” (166). Carrying on the role of Walker’s spokesman, Brownfield –the child—enunciates his, and hence the author’s opinion about black men as they take “pride only in [their] bigness” (9). Sarcastically, the author refers to the only quality that distinguishes men from women. According to Brownfield, men do not possess any positive qualification but their physical

strength as compared to women and children –like him. Other distinctive qualities, like dominance and superiority are thus founded and imposed by society.

Through the reproduction of the lives of black families in the narrative, one may guess that the inter-gender relationships between male and female characters focus on the assertion of male dominance over women. Lawrence-Webb; Littlefield and Okundaye (630) believe that black men's aggressive behaviour on their women is contributory and instrumental for maintaining control and dominance over them, which is a privilege and a masculine gender role.

The text's discursive formation is built upon the principle that reveals the woman of colour as really experiencing a strong kind of oppression. Thus, being 'black' and 'female' stands as two penalising criteria for black female characters in this novel: the black woman is rejected and humiliated because of 'racism', and at the same time, she is dominated and tortured because of 'sexism'. It also reveals the American society as to take for granted that the inevitable position for any black woman is subordination. In addition, this is, I think, what makes it crucial for her to opt for this subservient position (by adopting the submissive character) though she does not really favour it. The word 'inherent weakness' may best illustrate and demonstrate this interpretation.

By portraying the ultimate oppression and suffering of the black woman, the author's intent is likely to shed light on racism as having its own regulation to bring about her weakness. Norton and Alexander (344-345), and Hooks (*Ain't I a Woman* 120) focus on the fact that the whites' oppression prevents black women from directing some of their attention to other issues. They seek survival (in front of the whites' racism and oppression) and to realise it, they feel it necessary even to sacrifice their personal dignity in front of their men's. Therefore, black female characters forgive and justify their own men's guilt. "*They [the whites] just made him do things when he didn't mean them*" (206); these are Josie's words exonerating Grange's indifference to her and his violence on Margaret (his first wife). Hence, the oppression and racial discrimination exercised by the whites on the blacks blind black women from seeing other issues, from seeing other plagues, namely genderism and sexism.

2.2.1. Assimilation and Otherness

Masculinity refers to a set of norms, values and behavioural patterns of how men should and are expected to be, act and represent themselves to others (Lindsay and Stephen 4). However, masculinity, which is a cultural construct, is founded in accordance with stratified structures of power relationships. According to Connell (an Australian sociologist), masculinity is not only a behavioural norm or a type of character; but it is part of “the process of relationships through which men and women conduct gendered lives” (Masculinities 71). Hence, masculinity and femininity exist only in relation to one another; if no femininity exists, no masculinity would develop, and vice versa. “Woman is the ‘other’. The masculine model can only exist in opposition to the supposedly feminine characteristics of cowardice, weakness, lack of dexterity, disloyalty, stupidity, evil cunning, and garrulity” (Carabi 77). Thus, masculinity and femininity are not natural given but rather cultural, social and historical constructs slightly varying from one culture to another and from one generation to another. They, both, are varying socio-cultural-historical formations.

So, instead of pointing the finger of blame at the frustration and oppression that all the blacks –men and women-- are enduring at the hands of the whites, black characters should first hold themselves accountable for failing to alter the gender ideology that is empowering men at the expense of women

2.2.2. Masculinity Chauvinism

While tackling this novel in accordance with gender perspectives, it seems necessary to examine the misogynist disposition of male characters. Hegemonic masculinity and masculinity chauvinism prevail in the personality of all male characters in Walker’s narrative. Hegemonic masculinity is “the configuration of gender practices which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of legitimacy, which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and the subordination of women” (Connell 77). What mostly demonstrates this notion is Brownfield’s speech to Mem and which is always loaded with masculine authority and implied misogyny. His threats to her are techniques for intimidation that he uses to gain control and domination over her, and which reflect his *hyper-masculine* character. Walker also illustrates her claim of chauvinistic masculinity by referring to men’s refusal to do house works or to take care of

the children for –according to them—it brings shame and humiliation that convey a loss of masculinity, and that eventually (and which often happens in this novel) may lead to rage and therefore to violence against women.

Traditional Masculinity is clearly defined by Alice Walker while depicting young Brownfield's conception of a man, “ as a small child all men had seemed to merge into one, they were exactly alike, all of them having the same smell, the same feel of muscled hardness when they hold him against their bodies, the same disregard for smallness. They took pride only in their own bigness” (8). Hence, according to Walker, all men are alike, masculine chauvinists, misogynists, dominant, proud –or rather arrogant--, powerful and scornful of weakness (for society grants them with the necessary power).

Oddly put, however, is the mild treatment of Brownfield to his wife, Mem, in the first three months of their marriage. Plain reading may lead us to believe that being outraged because of frustration (resulting from the whites' racism, oppression and excessive poverty and constant debt) turns him into a human monster. However, a close scrutiny of the text reveals his *maleness* and Mem's *femaleness* (and which reflects cues of weakness) as motivating him to boss around, dominate, even oppress and torment her.

As patriarchy is engrained in the African American culture and hence becomes apparent at all societal and family levels, gender inequality prevails in the text and is clearly noticed through men's rejection of embodying any quality or performing any action that would introduce them as feminine. Concomitantly, women wistfully regret being females also demonstrate their awareness of gender preference bias against them. Too fine, authentic, debatable, and nevertheless *ironic*, questions have been raised by Mbele (23) about the legitimacy of gender roles prescribed for men and women“... in most societies, it is women who do the cooking. We can ask: is it impossible for a man to cook? Did God decree these customs? Would it harm anybody if we changed them?” (Mbele 23). These questions seem to be mainly addressing male chauvinists and biological essentialists (i.e. those who believe that men and women own intrinsically distinct natures and characteristics).

Brownfield sees Mem as a servant who should always be ready to gratify his pleasures. He rather sees every woman's crucial existence as to ensure man's pleasure and comfort. Domesticity is clearly confined to the female gender. This may be apparent in his saying; "*you ought to stay home yesterday... If you acted like a woman with some sense we'd had ice*" (83). These are Brownfield's reactive words to Mem when gently reminding him that there is no ice for drinks at home. He wants –and expects- her to accomplish all the house tasks alone⁴.

As mentioned earlier, Walker depicts how men believe and are convinced by the false belief that women are created only to serve them. Walker represents the notion of gender role distribution between husband and wife through Brownfield and Mem's interrelationship. Brownfield regards Mem as a servant to gratify his pleasures. He rather believes that her crucial existence is to please and comfort him. His desire and expectation is seeing her well accomplishing the housework. Men's refusal to do house works or to take care of the children conveys that these duties reveal a loss of their manhood and even bring shame and humiliation; feelings which would provoke violence by men on women.

Hence, he assumes a kind of generalisation that makes him take it for granted that women's duties are restricted to the domestic sphere and that her role is inevitably pleasing and gratifying men. "Cultural, social, legal, economic and etiquette practices place the male in the dominant authority position in this structure, transforming him into the guest who is served, his spouse into a servant-mistress, and the house into a residential hotel" (Denzin 486).

Hegemonic masculinity leads him not only to commit violence on his woman but also to urge her submit to his patriarchal authority in order to make him feel man, and a human being, to make him feel a whole. Thus, men's chauvinism creates and constructs women's submissiveness. Consequently, they start to intensify and diversify violence against them. Their argument then seems to be the same as Brownfield's (that of 'I am the man' and 'a woman ought to call a man mister' (195)) as a motto he assigns for their relationship. It is a matter of power relationships that is implied through men-women interactions, where men coerce, control, and influence the lives of women.

The character Mem may imply this notion best. Her knowledge, her self-confidence, and her reasonable thoughts start to perish because of her feelings of weakness and of defencelessness, and because of her submission to Brownfield. "*Her inherent weakness ... had made her ashamed of her own seeming strength*" (162). The false received conventional image of woman makes Mem ashamed to embrace qualities that are not designed for her, they are *not her own* but man's; she is conscience-stricken for being superior or showing any strength, though symbolic. Moreover, Walker seems to load the character Mem with all the features that a woman –as being female and subordinate- may hold, and this is because, as Walker, A (1987) herself stated, Mem (meaning *même*; the same) in relation to men is symbolic of all women (251).

The representation of gender and gender roles is clearly revealed in *The Third Life of Grange Copeland*. Men establish their eligibility for gender-based privilege from the fact that they as well as others can distinguish them from women (Schrock and Schwalbe 287). Men's main privilege rests in the fact that they can recognise their manhood and that their manhood can be recognised from women. "I am a man, I don't intend working in nobody's damn factory" (87). From Brownfield's answer, one understands that being a *man* signifies having more prestige and authority. The statement above conveys man's superiority to woman and that is paralleled and echoed by woman's inferiority. Otherwise speaking, he intends to say; *only women could be bossed around but I am not a woman; I am a man.*

In one of his quarrels with Mem, Brownfield says: "I may not be able to read and write but I am still the man that wears the pants in this outfit. He towered over her in rage, his spittle spraying her forehead" (87). Mem's higher education deems her superior; the fact that relatively outrages him because he seems to firmly believe in women who "*wear the pants* [i.e. who engage in a masculine deed or assume a masculine identity by being superior] disrupt the binary oppositions of masculinity/femininity" (Anderson and Umberson 368). His wife's "wearing the pants"⁵ makes Brownfield unable to perform masculinity to the satisfaction of his friends especially when mirrored by a female partner who is viewed as superior or dominating as Mem's higher education makes her seem to be. Accordingly, Brownfield thinks that one gains more prestige from his *maleness* than they may get it from education or any other privileges. His speech appears too biased, and he

sounds so sexist and strongly believing in the notion of 'gender'. According to him and to other male characters alike, a man is the one who wears the pants and *oppresses* women.

Tuker says: “[P]ants have always represented a freer from of clothing, one usually forbidden to women” (81). Clothing too, as it is related to gender, refers to a matter of imposition and prohibition, and not of choice. For instance, females prefer the *pink* colour for they are influenced by their social environment; and are neither biologically nor literally nor metaphorically determined to *blue* or *pink*. The pink dress that Grange offers Ruth to wear instead of her dungarees may stand as fitting illustration showing how the environment and the family influence the child to form his gender identity as male or female.

Not only do the actions of Brownfield express and convey his sexism against his woman, but his words also seem to be loaded with his male chauvinistic constitution. His disclosure followed by ‘spitting’, ‘cursing’, and other forms of humiliation, appear to be too ideological and full with connotations. One can also draw the inference that, according to him as a male chauvinist, *to be a man* means to be the boss, to do whatever he pleases to his wife. Being man means his wife’s owner. In a word *to be a man* substitutes for being a *patriarch*. “Indeed no one is more arrogant toward women, more aggressive or scornful, than the man who is anxious about his virility” (De Beauvoir xxv).

“I am the man” seems to be an alternative to ‘I am the boss’, ‘I am superior’, ‘stronger and better than you, women’. Hence, and as mentioned earlier, though Mem’s education is a privilege and an advantage that serves her an apparent superiority, it seems to be nothing in the face of his assumed manliness.

The black male character is inflicted by the very ideology which is meant to give him power. The insisting social pressures to behave like man destroy him and his family together. Patriarchy creates *fear* for both men and women; women are afraid of abuse by men who -in turn- fear losing the power they have, and hence each are obliged to behave in acceptably masculine or feminine ways respectively. Unequal relationships often result in violence against female characters which create physical and emotional damage that would lead them to despair at least, and to suicide at worst.

2.2.3. Sexism

Misogyny and sexism ultimately display in *the Third Life of Grange Copeland*. “I ought to make you call me Mister... A woman as black and ugly as you ought to call a man Mister” (77); these are Brownfield’s words to his woman that hurt her feelings (being one form of emotional violence), and that indict him as misogynist. The home Mem rents in town, too, appears as one among the most concrete clues that exhibit Brownfield’s sexism. Although Mem managed to get themselves a ‘somewhat’ decent house with almost all the necessary commodities one can require, and although he gets a better job than those he had in the rural South; he refuses this better life; he resents this comfort since it is not his own choice, but Mem’s. “He was in a rage against his own contentment ... *He could not seem to give up his bitterness against his wife, who had proved herself smarter, more resourceful than he*” (102-103). His actions –I believe—do not only communicate his jealousy or envy but they also prove him as sexist; because, he views her smartness as a sign of superiority. He considers her attainment as a threat to his own superiority, a menace to his masculine ‘self’.

You know how hard it is to be a black man down here. You knows *I never wanted to be nothing but a man!* The white folks just don’t let nobody feel like doing right. You can’t stand up to them is what you mean, ain’t it?
I don’t make money, you knows that; and the white folks don’t give us no decent houses to live in, you knows that. *What can a man do?* (95). (My use of italics)

The aforementioned is the only composed and calm conversation taking place between Brownfield and his wife Mem under her gun threats. To be nothing but *a man* is Brownfield’s sole objective; he is highly infatuated by his masculinity; and to prove himself as a man, he uses Mem’s femaleness as a foil highlighting his *lost* maleness in a white dominant society. He attributes all the blame of his wrongdoings to the whites. He blames the whites for giving them no decent houses; while he himself strongly rejects the very decent house that Mem manages to arrange for and to rent with her own gained money.

Brownfield prefers to live in shacks rather than in a decent house as long as chosen and rented by his wife.

If he had done any of it himself, if he had insisted on the move, he might not have resisted the comfort, the feeling of doing better-ness with all his heart. As it was he could not seem to give up his bitterness against his wife, who had proved herself smarter, more resourceful than he, and he complained about everything often and loudly, secretly savoring thoughts of how his wife would come down when he placed her once more in a shack (103).

Black American men feel that the black woman partakes in their emasculation which society persists to afflict on them (Norton and Alexander 344). Any sign of intelligence or acumen demonstrated by her is therefore regarded as an intended threat and as an insult. He begrudges her smartness and intelligence; he wants them to be his own for he is *the man*, the lord of the household, and simultaneously plots bad and harmful plans against her to lower her once more to her socially decided place.

A set of relations within the text precipitate the impression that Brownfield and Grange (and every black male character) feel themselves small, and so they endeavour to prove themselves strong and masculine. Their subordination to white bosses, to white women, and at times to black women themselves, meet to generate this feeling of ‘smallness’ of black male characters. Loss of masculinity brings shame and humiliation that raises men’s awareness and alarm of their subordination. The refusal of this failure, of this seeming weakness and deficiency increases rage, which is most of the time issued through gender violence. His sexist orientation consequently leads him to despise Mem and even try to blight her life with violence.

Men’s masculinity and sexism drive them to regard and evaluate women as objects. Men (society) measure *woman’s* worth in accordance with beauty criteria more than acumen or selfhood. “Woman’s looks determine whether a man can proudly display her in public and so establish his status with other men” (Kara 12). During the first years of their marriage, Brownfield’s male friends entangle him within shame and humiliation when they observe Mem as too good for a man as him (for her beauty, educational level, her refine style, her etiquettes ...). “Mem’s education and her proper ways are threatening because they challenge the mould in which poor black women are expected to fit according to patriarchal and racist ideologies” (ibid). They all envy him for having her as a wife.

Though they pretend to praise him, Brownfield feels warned by their sarcastic remarks as an urgent necessity to raise his power over hers and increase his violence on her to get her down. Therefore, he aspires to contempt her in front of them, in public to please his supermanliness and to boast at the other *men*.

There is a set of assertions established within the text to impart black men's vision and expectations of the black woman. An enigma imposes itself on the reader's attitude when trying to fathom those relations. On the one hand, the black man is eager to see his woman beautiful, set up in style, and refined. And on the other hand, he does not like her to be better than him; he likes to see her destroyed. "*He changed her to something he did not want, could not want, and that made it easier for him to treat her in the way he felt she deserved*" (53). He wants her to be better than white women whom he considers as arrogant tormentors; simultaneously, he also tries to make her fit to the image of *woman* that he has drawn in his mind, i.e. inferior to him (man). He tries to destroy her power and strength to build and nourish his own.

The patriarchal Afro-American society creates the conception of male superiority which nourishes and extends sexism against woman. To maintain his superiority, Brownfield drags her from school teaching and urges her to work as a domestic in white houses. "*Her knowledge reflected badly on a husband who could scarcely read and write ... [his actions reflect] his need to bring her down to his level!*" (55). This way and by other forms of violence that Brownfield inflicts on Mem, he could only imagine his own superiority and Mem's inferiority. This ideology could live only in his mind and he simultaneously tries -by all the means- to make his wife, too, believe in it.

Her decision to leave him also threatens his masculinity. It incapacitates his deep - and yet narrow- sense and pride of manhood. It is deeply imprinted in him that he is a *man*; however, his black skin stands as hindrance that confines his sense of his manliness in a white patriarchal society. Furthermore, he often accompanies her threats to leave him with ultimate violence, insults and more hazardous menaces. Threatening to leave him really provokes his rage for it crashes his pride. "*I got my goddam pride, I is*" (117), he used to tell her when getting too abused by him and attempting to leave him. These were, in fact, his last words to her before killing her. His vanity is therefore satisfied through abusing,

and even killing his wife. Leaving him indeed costs Mem her life. Through *the Third Life of Grange Copeland*, black women search only for *survival*, while black men search for *power*, and an elevated sense of manhood. All male characters destroy domestic pleasure and peace while exercising authority at their homes.

Brownfield's words convict him of being 'sexist' while he tries to gain pride at the expense of his woman's welfare. His sexist orientation makes him think of Mem as *his* object. This is exactly what Harris (791) demonstrates asserting that a woman's attempt to leave the relationship is undergone as an unbearable threat to the self, to the manhood of a man. Men are proud of being *men*, and are ready to alleviate any obstruction that may inhibit them from celebrating their manhood.

Black men learn weakness because of the whites' domination and racial discrimination prevents them from accomplishing their assumed traditional gender roles both in society and at home. Brownfield believes that his manhood is contingently relying on his ability to be in charge of his home; a fact that he could not achieve as he realises that Mem is always stronger than he is. Brownfield is unable to fulfill economic provision of his family because he gets unemployed; this is among the causes that batter his *ego* and crush his *pride* as a male; and this is among the reasons that make him regularly abuse Mem lest she would never have control over him.

In a dialogue with Brownfield, Mem's tone seems to be too sarcastic against this kind of *foolish ideology*, of this disgraceful violence of her man on her, and which she identifies as stemming from "*all the manhood you [Brownfield] act like you sure you got*" (96). She satirises Brownfield's feelings of snobbery and of *arrogance, of false manhood*, while offending her and her daughters, at the very instant of his being inferior and impotent in front of others (of white men and women alike).

2.2.4. Ownership of Women

In the text, there is a kind of insistent pronouncement on male characters' domination and female characters' submissiveness. Hence, the text's discursive formation conveys male sexism as an important component of maleness. In this representation of male chauvinism, black men –Grange, Brownfield, Josie's father, Uncle Buster and the black

preachers- appear to be socialised to believing that being a man means possessing and oppressing their wives and children.

Brownfield's inferiority and feelings of smallness find relief in abusing Mem. *Possessing women* also becomes black men's compensation for their lost manhood. "Josie was necessary for his self-respect, necessary for his feelings of manliness. If I can never own nothing, he told her [Margaret], I will have womens" (177). Grange thinks that he can restore some of his lost manhood by using Josie; by owning and controlling black women. Simultaneously, one type of inferiority complex displays through his behaviour. He is ashamed of "his own degradation, his belief in a manhood devoid of truth and honour" (177). He himself is acutely knowledgeable of his *false* manhood.

Ownership of women is revealed through Brownfield's and Grange's treatments to their wives, through their beliefs of their right of fully possessing them. On their parts, women characters believe, as they have been taught by society and culture alike, that a wife should be owned by her husband. Cousins admits that "The notion of ownership in marriage is another thing that makes wives vulnerable to violence in their marriages" (79). Brownfield thinks that he has the right to own Mem because she is his wife; his good treatment of her before marriage stands as an evidence for this notion. Before marriage, Mem has had some kind of power that she loses in marriage while becoming a wife under the statue of her husband. Brownfield's harsh beatings are grounded on Mem's education and other advantages as signs of superiority that he tries to rob her of during their marriage life.

Man considers his woman and children as his property. In one and only conversation that gathers Brownfield with his adolescent daughter, Ruth; he openly and directly reveals this truth to her. "You [Ruth, her mother and sisters] belongs to me, just like my chickens or my hogs" (220). Having and treating one's family as a property is one aspect of manliness, as Walker frankly states it through Brownfield's conversation with Ruth while forcing her to come back and live with him. Brownfield seems to argue that his *manhood* is what pushes him to behave aggressively with his woman and his daughters. Negotiating with Ruth while preferring to live with her grandfather and refusing him, he tells her "*I am a man. And a man's got to have something of his own!*" (220). He, hence, considers Mem

and the children as *something*, a *property*, as an *object* that he must manipulate –or rather destroy- to prove himself *man* and to demonstrate his imaginary masculinity. Brownfield in this case can be referred to as a *stereotypical character* for his vigorous belief in his masculine identity and his gender roles which stand as indisputable for him. (See chapter one).

Brownfield often tells Mem: “*A woman ... ought to call a man Mister*” (95). His intimidation to her demonstrates his chauvinistic masculinity and reveals his intention to coerce her into an ultimate subordination to gain control over her. *Man*, hence, becomes an umbrella concept for superiority, dominance, power, prestige, and highly ranked status among other concepts that are acknowledged within the culture of gender. In the meanwhile, woman becomes a concept symbolising inferiority, subordination, weakness, and marginalisation.

The black male character neither gives his woman a chance to leave and free herself from his abuses nor does he end his cruel and violent treatment on her. His intent is to keep her -and the children- with him by force in order to preserve his privilege of manhood because “*having his family with him was a man’s prerogative*” (221) as Brownfield usually reasons and submits. What is ever necessary for Brownfield is to demonstrate his ‘manhood’ through different malicious techniques. Nothing seems to matter with him; which way he would follow, and how painful his physical and psychological abuses on Mem and their three daughters would be.

Therefore, and after his murder of his wife, Mem, he works hard to have his three daughters living back with him. His intention of having his children is to assert what is left of his manhood. “He did not want them [children] out of love, Josie knew, he wanted them (or at least one of them) because having his family with him was a man’s prerogative” (220-221).

Although Mem is conspicuously submissive to him, Brownfield’s threatened masculinity (as a black man), his low self-esteem and low self-confidence, drive him to see her as an enemy who is geared to compete against him and to annihilate him as a man. “*You think you better than me. Don’t you? Don’t you? You ugly pig!*” (90). He may intend

by this introduction to create a cause to initiate violence on her; however, I think he says it owing to his fear and scare of his endangered manhood. In front of these notions which are socially and culturally supported, Mem, recognises that her education serves her nothing because she is a woman, and likewise she renounces her job as a teacher and even turns, once more, to her informal (Negro's) dialect that Brownfield thinks is the only appropriate to her (55).

Feeling too oppressed, "it seemed impossible that she could face him and not weep" (88). What makes Mem usually weep at Brownfield's sight is the belief that she could do nothing to fight back, to defend herself from him, to recover her rights; because, no one is there to acknowledge her rights. She juxtaposes herself with him and finds him terrifyingly a giant; a giant that society and culture have constructed. She also feels oppressed, tyrannised and wronged by the closest person, a person who would rather protect than be source of danger and trouble for her. Home which is naturally considered a setting of safety becomes threatening to women. And marriage, too, becomes a condemning institution that creates and condones women's oppression.

Women are viewed as properties and they are not allowed to leave violent relationships. Not only does Brownfield consider Mem as weak, inferior and dependent, but he also regards her as his property. "You can't do nothing but lay up there and moan. And if you could get your ugly ass up I wouldn't let you go nowhere, make a fool out of me, have people laughing at me!" (107-108). Men feel intimidated by their female partners' desertion of them, which is regarded as an act that would emasculate them.

Marriage is likely to be rather castigated by Walker because it encapsulates principles which reflect the patriarchal structure, and hence, that women should subject to male authority. Mem could not extricate herself from an increasingly dangerous marriage that is punctuated by Brownfield's constant violence. "When violence against females, for example wife beating is condoned by culturally prescribed attitudes and beliefs about women, it may be thought of as acceptable –even by women themselves" (Kariuku 47). Marriage is one of these social institutions leading men and forcing women to conform to particular gender roles. Deep-seated cultural attitudes about the role of woman make both

man and woman see violent acts in marriage as '*non violent*' but as dutiable; as part of social or cultural customs.

Brownfield thinks that his male gender provides him with protection and it also allows his conjugal authority; "Despite his individual weakness [for being black, a hyphenated American], he is still protected by those ideologies which reinforce his masculine and spousal authority" (Cousins 133). He is also aware of his failure as a human being, of his inferiority to Mem; however, he also knows that *being a man* guarantees his authority over her because she is a *socially unprotected being*.

Women in *The Third Life of Grange Copeland* believe –as it has been solidly stamped in their minds by the *false stereotypes* --that a wife is there for a man only to ensure his well-being, including his pleasure. All the female characters hold this same notion; and Josie, being illiterate, seems the most convinced by these clichéd stereotypes and that have been socially indoctrinated in her. Josie devotes everything in her to please Grange who never cares about her and who is, in contrast, always violent on her.

Another set of parallels establishes itself within the text to reveal that genderisation runs through a life cycle, which moves from Grange's father and Grange's uncle to Grange himself and then to his son, Brownfield. Each one imitates and duplicates his father's masculine gender identity; each one follows his father's steps; each male echoes his father's crime. It is in this same circle that the male characters inherit domestic violence from father to son. Brownfield as a monstrous and cruel to his own family is a remnant of Grange's first life, as Grange himself has been his own father's damaged vestige. Each repeats his father's faults, and each stays as an evidence of his father's damaged soul.

This implies that male children embrace the identity of their fathers (and which is that of maleness). Grange, as a father, confesses that he provided no right directions to Brownfield, his son, and that he was the worst model to shape one's identity on. This wrong shaping of one's identity is what mostly matters and ideologically functions in Walker's novel. Male characters construct their masculine identity and label it with violence (on women) so that they would not break that cultural chain and that has been extended throughout various generations.

Resorting to cruelty and harshness as a masculine attitude is an inherited facet passed on from old ancestors, as Denzin (487) clearly admitted. Therefore, Brownfield's masculine power and violence are not spontaneous or innate but they have long been institutionalised and transmitted to him from countless previous generations. It is hence a structured and a solidly based and plotted dominance granted to man.

For instance, Grange, as a child, attends and watches his father's and his uncle's violence, along with the black preachers' violence, on their women. In his turn, in his childhood, Brownfield too experiences and witnesses Grange's frequent violence on Margaret, his mother. Likewise, when getting adults, they both beat and oppress their wives to demonstrate this *necessary* constituent ingredient of their masculinity. It is this culture and this patriarchal ideology, which move on from father to son over generations, that shape each black male character's conception of himself and of his place in the family and society; and that justify men's conducts and condones male superiority to women.

What black male characters experience as children reflects the idea that gender identity is learnt through modelling as Bandura puts forward explaining the way people are identified with others, "... most human behaviour is learned through modelling: from observing others one forms an idea of how new behaviours are performed, and on later occasions this coded information serves as a guide for action" (22). Otherwise, Brownfield attempts to hardly dissociate his attributes and qualities from those his mother exhibits during his childhood –and which are *hyper feminine*. "Psychoanalysts would explain Brownfield's determination to follow in Grange's footsteps as his constant and public demonstration to separate himself from his feminine mother" (Kimmel 244; cited in Tamalyn).

Taking an advantage from this popularised culture of gender and to absolve himself from the wrongs he does for Mem, Brownfield ascribes his wrongdoings to his father's humiliation and violence over him (as a child) and over his own mother. He therefore, reproaches Grange for having indirectly taught him of and guided him towards this culture of gender and gender role orientation. He accounts for his wrong drives by laying the blame on Grange. What his father lays before him is the only sample of *maleness*, and so he inherits nothing from him but hopelessness and masculinity chauvinism that entail

sexism against and even violence on women. Partially, Brownfield is right because he was not born *sexist*; he was not born *masculine*. But, the full accusation of Grange also seems unfairly attributed; because, Brownfield could have altered this immorality, he could have avoided, or even corrected, the error his father had once done.

While discussing alone the causes of his father's indifference repugnance to and even violence on his mother, it occurs to Brownfield (as a child) that Grange's intention is to control and possess Margaret. Brownfield attributes his father's bad treatment of his wife to his determination to 'sell' her –as if she were *his* property (10). Grange, like any other black male character, violates his woman's mind (moral core) and body. Brownfield is, therefore, unconsciously acquiring these -one may say- masculine traits and attributes from directly watching them throughout the everyday practices and disputes that take place between his parents.

Thus, Brownfield –as any other black male character-- learns *how to be male* from the master/slave relationship that repeats throughout the whole novel between any white and black character on the one hand and between any black male and female character (husband and wife) on the other hand.

2.2.5. Stereotypes about women

The text generates another ideologeme about the image of the black woman (as society provides it). Women seem not to develop enough self-confidence, for they have been devaluated by various stereotypes (Hooks 52). Brownfield thinks of women as pigs, liars and hypocrites (221). His perception of women derives from the negative perceptions of Eve, the first temptress, liar in nature, and a responsible for the widespread female tendency to corrupt and lie. Regardless of his notion's being right or wrong; it is quite natural that he, as a member of his own society, is terribly influenced by their socio-cultural stereotypes.

Negative prejudices about women drive men to depreciate their values. They eventually start seeing them as cheap commodity, and women themselves get so embarrassed by the images devoted to them that some like Josie and her daughter (Lorene) start regarding themselves as really bad and as meriting only bad treatments. Brownfield

usually curses Mem by referring to her as a black woman of pleasure, a bad woman (though he and everybody else in the novel know she is not), and he convicts her of cheating on him with white men. The other male characters in the novel also address their women with the same accusing and abusive words; an accusation that exposes Josie –as a black woman- to endless rape by both black and white men.

2.2.5.1. Femaleness as Equating Weakness

A discursive fact exhibited over the text is the global victimisation of women. All women in *the Third Life of Grange Copeland* go through the same miserable and painful life cycle. Although some may seem stronger, more powerful, they all display the same inherent weakness and subservience. “She [Ruth] never considered that as a big girl she might look more than a little like her mother” (205). Seeming strong, and apparently more conscious than the other female characters, Ruth thinks herself would grow more dependent, self-confident and above all *not weak*. However, she --like any other woman— could not escape the traditional gender stereotypes making her believe in her very weakness, her inevitable vulnerability.

2.2.5.2. The stereotype of the Female Body as Vulnerable

Through the character Ruth, the author illustrates how the black woman hates and is scared of her female body. Besides her already decided place in society as a woman, Ruth recognises her *biological vulnerability* as slyly exploited by men to over-weaken her and to eventually gain control over her. Ruth thinks her female body –too-- is responsible for her subordination and oppression by men.

Tingle and Vora (6) profess that many researchers associate the female body with the sick role. Pregnancy, menstruation and menopause are regarded as illnesses bringing about women’s deficiencies.

Entering the realm of true femininity, the adolescent Ruth vehemently rejects her female body. Ruth who “*felt tightened and compressed by panic ... what scared her was that she felt her woman’s body made her defenceless*” (193). Ruth’s notice of her body that would be a source of troubles for her, Josie’s forced pregnancy at her early puberty, and the continuous and destroying pregnancies of Mem; each sheds light on the notion of

female biology as a source of vulnerability and weakness. However, Ruth theoretically rejects this physical embodiment of femininity. As an adolescent, she rejects her *female body*, and she is alerted by her *menstruation* and the vulnerability it physically and symbolically conveys and bears. Biological femininity represents a threat for Ruth towards which she reacts with rejection that connotes her as masculine as far as gender conventional roles are concerned. A traditional perception of the female body that pictures women as victims of their own bodies, of their own biology, appears as alarming omen for the female characters, and which is both valid and false at the same time. For instance, even though Mem seems to obtain power and regain her voice after the great move to the town, her female body prevents her from maintaining the powerful role in her family. Her masculine role expires while unwillingly resuming her feminine one through her nurturance and her frequent and successive fatal pregnancies.

Likewise, stereotypes about women's deficiency engender fear for woman about her position in society. These false societal beliefs about her biological or natural weakness appear as a warning alert for her bad future, her inescapable bad fate. This makes her lose confidence in herself; it even makes her lose hope in everything. She therefore gets withdrawn, silent and submissive.

Femaleness equates weakness and inferiority in *the Third Life of Grange Copeland*. Female weakness; this is what scares Ruth as a witness of Mem's (her mother's) torment caused by her father. She knows very well that it is this weakness and which is the result of her female body that victimises her mother, and hence, strongly rejects it. Ruth rejects to be a younger version of her mother and suffer likewise from the same fate her mother had before her. Therefore, Ruth starts to exhibit counter-standardised traits and deeds which are more or less *masculine*; like her desire for having her hair very short, her inclination to wear jeans and overalls and other garments that are traditionally ascribed to men. In this sense, she believes that physical appearance is part of her masculine self, i.e. she attempts to alter what is alterable in her since she cannot evidently cause any metamorphosis at the level of her biological body. However, Ruth succeeds in achieving a balanced personality because she could fuse masculine with her feminine traits, to fuse two different parts, to reach and create her own wholeness.

Josie refuses weakness generated from her sexuality by trying to control an exclusively male arena (sex). One strategy by which Josie tries to reclaim one part of her identity is to impose her sexual power. She uses sex to survive on the one hand and to gain –as she assumes- authority over men on the other. “Fat Josie (...) did her job with a gusto that denied shame, and demanded her money with authority that squelched all pity” (41). However; she victimises herself first as a needy by being a prostitute selling her body to men, and then when propertied by renouncing everything she owned from (prostitution) to her former teenage-beau, Grange in his third life, and whom she meets again in her sixties.

2.2.5.2.1. Men’s Exploitation of Women’s Biological Vulnerability

Oddly put, however, is Walker’s reference to woman’s biology as the first responsible for her painful destiny. “Brownfield lay in wait for the return of Mem’s weakness. The cycles of her months and years brought it. Her body [repeated forced pregnancies] would do to her what he could not” (101). Brownfield takes advantage of Mem’s biology, as a female, to create her vulnerability as a woman. He manages to drive her down once more –after her previous and only successful attempt to power—to her subservient position through the pregnancies he has forced on her. As a consequence, her female body becomes her own traitor as it brings about her own weakness and downfall.

“‘I waited a long time for you to come down, Missy’. ‘See how you like *me* holding the upper hand!’ He was enjoying himself in a sort of lunatic way” (107) Brownfield believes he alone has the right to have the upper hand on his house, that domination is a male attribute and power is a privilege that no woman must obtain. He begrudges her the amount of happiness she has enjoyed when assuming –though very short-- a position of power.

“Planting a seed to grow that would bring her down in weakness and dependence and to her ultimate destruction. Like the non-fighter she essentially was, Mem thought her battle soon over. She was not evil and he would profit from it” (103). Brownfield works hard to see Mem dependent and totally destroyed; and Grange exploits Josie’s benevolence while making her resign all her money for his favour to build his own farm and from which she is discarded later on. All men in *the Third Life of Grange Copeland* take advantage of women’s nurturing qualities to achieve their personal goals.

A false belief is forced upon women's minds about their *biology*. The female body is defined as weak, defenseless and as troublesome. "What scared her was that she felt her woman's body made her defenseless. She [Ruth] felt it could now... against her will, and her mind could do nothing to stop it. She was deadly afraid of being, as she put it 'had', as young girls were everyday" (193).

In *The Third Life of Grange Copeland*, the female body and pregnancy doom the female character to move toward her decline as men try to make it seem. Pregnancy, at an early age, dooms Josie to be expelled by her father (for shame) and plots therefore for her unfavourable life. Margaret too is destined to suffer for conceiving and giving birth to an illegitimate child; a pregnancy that makes her takes revenge from herself by committing suicide and poisoning the baby. In the same vein, Mem is not likely to have a better fate because of her physical embodiment of womanhood (mainly of her pregnancy); when Brownfield forces her to conceive so as to weaken her already frail body. "Her body would do to her what he could not..." (101). It is a strategy that is well accomplished by him to bring her back to her subservient position after her assumed short-lived strength and eventually murders her in the very presence of her daughters. The dangerous plot that Brownfield plans against Mem, and Josie's father's violent reaction against his pregnant teenage daughter imply that men exploit women's assumed biological vulnerability to make them believe in their natural inferiority.

Therefore, Ruth's worry about her body's defencelessness is --to some extent-- right, significant and inevitable. What frightens her is her defenceless body; as a female she cannot defend herself from men. Ruth develops a kind of *fear* which Hillenbrand (117) describes as 'psychological impregnation'. As a woman, she can be subject to physical and emotional rape. The type of life that Josie leads and the nightmare she keeps having each night and which possesses her, illustrates this notion best. Josie could not stop rape forced on her at the age of sixteen as she could not stop the frightening nightmare that *rapes her mind* and deranges her psyche. In a word, Josie has all her life been victim of her femaleness.

Similarly, Layla is a female character in *The Open Door* by Al Zayyat, L. (2017, 1st ed. 1960) who suddenly gets knowledgeable about her fatal weakness; "by starting her

menstruation she had become a woman and had entered a prison; a prison with fixed boundaries, and at the door stood her father, her brother” (21). Young girls’ conception of menstruation reveals their huge panic of crucial restriction; a real claustrophobia they hold of being women.

2.2.5.3. Stereotypes about Women’s Silence and Submission

Women are socialised to turn into silent beings and submissive partners. Silence, this is what is commonly noticed in female characters’ behaviour. Their relationships with their men show their absence of opinion and of decision. It seems as though they doubt their thought, their existence as ‘human beings’ and as individuals. Out of the cycle of their lives (from childhood to adulthood), one can notice and perceive that low self-esteem and low self-confidence generally generate submission among female characters. Silence and submission also indicate their loss of identity. Developing fear out of her female body, Ruth demonstrates self-abasement and identity-bereavement. Luckily enough, nevertheless, Ruth would later on regain strength and assertiveness thanks to her grandfather’s assistance.

Silence is one female gender attribute that every woman must adopt. Every woman in *the Third Life of Grange Copeland* seems to be either *silent* like Margaret and Mem’s mother or *silenced* like Mem and Josie. Male characters’ mal-treatment to their women turn them into *silent beings*; the several beatings and the harsh insults they regularly receive from their men make them lose their voices. Women are forced to be silent (they are even battered to be silenced), and their silence –in turn- implies their submissiveness and consent which would encourage more violence on them. Women in the novel are not acknowledged the right to air their knowledge but are rather seen as sexual objects “This signifies that women are supposed to be seen not heard” (Okpara et al 256). Gender differences have become an ideological propaganda that oppresses and marginalises women. Black female characters’ submissiveness is generated from being socialised towards gender construction of *femininity*, which is associated with passivity, weakness, and with support and nurturance for others. Margaret’s, Josie’s and Mem’s nurturance is rather shown through love, understanding and patience in an attempt to remedy their men’s cruelty.

In the reproduction of this 'absence' of woman's voice and personality, one may also notice male characters' attitude towards their women's subordination and submission and which conveys that they see it natural –indeed quite logical-- for women to obey them and to submit to their orders and even violence. Not only do men force women to yield to their authority, but they even think women's obedience is a natural duty.

The black female character in this novel is a symbol of *voicelessness* of the Afro American woman. The African American woman is “an instrument of the work, the object of male sexual pleasures and the machine for child bearing” (Pasi 32). This definition is much compatible with the character Mem who is the family provider, source for Brownfield to satisfy his sexual pleasures and a child bearer. “Your trouble is you just never learned how not to git pregnant. How long did you think you could going with your belly full of children...” (107); These are Brownfield's harsh words while mocking Mem even though it is he who forces her pregnancies to reduce her to the lower level she is now enduring. He intends to make her health goes worst in order not to be anymore able to afford to pay the rental of the decent house she has for them in town and to force her and their children to live back in the freezing barns of the South.

Mem's suffering as a woman subject to her culture perception of gender becomes elucidative case of women's status in society. In her afterwards of *the Third Life of Grange Copeland*, Alice Walker clearly states that Mem's life is symbolic of all women's. “Seeing the dead body of Mrs. Walker [the family name of the real case is ironically the same as the author's] there on the enamel table, I realized that indeed, she might have been my own mother and that perhaps in relation to men she was also symbolic of all women ... that is why she is named Mem in the novel, after the French *la même*, meaning ‘the same’” (the *Third Life of Grange Copeland: Afterwards* 251).

As seen in the previous chapter, definitions of masculinity are usually associated with the sexual objectification of and violence on women. Falling within the tyranny of Brownfield's violence –as an expression of his masculinity--, Mem, like the other black women, plays the role of the submissive. However; her submission and silence –her understanding and cooperation- do not solve the problem; it worsens it instead. She gets weaker and “*her weakness was forgiveness, a stupid belief that kindness can convert the*

enemy” (162). Black female characters try to convince themselves that their men do not intend violence on them; the reason that makes them behave with absolute support and cooperation with them.

Mem deeply suffers from her man’s aggressive behaviour though she never shows her suffering to him. This is the very fact that reveals her submissiveness. As she never dares to disobey his orders or to upset him anyway, he never rewards her with the same mild treatment. On the contrary, he attempts to increase and vary his violence on her each time she does show obedience and faithfulness to him. “Evening Brown”. “Evening ugly” (84). (If politely greeting him, he curses her).

Out of those different sets of relations taking place between males and females, one can conceive that the progressing pressures on women (by society) to assume feminine gender roles mystify their conceptions of themselves. Fathers, husbands and society together contribute to limit their aspiration and behaviour, and eventually, lead them to be more vulnerable to depression and withdrawal.

All female characters are depicted as nurturers and caregivers and as expecting nothing in return from their men. Josie and her mother, Margaret and Mem obey their husbands and submit to them although they rarely agree with them. Submissiveness and subordination; these are the prominent features that highlight female characters’ identities in the Afro-American society. They have been socialised, even brainwashed, to accept such a stereotyped status. Women’s subservient place in society, besides her own capitulation to her man, on the other hand, upholds male dominance (patriarchy) and even violence in the black family. Hooks (*Ain’t I a Woman* 120) admits that the success of this indoctrination is that women perpetuate (both consciously and unconsciously) the evils that oppress them. Accordingly, I do believe that society is the most persuasive institution from which men learn and attain their role as the dominant group; by contrast, women are taught to be the subordinate.

“Mem said nothing, lay so silent; it was as if she were not breathing or thinking or even being” (90). This is Mem’s reaction towards his curses and his physical violence. The being, the presence, the existence of the individual rests on their voice. (Herrero 29). Being silenced by all of the family; society and her violent man, Mem loses her *being*. She knows

very well that she is denied the right to talk back, and to defend herself and her daughters. Although it is not a legal deniability; although it is not a lawful deprivation, nevertheless, she (while representing all women) has been brought up with prejudices condoning women's inferiority, weakness and fundamental rights denial in front of men. These prejudices frame and control their whole lives.

She, then, takes it for granted that she has no rights and no privileges, for the simple fact that she is a woman; her only guilt is that she was born female. It is socially and culturally unacceptable for woman to fight back even by words, if she is hurt by man. This is one among the reasons that make Mem, as well as they all, sink into their deeper silence and submission. Mem begins to feel that her husband treats her with condemnation for he barely tolerates her expressiveness (when it does occur). She recognises that man, society indeed, does not approve women's expressiveness. Fear twined with tolerance and 'intelligence' drive her for this ultimate silence. Mem tries to perfectly study the equation, and in due course, she ascertains that it is *silence* which would serve her best at the present time.

Mem as any woman in the text is a non-combatant; she never fights back Brownfield to defend herself or to regain her rights. Her silence, however, contributes in increasing his violence on her. "...I let you drag me round from one corncrib to another just cause I didn't want to hurt your feelings" (94). It appears clear from Mem's argument that she is a submissive and non-fighter wife and that the reasons that make her be so are resumed in the nurturing qualities that she is geared to acquire as a female. *She does not want to hurt his feelings* despite the excessive and frequent physical and psychological harm he causes her. Subservience grows deep in her because of her *gender blindness*.

Mem is the only 'educated' married woman in the novel; thus, she seems the best to illustrate the notion of the *silenced woman*. Being a teacher, an educated female character demonstrates her possession of a critical mind, of a strong and convincing voice; but, a voice which has harshly been silenced. Brownfield's treatment to her and his burning of her books makes her leave school and resigns her profession as a teacher to stay home under his total domination and control. Home is considered as appropriate to her; a fitting setting to exert violence on her.

Hellenbrand (115-118-126) views silence as powerlessness and vulnerability while acquiring voice as signs of power, independence and imposing one's identity. Many feminists raised the phenomenon of silence; there are, in fact, numerous fictional works that portrayed women's silence as it is forced upon them through common consent. *Jane Eyre* (2003 1st ed. 1855) –a Victorian feminist novel written by Charlotte Brontë—is among the most quintessential fiction that tackled this very discrete issue. *Eyre's* silent suffering caused by Mr Edward Rochester who deliberately makes her love him and be economically dependent on him depicts how frustrating silence is for the identity of woman and which she tends to adopt as a last resort.

As we have seen in the previous chapter, the family and society are responsible for deriving such degrading images about women (of weakness, subordination, and of crucial submission). By contrast, it provides men with certain promoting images, which –in turn– engender male chauvinism. Hence, taking on the role of inferiority in society makes woman develop a submissive character. All female characters in this novel are weak and submissive in front of their men whose sexist treatment lowers more their self-evidence. Hooks (184) admits that the psychological violence the black man uses is his weapon to gain his woman's silence and therefore submission.

When thinking about the secret of his mother's excessive obedience to his father, Brownfield supposes that it is his indifference and disdain of her –as a female-- which makes Margaret indulge in her deep silence and submission to him. *"His mother is like their dog in some ways. She didn't have a thing to say that did not in some way show her submission to his father"* (5). It is clearly noticed that Margaret's submission to Grange gets climactic. But, Brownfield, the ten-year-old child, seems to misjudge the cause of his mother's absence of voice, of her submissiveness which has been ascribed –as the different incidents of the narrative convey—to gender socialisation. As a child, Brownfield wonders about his mother's submissiveness and her rather feminine behaviours. *"His mother agreed with his father whenever possible, and though he was only ten-year old child, Brownfield wondered about this"* (5), He defines it as a strange, ambiguous and irrelevant in front of the humiliation, disdain and violence that she receives from his father, Grange. Strange, it

is though, that as a grown man, he would evaluate the same behaviours by his own wife, Mem, as a necessity, as an obligation for women.

Every behaviour issued by Margaret shows submissiveness, even her ignorance to the baby 'Star' is used to gain gratification from Grange (who showed great repugnance for her illegitimate infant). Her behavior reveals that she can take no decision on her own, that she owns neither self-esteem nor self-evidence. Hence, though she does not agree with her man, she never argues with anything he says or does. This submission –as Brownfield supposes- is one of the causes that grow and encourage Grange's domination over her. Unexpectedly, Brownfield himself would follow the same path that his father (Grange) has taken on earlier.

Submissiveness derives from dependency and limited control over one's life. Likewise, Margaret feels that she can never achieve a level of independency from Grange and that will enable her to survive without him. I think that Margaret's submission to Grange increases his neglect and indifference to her. Her being unarguably yielding to him makes him expect and demand more than submission from her until she offers him her life (for everyone in the novel believes she commits suicide to show him her deep love and her deep grief in losing him). Margaret wants, by her death, to show her faithfulness and docility which he never thinks to reward her appropriately for.

This fact may carry a wide signification that fathers and husbands become enemies for the black woman. The extra terror that she gets arises from the fact that her closest persons attack her. Denzin (497) and UNODC (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime) attribute the terror of wife abuse to the fact that the woman gets violently offended by a person she has previously defined as safe. Hence, this violence and this shock would lower more their self-evidence and would increase their passivity.

Multiple signs from the novel are used to depict the black woman's attempts to deal with men's sexist behaviour with her great heart and tolerance. Mem consents to any burden Brownfield creates for her, to any abuse he offends her with, and she tries to adapt to this violence "with her great heart and greater knowledge" (55); the two criteria that

Brownfield is devoid of. In some sense, Mem is therefore responsible for helping him blight her life.

The text also enunciates that whatever the woman does is to please man. She is ready to renounce everything in favour of her man. Being predisposed by these notions of femininity, Mem drags herself out of her new culture to please Brownfield; she renounces her new language, the sign of her superiority, to make him feel *man* and enjoy his masculinity suppressed by Captain Davis and the other whites. Josie, too, renounces all what she owns for Grange⁶ to please him, to win his love and his emotional gratification. However, his neglect and his affronts to her are only meant to increase by him; Grange never appreciates her sacrifices to him. He does not evaluate what she has done for him as sacrifices but as feminine duties.

These discursive formations that are used within the narrative show that woman allows male exploitation, no matter what harm he does for her. In this sense, she is taking part in rising male patriarchy. This submission by woman comes to entail more violence on the part of the husband. As Lalani and Parpio (208) put it, as the man becomes more violent, his woman becomes more passive, or vice versa. *The Third Life of Grange Copeland* exposes the two notions -the husband's domination and the wife's submission and passivity- throughout too hardly attached scenes; the ones following the others.

Therefore, she sometimes takes the responsibility for any aggressive and abusive treatment by him. Likewise, while conceiving it her fault that leads Grange to desert her, Margaret seeks ways to apologise. She neglects the baby (the one she has in an illegitimate way) in his favour. "*And now, humbly respecting her husband's feelings, she ignored it [the baby]*" (20), this is what she does; "*his wife [who] had died believing what she had done was sinful and required death*" (178). Eventually, the guilt she thinks she commits drives her to kill the baby and to commit suicide to please him. Margaret thinks that by adopting a masculine conduct, she is transgressing gender tradition; and thus determines herself as bad and guilty and as deserving death.

Similarly, a kind of 'order-execution' relationship gathers Grange with Josie. Her submission to him is the most noticeable in the novel. Throughout the different passages of the narrative, one may sense that Josie is urged more than any other female character --to

be weak, passive and submissive. Since her exposure to rape, she has been transformed into an object. She has no power, no will and no subjectivity mainly because her family rejects her. Men's abuses make of her a worthless object without any will (it turns her into an object that feels pain and humiliation, nevertheless). Josse (183) defined rape as the final humiliation which conveys one is worthless and that he or she is to be used by whoever wants to use him or her. This is really, what happens to Josie when falling a prey for both white and black men and even for her own father. Consequently, Grange takes advantage from the authoritative power that his male gender warrants him besides Josie's vulnerability, docility and genuine love for him to boss around her, and to exploit her both sexually and economically. Meanwhile, she is satisfied to serve him anyway and she is convinced that every favour she does for him is part of her duty, and that it is therefore linked to gender commitment. Josie is not to be blamed because she is socialised to treat men in such a way that conveys submissiveness. Female weakness and submission is perceived by both men and women as a *must* –as society makes it seem. “Her weakness was that she cared for him and waited for him a long time” (140). This is Josie's and every female character's error –though not intended- and which drowns them into absolute affliction.

The feelings of helplessness are also stemmed out of Mem's fear to recognise that she too owns power, though it is not socially acknowledged; that she can make, and alter actions with a total safety. These feelings are derived by society, which encourages -or rather forces- women to remain in such a position of passivity and fear. Any attempt to change their status is considered as a threat for women: the woman has no alternative, she has no place to escape to. A total isolation and a complete condemnation doom the woman to stay in her very place. This is, in fact, what one can grasp from the reasons behind Mem's and the other black women's 'paralysed' actions. Women are thwarted to have firm resolutions and determinations. “*She wants to leave him, but there was no place to go*” (58). *No place to go to* bears the connotation of having no protector; both family and society create her condemnation as a female and ensure its continuity the minute they created the notion of gender discrimination.

Race and gender are the products of the same systematic culture of power distribution. It is in the same vein that race and gender issues are constructed; society

imposes cultural beliefs and practices that create dominant and subordinate groups. “[Black] American women have been socialised, even brainwashed to accept a version of American history that was created to uphold and maintain racial imperialism in the form of white supremacy and sexual imperialism in the form of patriarchy” (Hooks 120). The white patriarchal dehumanising culture makes the black woman believe in their natural subjugation and oppression.

The construction of black woman’s personality is mainly done by society, which makes her learn her inferior status as a black and as a female. In this vein, black female characters, experience two kinds of oppression; they suffer from the abuses of both racism and sexism. Thus, black women are incapable to escape the double, and at times triple oppression they are thrust in (as wage workers, blacks and females). This vicious triangle generates more subordination for all of Margaret, Josie and Mem, and it stands as a discursive fact that arises throughout the whole text.

In spite of its being an adequate vengeance, or rather an appropriate response (because it refers to self-defense violence for the battered or the abused wife), the woman’s gender identity prevents her from meeting her man’s violence with violence. Woman’s greater knowledge, too, prevents any violent reaction to appear. In the black woman’s case, one may say that she can see what no other can; her long insights make her see in her man the prosperous future of the whole community. She falsely thinks that in order to fight racism, she has to help foster the whole black community; and this is through giving assistance to the black man’s strength. This assistance that is done through submission for and nurturance of men is increasing their domination and strengthening their gender power that they use against women.

Individuals’ gender and race can be --themselves-- source of suffering and trauma. In this vein, women are frustrated and oppressed by their psychologies of femininity as pointed at by Lewis (28). To be a black woman means to be nothing in *The Third Life of Grange Copeland*. As far as society and their men’s notions towards them are concerned, Mem and her daughters, Margaret, Josie and every black female character are described to have neither rights nor prestige, nor any value in front of man. “Walker clearly shows the dilemma faced by the black woman, that is, she is oppressed because all blacks are

exploited, but she is also exploited [by both white and black men] because she is a woman” (Pasi 33).

Black female characters feel unloved, uncared for, and unprotected within their own families. Their exposure to different forms of abuse (poverty, racism, oppression, and domestic violence) develops their feelings of alienation from society and from home at first degree, which grows, in turn, the feelings of fear, helplessness and of powerlessness.

However, one should note -at this stage- that it is a matter of socialisation which reinforces the stereotype woman gets about her own deficiencies. The clearly defined role of gender within society creates patriarchy among African American couples in the novel on the one hand, and shapes the black woman’s feelings of deficiency that are displayed through submission and selflessness, on the other hand.

This social orientation of the identity and the role designed for woman in society teach -or rather socialise- Josie, Margaret and Mem to embrace their crucial feminine roles of passivity and submissiveness. Asking her if she has thrown her magazines and school books away, Brownfield intends to know whether Mem “*had learned her place*” (57), whether or not she has received and assimilated her ‘inherent weakness’. Her natural place and her inherent weakness become signs of her socialisation into being weak, inferior and submissive. In the name of femininity, women are motivated to avoid human growth; that is critical to their mental development.

At times women, rather, adhere to male violence. One female character in *The Comfort of Strangers*, a novel by Mc Ewan (1982), articulates a rather interesting ideological notion about the reaction of women towards male authority and even violence; “*But they [women] love men. Whatever they may say, they believe, women love aggression and strength in men. It is deep in their minds*” (72). It is deep in their minds because society engraves it that profound in them. Society makes people assume certain grids of gender roles ascribed to men and others –and which are their opposites- to women. Aggression, toughness, coldness and strength are prescribed as purely masculine traits and male traits as almost all cultures conjecture. Maintaining roles or possessing traits which are contrary to those mentioned before presume that the person is *not* male.

Margaret's feminine attitudes are summed up in her conspicuous submissiveness to Grange and her deliberate affection to their son, Brownfield. The text makes it clear that Margaret is excessively self-sufficient in relation to Grange who deliberately plans it to be that way. Nonetheless, he eventually, refuses to continue in the same power-based relationship with his woman and decides to desert her altogether.

Mem also seems not to be resentful against the rise of her man's power although she disapproves his violence on her, "many times I done got my head beat by you just so you could feel a little bit like a man" (94). Likewise, Mem reveals her intention to empower her husband and her endurance of his mistreatment of her. And after being tired of his excessive arrogance and contempt of her, Mem unveils the secret of her being so submissive, so accepting a wife. She clearly enunciates that her desire is to contribute in creating his 'whole', is to rise his manhood's power for she may "*see in it the eventual liberation of all people from this corrupt system of capitalism*" (Norton and Alexander 344). It is a false belief, which the black woman holds, that nurturing *his power* would set both him and her free from the whites' oppression.

Weakness, passivity and submission are among the outcomes of women's subordination in society. This makes of the black woman in *The Third Life of Grange Copeland* a non-fighter; a non-reactive partner. Domination, on its part, carries strength, cruelty and arrogance for men; and this makes of the black man a ruthless and aggressive husband and father. It makes of him a beast generating his woman's -and hence his family's- destruction. The woman is made to believe that she exists only to care for others and participate in their development. Men, in general, avoid such a behaviour lest to appear weak or less important. Some women, thus, believe that they exist only to prove their men's strength and masculinity, and they opt to be obedient and passive. In this sense, women do contribute in creating their own enslavement. They use their own energies; of love, compassion and unfinished giving, to create their own defeatism.

Women's superiority is a source for her humility. The mild treatment of Josie to Grange shows that her economic superiority does not make her evaluate him as her inferior or that he deserves any worse treatment. Conversely, she does her best to make him feel

more important. Therefore, she renounces everything she owns for his sake while she becomes a needy washing people's clothes for survival.

Similarly, Mem never regards her educational superiority to Brownfield as a privilege; although -at the beginning of their relationship- Brownfield thinks Mem would desert him because of his illiteracy (his inferiority). Educated, rich or economic provider women are still regarded as subordinate females; they still should fill the traditional place of women. They -in so doing- remain in their subordinate and marginalised position. After all, Mem surrenders everything her beauty, her body, her brain and even her *language* in his favour. (She resigns all the components of her identity starting with her language, for this is what he intends to destroy in her).

If they only start to think of women as their 'equals', men will cease to be sexist and therefore stop their contempt of and their violence, be it physical or emotional, on them. Ashcroft and Thompson (Preface) ascribes the crucial end, or limitation of domestic violence to a reconstructed (American) culture in which male violence and domination give way to a more humane atmosphere. She persists that social equality can be achieved only if men are convinced of women superiority and she assures that women, on their parts, will treat men fairly by using their special knowledge and their special capacities.

As we have mentioned earlier, the family teaches girls to be as too obedient and submissive as possible; and being shaped by those feminine traits, all of Margaret, Josie and Mem are discouraged from using violence as a means to gain power and domination in their intimate relationships. *Being female* impedes them from adopting any violent acts on their men. They are brought up according to a range of misconceptions about themselves and about their roles in life. They believe that their sole function in life is to bear children, serve their husbands, and take care of their families. The novel tackles the consequences patriarchy levels in black girls as they grow bearing in mind that they have to belong to a man (whether a father, a husband, or whosoever). Sexual discrimination, thus, starts at home and accompanies them during their whole lives.

Patriarchy displays in different issues ranging from stereotyping and discrimination to oppression and violence. Traditional societies position women in a low/subservient

stratum as compared to men; the reason that creates problems and greatly and negatively impact women. Therefore, tradition contributes to the escalation of abuse against woman by the limitation of her role in society and the degradation of her value. Regarding the subordination of woman as entailing other plagues and misfortunes to her, Simone De Beauvoir reported that “Plato thanked the Gods for was, first, being born free and not a slave and, second, a man and not a woman” (31). De Beauvoir used Plato’s confession as an illustration for the immense suffering that women have been encountering.

2.2.5.4. Women’s Refusal of Femaleness as the Cause of their status of inferiority

The way women conceptualise themselves is outlined by society. The black woman herself starts lamenting her being female, “*if I was a man*” (84), Mem daily and wistfully wishes to be a man and revenge herself and her daughters. Ruth too, with her inclination to wear like boys may demonstrate the black woman’s wishes to be a male. They may therefore see in ‘being male’ freedom and end of tyranny. In this sense, what the black female character experiences is what is referred to by *Gender-dysphoria* and which occurs when a person feels distress with the gender they were born with, for it does not seem to match their gender identity. The state of gender-dysphoria that women in *The Third Life of Grange Copeland* develop emerges as a reaction against the attributes which have been determined to women and which they find contemptuous, and at times, offensive.

Mem’s wishes *to be a man* indicate her refusal of her subordination and inferiority to man because in so being, she lacks power and hence does not ensure any societal shielding. “*If I was a man, I’d give every man in sight and that I ever met up with a beating, maybe even chop up a few with my knife, they so pig-headed and mean*” (84). She grieves her repulsive reality of being a female; for she knows that she is the only loser in this unfair distribution of power in her man-woman relationship. This also reflects the notion that as long as she is a woman, she cannot use violence, that males are more socially privileged and upheld of than females are, and that, it is this privilege, which supplies men with the opportunity and the right to offend women.

However, the black woman is never ashamed of her being ‘black’. “*He [Brownfiled] did not make her ashamed of her color though ... and as his own colored skin annoyed him it meant for her to humble her*” (58). From this standpoint, one may figure

out that the black skin is a burden for black men more than it is for black women. Blackness of skin annoys man, for it marginalises him. Black women, as already-marginalised group, regard blackness as a reason for humility; and not a source for humiliation. For Mem, colour is “something the ground does to flowers and that is an end for it” (58). Mem does not feel victim for the racist society or racist ideology as she feels victim for her man. The albino babies she and even Margaret, Brownfield’s mother, once had may illustrate her notion about colour⁷.

2.2.6. Women’s Superiority as a Source for Men’s Fear and Envy

Men are afraid of women’s strength, owing to the fact that it constitutes a threat for them and for their masculine identity. Black men are afraid of their women’s dispositions while assuming that, though weak, the black female proves herself better and stronger. The minute she shows that despite all the harm she receives, she –at least- does not cease providing love and support for her children; qualities that no male character could hold or maintain in *The Third Life of Grange Copeland*. Women also appear to own natural traits and attitudes that are traditionally defined as male gender attributes, like courage. These qualities are proved to be absent in male characters with regard to their resort to silence in front of their white oppressors, and to shrugs whenever they find it impossible to fix problems or to attend to difficult situations. Black men can be read as schizophrenic, for the double gender identity role they play between the white supremacist society and the family.

Homophobia as defined by Kimmel “is the fear that other men will unmask us, emasculate us, reveal to us and the world that we do not measure up, that we are not real men” (Kimmel 65). Starting from such an understanding of homophobia, both Grange and Brownfield are homophobic. Brownfield has developed apathy and hatred in the person of Mem because of his homophobia. He makes her pass through strains and pains, yet she remains resolute. Her eagerness and her endeavour to live in decent houses and to ensure a decent life to her children reflect her still alive determination. Her natural superiority and her intrinsic strength never perish, contrary to *his own power* which is readily gained from society.

Men's loss of their economy provider role makes them jealous of women. Brownfield understands his obligatory responsibility for the economic provision for his family; yet, he realises his impossible affordability and therefore turns into a fierce, violent and bad-tempered man. "Brown, too, becomes neurotically jealous of his wife and degrades her to the point where he can recover part of his ego by feeling superior to her" (Butler 197). Her ability to be the sole provider for her family threatens his ego as a chauvinist patriarch. He also recognises that Mem is educated while he is not⁷; she works while he turns jobless as he loses his low-waged-job. This makes him feel –besides his jealousy—socially inferior and he therefore strive to *create* her urgent inferiority. His hurt pride makes him bring Mem down to his level –or much more down, for she is a woman. Mem's higher status as school teacher represents a menace for him; hence he reckons that he would feel more like a man if she is dragged from school teaching and turns to domestic works, as a servant. And this is what he actually does while forcing her to domestic works.

Mem's discovery of her 'self' rests in gardening, reading books, and keeping the house clean. Although these acts are traditionally viewed as feminine, yet she is dearly devoted to them while she defines them as her own art, an art that Brownfield does not encourage in her. Brownfield "shoved her and she knocked over her flower boxes, spilling flowers and dirt. She scrambled shakily to her knees, then to her blistered and callused feet, sniffing and putting and wrinkled hard hand to her head" (78). Mem feels her identity and power stifled, since her artistic creativity is denied. He also dirties and stains the table cloth that she proudly manages to make white, and he destroys her books and magazines. Women appreciate these feminine items and acts because they are socialised to. Seeing her so involved in them, Brownfield manages to deprive her of them to make her suffer. The author succeeds in voicing the text's main discursive enunciation and that reveals both: that black men are socially conditioned to behave as 'men' -dominant figures- and this is because they are males, and that their masculinity is subject to underestimation – because they are blacks- and eventually to withdrawal and failure. This however requires from black men to be hyper-masculine with their women. This means being more dominant and violent than other men.

Therefore, socialisation seems to play a critical role in giving rise to men's sexism against women and hence increasing their violence on them. The recurrent and invalid

excuse of *'I am a man'* that Brownfield resorts to in order to absolve himself from his very own guilt grows in one's mind the notion that black men are culturally and socially predisposed to viewing their women as their natural 'inferiors'. Women are viewed as destined to be dominated and controlled. This excuse rather convicts them than absolves them of sexism and misogyny.

2.3. Men's and Women's Contrasting Gender Qualities

Walker's female characters are all described to embody contrasting qualities. They all embrace love and hatred; strength and weakness; ugliness and beauty; acumen and insanity. Similarly, some feminine attributes highlight the personalities of her male characters. Through them, and mainly through introducing the character Ruth, Walker intends to reject gender ideology.

The usage of violent and weak black men paralleled with the usage of excessively oppressed and independent black women is an attempt to articulate the frustration the blacks live intermingled with inequality and imbalance in inter-gender relationships. Almost all the characters in *The Third Life of Grange Copeland* exhibit both male and female characteristics according to different situations; except for violence which is exclusively introduced as being a male attribute as will be demonstrated in the following chapter.

2.3.1. Men's Embodiment of Female Gender Attributes

In his first life, Grange is introduced to the readers as an abusive husband and father, who batters, curses, threatens his wife; and neglects and frightens his child, Brownfield. "[Grange] never looked at [Brownfield] or acknowledged him in anyway..." (8). Grange's insistent indifference to his son and his refusal to acknowledge his presence deeply hurts Brownfield who "He saw him reach down to touch him. He saw his hand stop, just before it reached his cheek. Brownfield was crying silently and wanted his father to touch the tears. He moved towards his father's hands, as if moving unconsciously in his sleep" (21). His second life is torpid period; a period that spans the life he deserts his family and lives in the North with the whites who make him experience --while never acknowledging his presence-- the same *numbness* that his son Brownfield feels from him. And his third life is that of hope, when Grange changes to a loving and affectionate nurturer to Ruth.

Brownfield plays the role of a babysitter to his illegitimate half-brother, Star; he becomes in full charge of the baby's rearing and nurturance. Rearing or caring for children and expressing weak emotions are feminine expectations that are considered as restricting norms of manhood. Brownfield, when still adolescent, could no more hide weak emotions and he cries; because, his father refuses to touch him even when being alone with him in the dark, and when presuming that Brownfield is deeply asleep. Though a *boy*, he *cries* because of the lack of affection. He cries as an adult, too, feeling melancholy when imprisoned because of the murder crime he has committed against Mem. According to social standards, this action symbolises weakness and femininity because it is socially and culturally acceptable only for girls (women). Grange resorts to this feminine reaction when he too could not help exhibiting his emotions and cries bitterly when assimilating that the Judge is in Brownfield's favour for Ruth's custody. Granges' sympathy towards the white pregnant woman, while left alone deserted by her lover, also stands as a feminine attitude unexpected from men. In a similar way, Brownfield reacts towards the pain of Mem when nursing her sore feet and toward the five-year-aged Daphne while tortured by her wounds caused by arsenic when working in the whites' cotton fields. Through these illustrative incidents, Walker refers to the impossibility of preserving one's masculine or feminine role; that gender roles are rooted in clichéd and institutionalised beliefs. Gender does not refer to any instinctive or biological composition of men or women, but it rather refers to socially constructed and culturally ready-made identities to be adopted by them (males and females).

Feeling of pity while seeing Mem and his five-year old daughter while working as wage-labourers and suffering from different types of oppression by the white men, is a sign which does not however indicate his sorrow and compassion for them. He feels that he cannot save himself and them from these enslaving conditions; an indication of his failure to be his family protector as another traditional masculine role which he does not; cannot fulfill in front of the white supremacy.

As he becomes Ruth's nurturer, Grange buys her feminine hygienic products "napkins, a belt, and lovely talc smelled like warm rose" (193). Grange does not seem to be embarrassed by this new role anymore as he would be if this was the case in his first life. In his third life, Grange promotes a sense of *egalitarianism*. It is important to note that

maintaining a balance between both gender roles is healthier and more fruitful than sustaining only those related to one gender, i.e. being either masculine or feminine.

Classifying men as tough and emotionless characters is strongly confirmed in *The Third Life of Grange Copeland*. They --and mainly Grange—are nevertheless also portrayed as developing crises of tantrum; despite its being a sign of weakness and failure. They could not help being defeated by the frustration they are always subject to and which is caused by the whites; hence, they try to reduce their rage and anger of their emotional distress by displaying aggression on themselves. Besides their violence on their women, black men's hysteria presents their *weak violence*. Josie too is described as being hysteric mainly in her dreams; but tantrum in her case is quite *natural* because it is defined as traditional female gender attribute.

Temper Tantrum (also known as hysteria) is a violent demonstration of rage and frustration. However, tantrum can be regarded as a female characteristic because it conveys weakness; failure to deal with frustration; and weakness to alleviate or lessen the causes of one's frustration. Grange proves hysteric while he, each Saturday night, "would roll out the door and into the yard, crying like a child in big wrenching sobs and rubbing his head in the dirt" (12). Both Grange and Brownfield show symptoms of tantrum while feeling frustration by the whites' racial discrimination and oppression.

Brownfield is never discerned as a *true man*, for his subordinate stratum in front of his white bosses as a black sharecropper, and then because of his failure of the financial control of his family while he lives only on sharecropping. Even his abuses to his wife and the children are a sign of weakness because they demonstrate his inability to deal with his own failures. He could not do anything to save himself and his family from the white landowners' victimisation and hence, vents all his anger on them. This implies that he fully grasps that the whites control him and all his life, but never reacts against them. Sharecropping dehumanises him and ruins his life; and he oddly allows this oppression on him and turns his rage on Mem. Recognising that his gender role is in peril, he abuses Mem physically and mentally to reinforce his role as a man. His lack of masculine security, his lack of independence and strength guide him to be physically and mentally abusive to his wife.

Male characters in Walker's novel have learned to live under the traditional codes of masculinity. In this regard, one would clearly notice that Brownfield tries to exercise his role as man anyway. It is in the name of his sexism; his belief in the supreme meaning of masculinity that he abuses his wife. It is out of his belief in being a man means to be more powerful, dominant, and above all violent that he searches for an exit to demonstrate his masculinity and manliness through. "...Walker came to an understanding that people only control others to the degree that they are allowed" (Darden 40). Hence, black men in *the Third Life of Grange Copeland* learn with and on whom they can practice principles of their masculinity and with whom they cannot.

"In white men's presence they respond to their queries with 'yassir', prohibited from making direct eyes contact... they feel helpless and entrapped; the fact that prompts abuse of their masculinity" (Bates 57) The black man's weakness rests in his not believing in himself and his abilities; he does not trust his abilities and his potentials in facing the white man. "Brownfield nodded up and down still smiling but with his eyes carefully averted. He thought about turning down the offer but when the words of refusal came to his lips he found they would not come up... 'yassir', he said finally' (79-80). Brownfield and the other black men are weak and not self-confident; signs that contradict with the traditional definition of *man* and of his conventional roles in society. With regard to traditional male roles, what the black man often displays are feminine attributes.

As far as his physical traits are concerned, Brownfield –as an adolescent-- is not described as revealing signs of masculinity, either. His body, and especially his hands, rather shows traits of femininity. His hands were "narrow beautiful hands" (83); "aristocratic hands like hers [his mother] with fingers meant for jewels..." (5). Walker deliberately describes Brownfield's hands as feminine and as meant for jewels, which is an attempt to refer to gender as a socio-cultural construction rather than a biological one. Brownfield uses his once-delicate and refine hands how to abuse his woman. The reader, therefore, could easily distinguish these very hands which were meant for fineness and his present hands which have turned to a hurting and painful weapon against Mem and the three daughters. One important notion that has been brilliantly referred to by whiting (124) is that boys victims of father's absence are more likely to develop feminine gender identity because as children they identify with the mother. She also admits that as adults they are

too likely to adopt a kind of ‘protest masculinity’ by behaving in a hyper-masculine way as a reaction against their feminine identity which is socially inappropriate for them as men. Regarding that Grange has always been an uninvolved father to Brownfield, Brownfield has learnt femininity from Margaret, his mother; and once adult he turns into a virile male.

This is an indication of Brownfield’s transformation from a feminine boy to a macho to, a masculine man who holds no pity towards women (his wife and daughters). It is an excellent depiction of how the black male child transforms from a gender-neuter to misogynist and women abuser. This hence rests as an allusion to the fact that social and gender behaviours are learnt ones. His hands which have once been described as aristocratic and as meant for jewels are now “too deformed for any work except that done to and for animals. The harder and more unfeeling the elephant-hide skin on his hands became the more often he planted his fists against his wife’s head” (83). It is only late in the text that readers understand why Walker has mentioned Brownfield’s once beautiful hands at the outset of the novel. This is too connotative, for it bears significant transformation of gender-neutral young Brownfield to a misogynist and violent adult.

Identically, readers of *the Third Life of Grange Copeland* are likely to fail to meet their expectations of Brownfield as a benevolent husband, a nurturing and loving father and as they came to deduce through the recurrent daydream –where he shares true love with his imaginary wife and children-- he has kept having before getting married. This is not the case, though, as once adult, Brownfield’ masculinity becomes more problematic not less. However, a proleptic reading of the novel may hence lead readers to foresee possible transformation of Brownfield, for the narrative has insisted from the outset on the depiction of power imbalance between the two genders.

Walker’s description of Brownfield’s physical appearance does not constitute any of the traditional character traits of males. This purposeful and schematic description is implemented to stress the separation of gender from sex, to demonstrate that gender is not something we are born with but it is rather acquired from society and culture. This reflects the same notion of Kimmel and Messner while emphasising difference between gender and sex “Psychological and social differences [genders] are more the result of the way cultures interpret, shape and modify these biological inheritances [sexes]” (Kimmel and Messner 4-

5). Gender roles are proved to not be biological or pre-existing norms; they are however socially and culturally constructed.

The novel also provides hints about the young Brownfield's future probable metamorphosis into a monstrous husband. "One day he would know everything and be equal to his cousins and to his father and perhaps even to God" (11). This is how Walker has predisposed her readers from the first pages of the novel to form speculations about the future life cycle of Brownfield and which would not differ much from his father's. While wondering --as a child-- about adult males' violence on their women, he himself would grow ever more violent on his wife and children. Wondering of his father's and other men's power, he himself turns into a dominant and powerful man in relation to women.

While treating his wife and daughters as his subordinates and while aggressively behaving towards them, Brownfield proves himself as prototypical male character (beating, traducing and exercising all types of abuse on them). However, within his hegemonic masculinity, Brownfield hides a sense of vulnerability, for fear of being effeminated. He frequently strives to conceal it from the outside world because he refuses to be identified as feminine. Similarly and throughout the end of the story, Grange publically takes on female gender roles which are restricted in nurturance and care giving; he, nevertheless, reveals those signs of femininity only in treating his granddaughter, Ruth. Grange's economic dependency on Josie is another sign that disconfirms his masculine gender identity, and hence confirms that gender is not a biological state but a cultural construct. Grange's approval of being sheltered by a woman also feminises him.

Brownfield's revealing of *weakness* (emotional, mental and sometimes physical) on several occasions classify him among the effeminate men as far as the patriarchal culture and its stereotypes are concerned. On the other hand, displaying rudeness, dominance and even violence toward his wife and daughters give him typical masculine traits that are supported by society. His weakness and dependence on others clearly displays through his failure to be home breadwinner as his gender prescribes for him to be. The reader can also notice how Brownfield depends on Mem to teach him reading and writing at the beginning of their marriage. Hence, her educational superiority also deems him effeminate although he does not confess it.

The author's insistence on Brownfield's compassion and physical frailness as a child is to emphasise that power and strength is not innate in man. These qualities are to acquire from society. His role as babysitter and his role as boy toy in Josie's inn as an adolescent (his relation with and dependency on Josie and her daughter, Lorene) reveal a reversal in terms of gender roles and attributes in Brownfield's personality, for they contradict and defy the traditional role of a man. He, however, abjures these feminine attributes when dealing with his woman later on in his adulthood, through his attempts to prove his hyper masculinity.

A confrontation –an internal conflict—seems to rise with black male characters between what they actually are and what they have been made to believe they have to be. Hampton states: “as long as they attribute themselves to the mainstream standards for appropriate masculine role, black men are confronted with what they are and what they have been led to believe they should be” (96). Alternatively expressed, one may say that black men could not match the male role they find themselves performing (that of low self-esteem, powerlessness and subordination) with the traditional male role attributed to them (that of domination); the fact that ends up in severe psychic troubles leading them to assume a clearly noticed hyper-masculine self (only with their women, nevertheless). Therefore, black women in the novel (as well as real women) are met with their expectations –although confining—of their female gender. Yet, black men are –although afforded with the privilege of power-- met with renouncement of certain freedoms because of their race.

2.3.2. Women's Embodiment of Masculine Gender Attribute

Margaret Copeland, being initially a model of the traditional female (submissive, weak, dependent and passive) is later transgendered to engage into masculine deeds and oddly adopt masculine qualities. Her obedience, submissiveness to her husband who continuously abuses her is clearly noticed by her son, Brownfield, while comparing her role of a wife to that of their dog. “His mother was like their dog in some ways. She didn't have a thing to say that did not in some ways show her submission to his father” (5). One cannot fail to notice, nevertheless, that what drives her to show excessive obedience and docility is forced silence. She renounces her voice to avoid constant arguments with her

violent man. Margaret is eventually described as regaining her voice through the quarrels she keeps having with Grange.

One important strategy that Margaret resorts to to defy Grange is transforming from the wholesome submissive wife to a violent and uncaring mistress of many lovers. She, thus, alters to a masculine persona. “it seemed to Brownfield that one day she was as he had always known her; kind, submissive, smelling faintly of milk; and the next day she was a wild woman looking for frivolous things, her heart’s good times, in the transient comfort of strangers” (20). A metamorphosis she eventually regrets, and she finishes with putting an end to herself and to her illegitimate baby. “She had sincerely regretted the baby. And now, humbly respecting her husband’s feelings she ignored it” (20).

The neglect of the baby is one form of her rejection of her duties as a mother and a woman. Instead, she makes Brownfield, her adolescent son; fulfil her role of babysitter of her infant (his half brother) while she seeks satisfying her pleasure with strangers as the text reveals. In so doing, she no longer feels herself a victim but rather competitor for Grange as an abusive husband. Margaret bypasses her role of the battered woman shifting to her new role of opponent. Therefore, she takes on and displays her husband’s masculine role.

Having control over herself and her own life makes of Josie a financially independent female. Thus, Josie creates Brownfield’s dependency on her by establishing her control over him. Therefore, in relation to Brownfield, “Josie is the *man*, for she keeps him by giving an allowance as long as he keeps her satisfied” (Tamalyn 40). She is pleased by her financial stability and independence as Brownfield’s economic need of her helps her emphasise the *masculine* role. “He was constantly dependent on Josie or Lorene [her daughter] for money, but with the understanding that he must work for his living and in exactly the ways they specified [through their sexual manipulation of him]” (47), In the meantime, her commitment and devotion to Grange conveys her submissiveness to and her emotional dependency on him. On the other hand, Josie and Lorene think they are using Brownfield as a sex slave, a sexual object, “Brownfield was a pawn that Josie and Lorene enjoyed” (47); while, he too thinks that –by asserting his sexual self—he is exploiting women and practicing one part of his masculinity. Hence, Josie is an amalgamation of

different contradiction and inconsistency as she exhibits an unbalanced disposition that condemns her towards leading a miserable and inauspicious life.

Walker represents the black mother as either accepting or denying the harsh responsibilities she is enduring. Both Margaret and Josie give birth to children but then do not mother them. They have both relinquished their responsibility towards their children. Motherhood presents a burden for them and which they hence get rid of by neglecting their children. “In a culture that idealises motherhood but holds real mothers in contempt, women know only well how near impossible it is to enact Mother but elicit the respect accorded to Fathers” (Griffin cited in Warren 1-2). Being sensitive, caring, soft and emotional are related to be feminine; contrastingly, none of these features is definitely applied to Josie as when dealing with her own daughter. Josie is –instead—depicted as independent and rude with and as not taking any charge of her daughter Lorene’s *emotional* upbringing. Though they seem as cues of strength, Josie’s attitude reflects her passivity which is a female traditional trait. In accepting male roles, both Josie and Margaret neglect motherhood.

Walker represents Lorene –in the very few passages in which she appears-- with a new touch while adding to her temperament some traits and attributes which are predominately connected to males. “She looked more like somebody’s brother than anybody’s girl; she had a reputation for toughness that earned her an abundant respect from youngsters who hoped to grow up to be like her” (44). Despite Lorene seems to accomplish a flat role in the narrative, her significance is substantial. Lorene is a man-like female character described by Walker as too hairy, tough looking, physically strong and aggressive as another demonstration of gender as being a social non-innate construct.

Although, the physical and emotional oppression is a hindrance for black women in Walker’s work against realising their selfhood, they all make efforts to mark a change in their situations. They are all in search for self and identity discovery. Mem escapes the level of economic dependency on men. She escapes what Franz Fanon calls ‘dependency complex’. This is a good start for a woman who is geared to search for self-discovery and wholeness. This becomes apparent and clear in the new decent house she manages to rent for her and her family against Brownfield’s will in town. The reader notices how

Brownfield starts to respect and never beat Mem. He however feels that his manliness is crushed and in order to exercise his masculine gender role anew he forces her and the children to move to the South to make her lose some of this economic superiority and independency.

Brownfield lay in wait for the return of Mem's weakness (...) Planting a seed to grow that would bring her down in weakness and dependence and to her ultimate destruction (...) What a sly and triumphant joy he felt when she could no longer keep her job. She was ill; the two pregnancies he forced on her in the new house, although they did not bear live fruits almost completely destroyed her health (101-103-104).

Ruth spells out firm words to Brownfield that show her refusal to be brought up by him. Refusing to be possessed by him becomes a symbol for her,, rebellion against any form of repression. Ruth's rebel against masculinity chauvinism emerges at a very early age (four), she meets her father' physical and psychological abuses to her mother with strong and deliberate words. Ornette –on her part-- frequently talks sarcastically to her mother, Mem, because she does not hold any respect towards her, for nothing but her submission to Brownfield, her father. She thinks that she has made the worst choice having married him (112). “Some women (mainly adolescents), struggle their fathers; they may say ‘I will struggle against this inaccessible and arrogant male. They may rebel against mothers as well and say ‘I refuse to be a martyr like my mother; that is why I reject my role of a woman and transform into a boy’ ” (Daco 40. My own translation)

None of the characters, be they males or females, could match to their gender. Hence, a gender uncertainty and identity ambiguity reveals throughout the text which launches an urgent call for abolishing this ideology of gender. The formulation of an ideal masculinity is problematised by the depiction of men and women characters as embracing feminine and masculine traits respectively. Hence, unusual combination is introduced by Walker whereby she mixes both genders in one individual. The performance of femininity in the Third Life of Grange Copeland is just as complicated and problematic as that of masculinity. Individual identity is a site of cultural anxiety. Thus, there is a conflict in Walker's representation of gender. What it means to be male or female can never be satisfactorily resumed.

2.4. Gender Foundation as Imposed on Both Genders

Brownfield blames destiny for his bad actions “I felt just like these words here ... the line already decided. No moving to the left or the right, like a mule wearing blinders” (166). The individual does not choose his/her being a man or woman. The individual’s autonomy is confined as far as his/her choice of roles and traits is concerned. We, as human beings, are only directed by what our gender prescribes for us. Society creates culture that is constantly founding, constructing and imposing notions of gender on both men and women.

Brownfield never expresses his love to his wife Mem or to his daughters, for he thinks this would lower his self-esteem and his feelings of manhood. Expressing love and other emotions is one form of weakness for men. There are many actions, symbols and conventions that correlate within the text to convey Brownfield’s ostensible regret for offending Mem and her daughters. Brownfield seems obliged to hate Mem; his sexism compels him not to show any beautiful emotions toward his woman, lest he would be evaluated as feminine. Meanwhile, he is firmly aware that her beautiful soul deserves adoring and not abuses. He even blames himself wistfully for having her once for marriage as she has started receiving rude *punishment* for *guilt*, for a sin, she has never committed nor had a hand in. Her *femaleness* condemns her to live and be treated as a subordinate; her being woman makes her subject to male violence because society approves and condones it. Brownfield painfully confesses his concealed love to Mem as if it were suffocated truth with torture. “*I loved your mama* [Brownfield confesses to his daughter Ruth after her mother’s death]... *These tortured words ... sound as if they escaped from close dungeon in his soul*, hung on the air as a kind of passionate gibberish” (219). Man’s belief in his *gender* and his masculinity as impeding him from revealing and expressing his emotions is openly depicted by the author. It is hard for a man to vow love and show feelings. Showing emotions is much more associated with femininity, and accordingly, men avoid it. This *dungeon* is where all the theories of gender and its implications, of all institutionalised backgrounds that derive his and other men’s misogynistic feelings and views of women, find shelter.

2.5. Conclusion

The Third Life of Grange Copeland is an infinite repository and abundant reservoir for male and female characters' gender formation, where girls grow into feminine females and boys into masculine males. Society and family alike impose norms for gender that would be taken as duties for one's whole life. Hence, female gender attributes, such as submissiveness, lack of self-esteem and of self-confidence, and nurturance are mostly noticed in women; whereas, strength, toughness, aggression and the eagerness for domination in men. This unfair socio-cultural distribution of gender traits and of power would very likely influence male and female characters' inter-gender relationship, as the next chapter will reveal.

NOTES

1. Daphne, Ornette and Ruth find relief in remembering those very few and secure years of happiness and which become their favourite game, for it makes them feel secure. These so-called souvenirs derive from their imagination and hallucination; they are rather built on a lie.
2. Mem and her father have never seen each other, for he deserts her mother while being pregnant and never asks or searches about his daughter. Calling for her father's help, he ignores and fails her. Mem writes some letters for her father and which he never bothers himself to answer; she begs him to help her escape Brownfield's (her husband) violence; she asks him to embrace her within his family, but he refuses.
3. His daughters go astray after their mother's death; Daphne goes insane and is sleeping in a mental institution, and Ornette becomes an easygoing woman and none knows of her whereabouts.
4. Brownfield never helps or takes part in domestic work even though he loses his job and hence gets unemployed while she works the whole day in factories.
5. According to the American Heritage Dictionary of Idioms by Christine Ammer 2nd edition (2013), wearing the pants refers to an exercise of controlling authority in a household, as in Grandma wears the pants at our house. This idiom (generally applied to women and dating from the mid-1500, a time when they were allowed to wear only skirts) equates pants with an authoritative and properly masculine role. Originally put as wear the breeches, it remains in use despite current fashions.
6. Josie offers him the money she has won from the sale of her inn, which is her only source of survival to help him reach a degree of independency from the whites.
7. The albino baby who seems to refuse both colours (black and white) demonstrates the death of colour.
8. Mem's higher economic and educational resources provoke Brownfield's violence on her, providing that he is an ignorant and --recently gets-- a jobless man. The lower status of man generates higher levels of wife abuse. Brownfield is one among the blacks who were denied the right of education by the whites' racial imperialism. He is left illiterate because of his parents' ignorance and need of him as a child labourer to help them pay back their debts as sharecroppers.

CHAPTER THREE:
THE EMERGENCE OF GENDER-BASED
VIOLENCE

CHAPTER THREE

THE EMERGENCE OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

God was declared male, and a man was declared to be created in his likeness. Eve became the symbol of temptation and sin” (Al Hibri 176).

Female characters in Walker’s work suffer marginalisation and highly noticeable discrimination at both social and familial levels. They are also subject to all forms of violence to which they react with excessive submissiveness, tolerance and meekness. The text problematises the notion of gender violence, for the possible different and divergent readings it provides. In general, a patriarchal atmosphere dictated most inter-gender interactions in the narrative where women are the weak side. In this light, what engenders this self-abasement, this calm and non-aggressive reaction of women in *The Third Life of Grange Copeland* seems an urgent and unavoidable question. This question, however, entails a series of problematic and controversial issues to raise in this chapter; the most important of which is what creates male violence on women in this novel. In the present chapter, we will explore to what extent black men and women’s gender roles do contribute to engender spousal abuse. Through a feminist reading of *The Third Life of Grange Copeland*, we shall examine Walker’s representation of male violence on women in the novel as a phenomenon stemming in gender inequalities which are structured by male-dominated culture.

Black woman’s endurance of intimate partner violence in this racial, impoverished and patriarchal environment makes her enter a double-oppression --if not a triple oppression—life cycle. The targets, or victims, of spousal abuse in this novel are African American women who are regarded as subordinated and oppressed at both the public and private spheres. Women in *The Third Life of Grange Copeland* suffer from unequal power. Because of the violation of their rights and restriction of their freedom, they all suffer psychologically, sexually, mentally, emotionally, and physically. In an attempt to gain control over their female partners, the male abusers vary and repeat their violent behaviours on their women. Wife abusers do not fear prosecution against them because

they are culturally supported and socially protected through gender –based power imbalances.

It has been stereotyped among the black community that black men abuse their own women as one way to alleviate feelings of frustration caused by the whites. “His hatred of Shipley’s whiteness had absolved Grange of his own guilt, and his blackness protected him from any feelings of shame that threatened within himself” (178). However, I believe that the whites’ racism and oppression of the blacks is used as a scapegoat for the violence that black men perpetuate on their women, for their own guilt. Additionally, it is this very stereotype that leads all of Mem, Margaret and Josie to submit to male violence, and hence accept their own victimisation.

A sexist orientation would cross one’s mind while discussing the causes of this violence. Male gender roles seem to collide with those of female gender roles to bring about wife abuse. In other words, black males’ conceptions of themselves as ‘males’, and black females’ conceptions of themselves as ‘females’ are highly interconnected with the emergence of domestic violence in *The Third Life of Grange Copeland*.

If one regards men’s masculinity as responsible for generating this cruel and violent treatment on their wives, to what extent are men in *The Third Life of Grange Copeland* violent on their women? Moreover, if one considers that frustration –or the blacks’ oppression— as responsible for deriving these atrocity acts to occur, why are only black men violent on their women while the contrary is not –cannot be-- true?

3.1. Gender-Based Violence in the Third Life of Grange Copeland

3.1.1. Male Violence as an Attempt of Maintaining Power and Conforming to Norms of Masculinity

Gender inequality manifests as male dominance that leads, in time, to intimate partner violence (IPV) against women (Garcia-Moreno et al 3). *The Third Life of Grange Copeland* holds a mirror to the socioeconomic scenario of 20th century black America where the whites’ racial discrimination of the blacks culminated. In spite of its being loaded with several motifs alluding to the whites’ racism, poverty, sharecropping, lack of education, and others, Walker’s novel puts strong stress and focus on women and their

suffering. Walker herself admits in an interview with O' Brian that in her work, "It is the women and how they are treated that colors everything" (O'Brien 197). Hence, gender inequality and violence pervade fundamental sections of the novel.

It is through analysing gender that we can explore power possession, power functioning and power distribution between men and women in the novel. Male supremacy shapes the socio-cultural structures of the American society at large and the African American society in particular. Culturally, institutionalised traditional customs and widespread beliefs, which make of women *men's puppets*, present an implied permission that allows man to use violence as a means to control his own family. This explains why all of Brownfield, Grange and the other men are violent on their own female partners.

Gender-based violence and inequality pervade fundamental parts of the novel. Several tight metaphors and thrifty sentences are reused in the narrative to describe domestic violence as recycling process. The same dreadful scene where Grange is described to come home every Saturday night drunk and threatening his wife and son, Brownfield, is repeated to picture Brownfield's rage, as a married man, and his brutal violence on Mem and their daughters. Their internal conflicts fusing with external clashes (with the socio-economic life) result in *more* abuses to their wives and children¹.

The novel illustrates how families and individuals alike get influenced by their society's culture that leads men put gender inequalities into practice; and how traditional notions of manhood intersect with the economic and racial oppression that the blacks, men and *women* live, creating by that masculine identity crisis that they try hard to fix through the use of violence as a sign of hyper virility. As Black American society is undeniably deeply rooted in patriarchal norms, Walker, in *the Third Life of Grange Copeland*, problematises the issue of wife abuse in reference to an Afro-American cultural context. She, hence, challenges the hegemony of a permanently supremacist ideology. Therefore, Grange's life is used as a vehicle through which the blacks' experience with racism and sexism is drawn.

Any action, indeed any word by the black female character is interpreted by her male partner as a threat, challenge and an attempt to break his insecure identity as a male. In search of repairing their fragile, if not lost, sense of self, black men trap and underline

their lives with physical and psychological violence on their women; echoing—by that—Walker’s theory of violence as destructive to the whole community. The novel articulates that the black community did not experience only one sort of antagonism and which was believed to take place with the whites, but also another --more discrete and more sensible at the same time—antagonism occurring between males and females. Therefore, Walker clearly expressed her concern over the physical and emotional abuse that black men inflict on their women through the suffering of Mem, Margaret, Josie and other flat female characters.

The author takes readers through forty years journey of the relationship between men and women. Tidied up incidents in the novel help clarify the roots of male violence on their women. The author’s link between *male violence on women* and black male characters’ attempts to restore *manhood*, confirms wife abuse as a performance of *masculinity*. The male characters fail to prove their manhood as they fail to be breadwinners in their own families. Thus, exerting violence on their wives becomes the only way to bolster their feelings of low self-esteem; it is the only way to assert their masculinity and to establish and assure their position within the male peer group. When men’s superiority /power is questionable, they feel insecure; a feeling of insecurity that they transmit to their wives and children. Therefore, Brownfield and the others beat and emotionally abuse their women to fully embrace the *role of man*.

Thus, violence in *The Third Life of Grange Copeland* is represented in a three-phase-life narrative. The three phases of life that Grange goes through are symbolic of three life times; his own, his son’s and his granddaughter’s as reflecting patriarchal violence recurring in tri-generational life. Margaret, Grange’s first wife, shares with him his first phase of life and witnesses his rude and cruel treatment of her. Josie, his second wife, shares with him his third life as she endures his symbolic violence. Despite, the reader may sense a gap in the narrative as far as Grange’s second life is concerned and which he spends alone in the North, yet they soon fill it –in the course of the story— while they learn much of the missed events from the flashbacks that the author supplies from now and then in her narrative passages. In addition, Walker also makes use of Brownfield’s adult life as an alternative for the absence of Grange –while being in the North. Hence, the story unravels the mystery of Grange’s second life as we are notified of

the severity of wife abuse through the union of his son Brownfield, being a replica of his father, and his wife Mem.

Gender-based violence “encompasses a wide range of human rights violations, including sexual abuse, rape, domestic violence, sexual assault and harassment, trafficking of women and girls and several harmful traditional practices. It is the most pervasive yet least-recognised human rights abuse in the world” (WHO 1). Viewed from such perspective, what men characters practice on their women in *the Third Life of Grange Copeland* are actual acts of *violence*.

Hegemonic patriarchal culture strongly dominates society that it engenders and promotes violence against females as justifiable and admissible at all societal levels (Greiff 3). Intimate partner violence in this novel appears to follow the same path as that of racial discrimination or any other form of oppression that minorities endure both in terms of intensity and motives which can be best summed up in the term ‘subordination’. “The cultural context model links gender ideology and subordination in individual couples with experiences of racial subordination and colonisation in marginalised communities” (Socoloff 167). Female characters encounter severe violence by their men, violence that is rooted in institutionalised gender beliefs degrading --by that-- the image and status of women, and legitimating violence against them. They are hence experiencing the same life cycle of the blacks under racism. Therefore, racism and sexism creation moves towards the same course.

Man asserts masculinity through the use of *force* that manifests in all acts of violence. Bell Hooks –in an interview with Gloria Watkins (1989) insists that “sexist notions of masculinity legitimise the use of violence to maintain control, male domination of women, children, and even other men” (Hooks 77). The relationship between Brownfield and Mem, Grange and Margaret or Josie has always been the result of manipulation of power. These women’s subjugation is the result of this asymmetrical power relation where they are the ones who lack power. The legitimating of this dominant-submissive power relationship (as biased against women) gives rise to domestic violence against Mem and the other women.

This signifies that patriarchy manifests in the form of violence as practiced by men over their women. All kinds of abuse occur under the shade of a male-dominated culture. Verbal violence, psychological, sexual and physical abuse; all appear because of gender discrimination ideology. IPV against women is a fact that is realistically portrayed by Walker in *The Third Life of Grange Copeland*; violence against women is meaningfully linked to the larger context of women's statuses in the actual patriarchal American society.

A woman is not considered as an equal partner in a relationship with man; the fact that legitimises power imbalance among couples interpreted through domination over women and even violence against them (Carabi 26). Likewise, a non-egalitarian relationship seems to establish itself in marriages of Margaret and Grange; Mem and Brownfield; and Josie and Grange, where women always occupy the subordinate position, and where men use the power that patriarchy granted them to subdue women. Patriarchy ensures a system of subjugation for all of Margaret, Josie, Mem and her daughters as women. Based on the traditional position of privilege, Brownfield has the full right to oppress and beat Mem in the same way that Grange offends Margaret and Josie and every other male character does to his fellow female.

Accordingly, Grange deserts and neglects his both wives, Margaret and Josie, and he affronts and humiliates them. He threatens to kill Margaret whom he eventually leads to suicide, he treats Josie badly too and succeeds to increase her psychological vulnerability, and he even sells black women whom he does not know in the north. Brownfield also, in his turn, victimises Mem and the three daughters; he batters, traduces and disdains Mem, and he terrifies the children and destroys their psyche. Daphne's lunatic behaviours may have developed out of the horror her father had created in her and in her two younger sisters mainly while having watched him murdering their mother. And similarly, every male character exerts different forms of violence on his female partner.

To fathom out the mystery of black men's violence on black women, the novel stands, to some extent, as misleading because it reads as an endless contradiction and predicament while discussing its different scenes and which seem to refer to the direct effects of frustration felt by black people. Among these serious drawbacks, intimate partner violence delusively appears at the vertex.

The novel seems to provide a set of cues that lays on confusion and awkwardness rather than exact cues as far as the causes of this violence is concerned. The reader may therefore find it difficult to take stand in front of the different situations and possibilities provided by the text. The author's transformation and arrangement of the facts displayed within this narrative, deceptively leads one to deduce that the black female character seems to exist as a fitting target for her male partner who needs vent his anger and wrath as a frustration-aggression response².

The further one moves from the centre of power, the more some men feel the need to assert that patriarchal power over women. Being somewhat marginalised themselves, they need to affirm their patriarchal authority by violence against women, knowing that their power is less secure and also subject to those men nearer the centre. Thus, violence is a symptom of insecure power, not a way to obtain it (Cousins 177).

The role of manhood, or of asserting manhood, is vital in the lives of male characters. The novel opens in the first life of Grange Copeland and which clearly depicts his violence on his wife, Margaret. His son, Brownfield who –as the narrative goes on towards the second life of Grange—grows up to turn into a violent husband to his wife, Mem. He starts physically and psychologically abusing her in the same (and more severely than) way his father offended his mother, Margaret. Therefore, an atmosphere filled with male chauvinism, constant search of preserving power, and wife abuse is well figured out through the entire lives of Margaret, Mem, and Josie and which bespeak their utmost affliction.

3.1.1.1. Grange's Violence on Margaret

The text displays clues indicating Grange's suffering from the whites' tyranny followed –right afterwards—by a tendency that supplies cues of his direct, and indirect, violence on Margaret. A paradox seems to display here; a contradiction in black men's disposition, and which may convey either that they are not really bad, and that there is something more powerful; an unseen force, pushing them to be so, or that they are 'hypocrites' who attribute their 'evils' to others. Innocent reading, hence, of the text makes us reckon that because of a hard week --and that is tagged with overwork and the white landowners' domination over and ill-treatment to him, Grange turns back home desperate

and ready to do nothing but eject his long concealed resentment on his wife, Margaret. “Late Saturday night Grange would come home lurching drunk, threatening to kill his wife and Brownfield, stumbling and shooting off his shotguns.” (12). Grange believes that, against his will, he abuses women. He thinks that it is against his determination and wishes that “he had stumbled on the necessary act [wife abuse] that black men must commit to regain or to manufacture their manhood, their self-respect” (153). Violence on women is a necessary act for black men to restore their lost manliness and crushed egos. Black men regain manhood and self-respect at the expense of their own women’s well being.

Both physical and verbal violence interpret Grange’s treatment of Margaret. He batters her and threatens to desert her and their son, Brownfield; he humiliates and insults her. And under the harsh conditions (hard work, low wages, poverty, debt, depression, and the whites’ racial discrimination) that they all men and women undergo, Grange’s abuses to Margaret were sure to increase. He eventually turns harsher and crueller with his wife; as if he tried to avenge his failure on her “*But these activities depressed him, and he said things on Wednesday nights that made his wife cry*” (12). Depression worsens the case, for it increases his violence against her but *not creates* it. Conceiving of her as socially weaker than, and inferior to him, he starts abusing her in an attempt to gain control over her as his subordinate. Conceiving of himself the *man* of the household, he thinks he has the right to dominate and abuse his *woman*.

Different sections from the narrative yield clues about Grange’s violence on Margaret. His desertion of her (when heading North), his adultery or marital infidelity when having Josie as a mistress, his indifference and silence; they all come to convey something which has an *ostensible* common relation with both his depression (because of frustration) and his violence on Margaret.

Grange’s move to the North, while leaving any word to neither of his family members, is the very illustration of his neglect of Margaret. This act indeed reflects selfishness, and it deeply hurts Margaret’s feelings as a woman. Grange himself gets aware of his mistakes, though very late, and even publically confesses it when reproaching himself --as an elderly (in his third life). “The crackers could make me run away from my

wife but where was the man in me that let me sneak off, never telling her about where I was going... never telling her how wrong I was myself" (207).

Margaret feels refused by her husband –particularly when he neglects her entreaties to return to her. Through his desertion, he makes her feel contempt, being refused and unwanted in public. In so doing, Grange exerts on her a psychological abuse, which is too damaging in the long run and which is responded to by suicide on the part of Margaret.

Gender stereotypes make men believe that they really *possess* women. Men in the novel start measuring women according to unfair stereotypical standards that they gradually learn from society and which are too condemning to women. Society plays a great role in their attitudes and behaviours towards their women. Grange thinks he owns Margaret; that she entirely belongs to him. This conception grows from the ideology that woman is traditionally viewed as having control over neither herself nor anything else. Thus, Grange, in his first life, was about to sell his wife.

Grange has been entangled in a private affair with Josie, a prostitute. He is introduced as a macho, a virile with vigorous masculine spirit. His marital infidelity, when taking Josie as a concubine, makes Margaret endure endless suffering; for she cannot bear it that her man leaves her for another woman's love. She felt humiliated and despised by his betrayal, the fact that eventually drives her to commit suicide (after trying, in vain, to play her husband's game of looking for love in male strangers). Having been suffering for a long time, Margaret starts rebelling against her husband's lustfulness and indifference by playing his game of wantonness; and which ends up with suicide as a final act of rebellion, and which rather demonstrates her surrender. It is, however, important to mention that what encourages her eventually to turn into wantonness is the rape trap the white landlord has planned for her in an attempt by her to pay for and save her husband from debt. Having been cheated on by Grange and once raped by the white boss, she starts a new track of sex trade to avenge herself (as she assumes she will do) from her husband's neglect, desertion and betrayal.

Taking it as an account in order to absolve himself from his *own* faults, Grange concedes his love to Margaret and attributes his violence on her to the oppressive life

forced on him by the whites, to frustration, and to his hatred of Shipley's *whiteness* that "had absolved Grange of his own guilt, and his blackness protected him from any feeling of shame that threatened within himself" (178). He thinks that his *blackness* would exonerate him from the *faux pas* he has deliberately done; that his oppression and misery gives him the right to oppress others, or rather to frustrate and *dominate* women.

Silence, and which is a symbol in the narrative is another issue of Grange's violence on Margaret, for it conveys indifference and neglect of her. From the very beginning, Grange is characterised by his abundant 'silence'. He never shows interest towards Margaret, and rarely talks to her, and if he does, it is only to threaten or curse her; it is only to despise her and hurt her feelings. It is in this sense that silence –which is seen by many as a sign of peace- becomes, here, a sign of violence, symbolic violence.

In Walker's work, the word 'stone' is loaded with a rather interesting discursive meaning. Likewise, it goes beyond mere literal meaning to refer to a number of possible connotations like 'inhumane', 'afraid', and 'desperate'. *Inhumane*, this is what the word stone comes to signify in relation to Grange's treatment of Margaret. The stone, that society creates while fabricating the concept of gender, affects badly on his wife. Because of his sexism and misogyny, Grange becomes a violent, a non-caring and a cruel husband. It is this mask, which appears in several portions of the novel that hinders Grange to acknowledge Margaret. It is what prevents him from expressing his love to her; his self-esteem as a man impedes him of doing so.

Grange frequently threatens Margaret to kill her and their son, and this is what he really does when he kills her twice; first by drawing her death-like life --by his violence on her-- and then by driving her to commit suicide. Essen summed up the forms of physical violence in "slapping, hitting, beating, kicking, burning, shoving, punching, fracturing a bone, *threatening with or using a weapon*, honour killings or customary murders, and forcing or *encouraging suicide*" (5) (my use of italics). Hence, although, he does not really commit her murder, Grange is considered as practicing another form of physical violence by encouraging Margaret to suicide. His physical violence on Margaret also appears when he terrorises her with his shotguns threats and when he destroys her patience and passion with his frequent furious drunkenness. In a word, Grange ruins Margaret's self, peace, and life.

Despite his violence on her; many keys in the novel indicate that Grange loves Margaret. His moans when lamenting about her hard life and harsh death (peculiarly when he gets drunk³), his defence of her when being denounced by Josie, and other indications express his implicit and tacit love towards his woman. “*It was confusing to realise but not hard to know that they loved each other*” (20). His masculinity chauvinism guides him, leads him aggress his beloved woman so as not lose membership in the gender male *dominant* group. Social and cultural institutional obstacles create barriers against the welfare of the emotional life of the black family in the novel.

Therefore, one may conceive that his violence on her is an *urgent* need. He needs prove himself *man* to exist as ‘human’ i.e. to preserve his *power* and secure his *rights* and *privileged status* as a male. He needs to prove himself the dominant figure at home through the use of violence. “Depression always gave way to fighting, as if fighting preserves some part of the feeling of being alive” (20). Within *the Third Life of Grange Copeland* as an effective discourse, there is a set of clues implying that it is highly valued for men to abuse and dominate women; it therefore becomes discernible for Grange to label his life with violence and aggression on his woman. In such a way, he can hear his socially unacknowledged and imprisoned voice while insulting, verbally threatening and screaming at and scolding her. It is only then that his voice finds release and his actions enjoy an extent of freedom that the whites cause to freeze. Through his violence on Margaret he assumes he can see and enjoy his signs of dominance and powerful position. Hence, he can feel his life’s dynamism as he makes and directs it himself in accordance with the way the patriarchal society shapes and structures it. In this vein, racism lays constraints for the black man that sexism eliminates. Alternatively said, sexism destroys the obstacles that racism creates for the black man.

Misery and the harsh truth of being ‘black’, of being despised and discriminated against depress Grange; it makes him feel emasculated. Trying to restore his fragile masculine identity, he eventually starts beating, threatening, insulting and humiliating his wife –his *subordinate fellow*. In spite of their being both members of the same marginalised group of the blacks, Margaret feels, and indeed is, more subordinate than him, for being a woman, and thus is a fitting victim for him to oppress. Margaret, in her turn, receives nothing from her husband but dread and deep despair. In a word, all what he

does or says (to his wife) reflects his feigned, or rather urged hatred of her. *“And he had not needed to tell her who was behind their misery –she knew and then he did not –for someone, something did stand behind his cruelty to her”* (176). It is this *something* that many passages of the essay try to release, and which refers to gender role inequality that condones women’s inferiority and supports violence on women as a way to preserve domination over them. The culture of gender victimises men and women together; it urges men to embody hyper-masculine features turning them into monsters who cause their women’s lives’ decay.

3.1.1.2. Grange’s Violence on Josie

The salient vehicle that men use to assert authority over Josie is rape and not beating. Sex is portrayed in a dreadful way, mostly through the countless rape that Josie encounters in her childhood.

A set of pictures describe how Grange abuses Josie --his mistress, and later on second wife. Although the nature of violence differs from the one he exerted on Margaret, his first wife, yet the same motives seem to be pushing him toward offending her. Grange uses Josie -as a lover- to procure pleasure, and she, indeed, does not fail him by helping him forget about his life hard conditions. Josie does not escape his offensive acts and words, nevertheless. His violence on Josie is more psychological than it is physical; he never beats her as he used to do with Margaret, in spite of her being too weak in front of him, regarding her excessive submissiveness and yielding to him. Furthermore, emotional abuse is of no less importance than physical violence. According to Engel, emotional violence “cuts to the very core of a person, creating scars that may be far deeper and more lasting than physical ones” (Carabi10).

Desertion is the first abuse Grange causes to Josie, and it seems to introduce an open track for him to exercise his abundant violence on her later on, peculiarly when she shows him her too much devotion and emotional dependency. By his abandonment of her, Grange does not carry out his promises of taking her with him north, of freeing himself and ‘her’ as they planned and thought from the southern hard life. Accordingly, Josie feels deceived and deeply wronged by Grange.

Every grumble by Josie implies that she feels wronged and abused by Grange. What Grange does to Josie is the very illustration of his violence on her, if one takes violence as any act perceived as aggressive and abusive mainly by the victim as many scholars have defined it (see chapter one). Obviously, here, Josie feels victimised; hence, the way Grange treats her is *violence*, for she feels it harmful, offensive and annoying. Contempt, offensive words, and indifference raise one's feeling of abuse and increase their pain. This is indeed what happens to Josie because of Grange's apathy of her and his emotional violence on her. What keeps nagging at her like an ache in the bones is that he never acknowledges the good she has always done for him; and that in reverse, he meets it with denial and indifference. "*After all I done for him... he don't pay me the mind you'd pay a dog*" (168), this is one of Josie's grievances while moaning to Brownfield about his father's offenses to her.

Josie spares Grange's life while he rewards her with rudeness and cruelty. When gently talking to him seeking his affection, he usually hurts her feelings, despises and disdains her. He belittles the good she does for him when saving him from the greedy and the cruel hands of Shipley and the other whites. This really, reverberates what Miller (23) believes when asserting that woman's valuable qualities and deeds are not rewarded for but are punished instead.

The very essence of the novel is revealing that the black man uses women to secure his welfare. Grange, in fact, is using Josie in different ways. He uses her to get joy in her inn, and then, to ensure his independency of the whites⁴ (and whom he thinks of as his only oppressors). Getting better off thanks to Josie's money, he no longer perceives her as useful for him. She feels discarded by him –for he really tries to get rid of her- the minute he does not need her any more.

Deceit is another form of emotional violence used by Grange on Josie. He deceives her, when he pretends to turn back driven by his sincere love for her and for seeking privacy to enjoy that love together and alone with her after the death of his first wife, Margaret. Grange, by this ruthless deed, fails her –particularly when realising his deceitful intention in using her. In fact, Grange exercises all kinds of emotional violence on Josie; he affronts, insults and curses her --peculiarly for being an easygoing woman⁵. He

usually swears at her for being a woman of pleasure, which is the reason why he sees her unworthy for breeding the young Ruth, his granddaughter –unless to help her plaiting her hair or having a bath, the activities that Grange threateningly urges her to do. “But this my grand girl, you do hers up or I pulls yours [your hair] off” (124), Grange violently coerces Josie to take care of Ruth.

On the other hand, he makes Josie cry when comparing her with Mem, Ruth’s mother –his daughter in law and niece to Josie at the same time. He applauds Mem, whom he describes as a ‘saint’; this comparison makes Josie suffer from his offensive words to her and his obnoxious description of her. Strange as it is, though, that Grange scolds Josie for having been a sex worker, for he, himself, used to sexually exploit her before they got married.

The novel provides a great deal of quite useful illustrations of how the black woman is extremely wronged by her male partner. Grange, for instance, excludes Josie gradually of his life the minute he conceives she is no more beneficial for him –the fact that completely depresses her as a woman. At the meanwhile, he –at times-- blames himself for neglecting her, for failing her, and he knows that there is a ‘strange force’ compelling him to be violent with her. Being socialised to despise, brutalise and control women nests deep in his heart. His belief in his gender superiority leads him to dominate his women (Margaret and Josie). Being violent on and humiliating women become necessary and axiomatic attributes for the male gender, whether they like it or not.

However, Grange always attributes all his wrong; his violence on Margaret, his disdain of Josie, to seeking survival --to feel a human being and much as a man--; and he argues that it is meant to hurt none of them. “*It ought never to be necessary to kill anybody to assert nothing but some men, in order to live, can’t be innocent*” (156). He wants to feel ‘alive’; this is Grange’s plea for his violence and mistreatment of Josie. Grange feels his masculinity, and which is the proper gender identity for a man, is dying. It is endangered by his subordination to the white man who not only oppresses and frustrates but also controls and dominates him. According to Grange, his life is dependent on abusing women, on violating the *self* of women. Nothing can this impose but the impression that Grange is a male chauvinist whose welfare is conditional on the suffering and the ill-being of

women, for although he gets better off (economically), he never stops his psychological violence on Josie.

By virtue of Josie's money, Grange becomes economically better off in the last phase of his life --his third life-- than in his first life with Margaret. Achieving welfare through this independency from the whites never impedes him from stopping violence on his wife. His abuses to Josie are definitely not to be reduced; the fact that accentuates his *violence* on her as *gender-based* violence, and not frustration-based one. Grange does not batter or abuse Josie physically; he cannot, because he feels economically dependent on her; and this is not the case with Margaret --as being herself economically dependent on him-- and whom he abuses both physically and emotionally. Grange feels indebted to Josie, though he never confesses or properly thanks her for. It is thanks to Josie's money that he gets half-frustrated by and half-independent of his white oppressors (as he has a personal farm built with Josie's money).

Grange never seems to love Josie but he tries to keep her with him for he thinks that having her could save some of his 'dying' manhood. It may free him from his "*belief in manhood devoid of truth and honor [because] Josie is necessary for his self-respect, necessary of his feeling of manliness*" (177). Having Josie with him conveys having a *subordinate* to dominate. Grange sees in his violence on Josie his ownership of women; he sees in this domination a successful accomplishment of his manhood.

One is likely to perceive that although Grange succeeds to free himself economically from the whites' oppression, he still feels controlled and oppressed by the whites. Hence, realising that he can never reach the perfect sense of freedom because of racism, Grange comes to understand that he can do nothing but to blight Josie with his cruel and offensive words to feel much as a *man*. Grange's attitude, therefore, alludes to the fact that *being male* does not coexist with being *dominated* or belittled by another. He feels his pride hurt and his masculinity rather restricted; and thus, to restore what is left of his manhood, he has to own women as he himself declares.

Odd enough it is to learn from the different passages of the novel that both Grange and Brownfield sexually use Josie. Grange once confesses it to Margaret "I love you, he

assured her, because ... trusted you to raise our sons; I loved Josie because she could have no sons" (177). This is how Grange perceives Josie, as a sexual object. He starts by exploiting her sexually, and after his wife's death, he marries her for her money⁶. Eventually --in his third life--, he decides to righten the wrongs he has done to women. And conceiving that he has begun doing it by devoting what rests of his life to his granddaughter, Ruth, he neglects Josie who entreats him to pay her deference that he never does. Worse than this, and as Walker disseminates through her passages is that Brownfield, Grange's son, too uses Josie sexually and economically. Josie does anything in the name of her love to Grange; she gets entangled in a dating relationship with his own son, Brownfield to make feel him jealous, to regain his love as she reasons; the same motive that has led Margaret to have relationships with other men (white and black).

Having Margaret for a wife that bears children, and having Josie as a whore to satisfy his sexual needs reveal Grange as too misogynist. Grange views the role of woman as concluded in bearing children and as serving as sexual objects. Traditional beliefs shape his mind (about gender roles); the very proof that his violence occurs according to a set of social standards and values and that make it seem a way of controlling women.

Grange's selling of black women to white men, when he moves to the North in search for a better life and which he never finds, is also one sort of violence on women. Selling women is a deliberate violation against the '*self*'. Although, the whole and heavy incident is depicted only through a very short and light sentence, yet it points at Grange with a sharp finger for being sexist, a male chauvinist who tries to fulfil his well being, as a man and human being, at the expense of abusing women. He physically oppresses Margaret, and emotionally abuses Josie *to feel much like a man*; and when starving, he both physically and emotionally abuses women strangers, by selling them to the whites, *to survive*.

3.1.2. Brownfield's Violence on Mem

The text displays another set of relations that appear to announce the same aforementioned discursive facts. As the narrative unfolds, we learn about Brownfield's violence on Mem. Brownfield, as a black man, finds himself in a subservient and powerless position in the white society; while Mem, his wife, falls victim of his abuses.

Thus, trying to approach this predicament from a gender-based perspective, one may then say that Brownfield thinks that his *maleness* gives him the right to vent his grief only on his wife because she is a woman; that violence on women is one of his entitlements as a man (regardless of his colour). Not only is Brownfield's life a repetition of his father's but also representative of all black men during the first half of the 20th century.

Brownfield's life is much more italicised in parallel with his father's, Grange's, second life and that he spent in the North. Brownfield's life, being a repetition of his father's first life, gets highlighted by the oppressive system of sharecropping and much more accentuated by his brutal violence on Mem, his wife. Brownfield's life is consequential of his father's abuse on his mother, Margaret, and on him too.

Correspondingly, all men characters grow up in a society that has made them believe in their natural superiority and family leadership, in their necessity to beat their wives to obtain their subordination; a sexist belief and practice that pass down from one generation to another (through imitation, for instance). Brownfield tries to prove –to himself and to society alike—his status as the upper-hand in his family through beating Mem, in order to keep her in her low position. Ironically put, however, is young Brownfield's vision/view of his mother as he likens her to their dog, for her being meek and obedient to his father –a practice that he disapproves and even sneers her for— while he himself, later on, strives to make of Mem, his wife, excessively submissive to him. Avoiding growing abusive as his father, Brownfield finds himself in the *very* sort of character he intended to reject and denounce, repeating –by that—the same life cycle of his own father. Traditional beliefs of patriarchy are socially learned from and persuasively taught to other generation. Inherited violence on women keeps smoothly moving from father to son, as a systematic and efficient way to control them.

Brownfield *too*, exercises violence on his wife to mend his lost masculine identity. He believes that he can prove his manhood only through oppressing her and the children. Mem's supremacy gained by her higher education and her economic provision represses his pride and bothers his ego. Therefore, he oppresses her to restore domination over her. To be 'male' means for him to be naturally and ordinarily superior, to be the dominant

figure in the family and in society as a whole; meanwhile, he feels sensitive to his wife's superiority –and education- and he tries vigorously to destroy her.

Brownfield's sexist behaviour takes many forms while treating his wife; he exerts physical, sexual, verbal, economic and psychological abuses on Mem. He usually shows strong misogyny against Mem; "He bullies (d) his thin wife murderously with his muddy eyes" (87) to grow fear and insecurity in her. At the hands of Brownfield, Mem suffers both physically and psychologically. He insults, intimidates, batters and calls her names like ugly, pig, and many other offensive words; a way that he uses in an attempt to maintain his superiority over her; an ill-treatment in front of which Mem remains selfless and self-sacrificing, nevertheless. His physical violence also appears by his destruction of her properties; of her flowers and pot plants; her books and magazines, and her white table cloth which he intentionally stains to make her suffer; and which he does on the purpose of subjugating her.

Many incidents from the novel stand as cues for readers to observe that abusive partners may seem—at first—attentive and protective in a way that they turn out (later on) to be frightening and controlling. So that many signs of abuse start to appear; the offender tracks all what his partner does (her relationships, her activities...), he also attempts to isolate her and limit her relations, and he pressures her to do things she does not favour.

At the beginning of their relationship, Brownfield has shown sympathy and love to Mem, but then he gradually slips into his traditional role as a dominant husband. *I am a man* he daily tells her as if his maleness absolves him of his wrong deeds to her. Through Brownfield's way of convincing Mem that his own victimisation as a black man living in a white society is leading him to oppress and abuse her, one may sense that he is making everything seem a question of fate, fate that is ordained by the whites and who are making it impossible for him to act otherwise; and of fate that has predestined it for him to be male. Thus, Brownfield takes the advantage of his situation as a black frustrated man and exploits black American patriarchal traditions to justify *his* violence on his woman. In an attempt to give excuses to black man's violence on women by referring to the suffering and hardship black men endure, Grange gets surprised by Ruth's response⁷. Ruth's father's violence on her mother becomes normative in *the Third Life of Grange Copeland*, "if

there's one snake that'd kill my theory it's your Pa" (143); Grange says when fails to convince Ruth about her father's *forced* violence, as he claims it to be.

The tendency is and reveals that the violence or the wrongs that somebody does for an intimate are the most to hurt him/her than any abuse from others. Brownfield, with his physical and emotional violence, hurts Mem more than any other black or even white in *The Third Life of Grange Copeland* does. Denzin (497) summarises the extreme terror of wife abuse in that the shock and trauma of a violently offended woman generates from her realisation that she gets abused by a person she has previously considered as safe. "But what had she thought, his quiet wife, when he proved to be crueller to her than any white man or, twenty?" (226). This makes women think that nothing in the world can assure their safety, nothing ensures them that they will not be abused or even beaten by men. Mem feels wronged and failed by him at the very moment she needs his love and support. The violence and the exploitation she receives from her man desolate her much more than the whites' oppression and racism.

Husbands have 'implied power' that stemmed from traditional beliefs, and according to which, men are endorsed to use violence in their relationships to maintain this offered power. Wife abuse which is supported and justified by society as too natural in marriage as a patriarchal institution is very noticeable and apparent in *The Third Life of Grange Copeland*.

The Third Life of Grange Copeland is a reflection of how marriage stands as the beginning of an imprisoning life for women. In a very talented way, Walker has given an excellent definition of marriage whichs contradict women's expectations "... and he [Grange] had not needed to tell her [Margaret] that she had married not into ecstasy but into dread. Not into freedom, but into bondage; not into perpetual love, but into deepening despair" (176). Marriage represents and symbolises the end of woman's life (See Chapter One). For instance, Mem owned all the qualification of the excellent woman in the novel; beauty, a higher educational level, and exalted style which grant her indisputable superiority not only among her female mates but also among black men. These features, however, perish in her marriage life. As a married woman, Mem is pictured as ugly, skinny and dumb. The miserable life Brownfield blights her with causes her living-dead life.

Conventional society ruins real love between men and women while admitting male dominance as the family code. Considering all the collapse she goes through, Mem's life is seen as a symbolic representation of marriage as a disadvantage to women.

Mem, once adored by Brownfield for her beauty, education and proper talk is now battered and humiliated by him. His violence on her starts by compelling her to leave her decent job (school teaching), and by thrusting her into domestic works where she works as a maid in white houses. Thus, Brownfield's physical and sexual abuses increase as a form of vengeance against her perceived insubordination. Managing to make of Mem an 'ugly skinny toothless and old looking' (55) woman—as he usually refers to her—, Brownfield really succeeds to. He intends to make her fit his mistreatment, humiliation and contempt “*for a man with an ugly wife can ignore her. It helped when he had to beat her too*” (57). The tension reaches its height when he targets his gun towards her. Therefore, his violence on her has gradually crept and developed to reach its climax to end up into *murder*. Based on a real scene, Mem's murder by her husband becomes—in addition to its being the most disturbing incident in the novel—illustrative of the brutal violence that all women of the world are subject to.

Brownfield sets out to destroy Mem, and hence he is determined to change her. “He was her Pygmalion in reverse. The first thing he started on was her speech” (56). Her speech has been the only thing that makes her seem superior; it represents a menace for him that he eradicates through the use of violence and intimidation. He strives to make her his inferior. Beating his wife becomes one of his favourite activities to prove superior “Brownfield beat his once lovely wife now, regularly, because it made him feel briefly good. Every Saturday night he beat her ...” (55). However, what seems paradoxical in Brownfield's attitudes about Mem as a black woman is that when getting in front of Mr Davis -the white boss- Brownfield thinks of Mem as an equal partner, a lover, a supporter and above all, as a human being. It is a difficult task that of discerning the reasons behind this attitude because they remain obscure in the text, but they may illustrate that in the hands of the whites (as his opponents) the black man pities his victimised woman for he experiences the same pain she endures. Brownfield, however, never unveils these feelings for anybody but himself. “... he thought of her [Mem] as another mother, the kind his own had not been. Someone to be loved and spoken to softly ... Someone never to frighten with his rough coarse ways” (45).

Brownfield envies Mem for her proper talk –her formal speech—and harshly urges her to re-adopt her informal dialect, the Negro dialect; for, as he tries to convince her, it is the only one that can fit a *Negro*. And Mem turns back to it “first to please her man, and then she honestly could not recall her nouns and verbs, her plurals and singulars, Mem began speaking once more in her old dialect” (56). He does not approve her ‘proper talk’, because it implies her higher education and which he begrudges her for, for her education makes him conceive her superiority to him as an illiterate man. Education or “*knowledge put her closer, in power, to them [the whites] than he could ever be*” (55). Her education reminds him of his own failure, of his insurmountable frustration, so he works hard to completely eradicate it. “Don’t you interrupt me when I’m doing the talking, Bitch!” he said, shaking her until blood dribbled from her stinging lips. The one blow had reduced her to nothing; she just hung there from his hands until he finished giving her half-a-dozen slaps, then she just fell down limp like she always did” (90-91). Brownfield deliberately strives to silence Mem through violence.

Brownfield’s motives to destroy Mem’s proper speech (formal speech) is to degrade her, to deprive her of her knowledge as the sole privilege that gives her power that he lacks. “He did not begrudge her the greater heart, but he could not forgive her the greater knowledge. It put her closer, in power, to them [whites] than he could ever be” (55). Her greater heart, her benignity, is a feminine quality that Brownfield tries hard to avoid and rather encourages on Mem instead. Her greater heart, he thinks reveals one of her dispositions as a woman and which make and keep her as his subordinate. Knowledge, however, gives her power that grants her dominance over him that he cannot achieve, cannot accept nor can he acknowledge.

Walker uses informal dialect and incorporates broken English as a means to illustrate the illiteracy and inferior status of black characters (and much more inferior status that Brownfield urges on Mem while making her switch from her “proper talk” to the “Nigger dialect”.

Brownfield strives to make and he succeeds to make Mem look and sound like a woman that fits his abusive hands and words. “He wanted her to talk like she was; a

helpless nigger woman who got her ass beat every Saturday night. He wanted her to sound like a woman who deserved him ... Everything about her he changed. He changed her to something he did not want, could not want, and that made it easier for him to treat her in the way he felt she deserved ... It helped when he had to beat her too” (56-57). Brownfield could not stand for his wife’s seeming superiority; he wants her further down, under his domination and control. His excessive violence on her makes Mem moan her nine-year marriage life with Brownfield as an abusive husband. “And just think how much like an old-no-count dog you done treated me for nine years” (94), she tells him, trying to make her so-long-kept and silent agony out from her bleeding heart.

Another violent act that is undertaken by Brownfield on Mem is that of forcing her to move from a bad to worse dwelling. He does it on purpose to make her suffer. Each time she strives to turn a previously used cow barn into a human-fitting lodging; and when she gets it ready, he intentionally and harshly urges her and the children to move to another dirtier and chillier stable. Although she has suffered from more intense forms of physical violence by him; this is in fact what makes Mem react ---and for the first time, use a gun-- against Brownfield as a menace to force him allow her and their daughters to leave to the town.

Mem’s decision to leave the rural life and live in a decent house in town makes Brownfield realise her eagerness to own and control herself and her life – a right that she is trying to share it with him so that he cannot enjoy it alone. He feels that Mem is challenging and confronting his masculine self; a feeling that would automatically raises his violence and abuses on her, *to make her learn her place* as he usually scolds her.

He accompanies Mem to the town house, nevertheless, because he has been threatened –by her-- under a pointing gun. However, in reality, he has never accepted to move and has never admitted it as a good idea to leave oppression and poverty of the South as long as it is Mem’s approach, a *woman’s* approach –and not his. Although he perceives that their life in town has become much easier and more comfortable; he never admits that Mem has been right; has made the right choice, for this proves her “smarter and more resourceful than he, secretly savoring thoughts of how his wife would come down when he placed her once more in a shack” (103). And for this sole reason, he plans to move back to

the poor rural Southern life; to endure back misery, harsh poverty and subordination to the whites. Therefore, Brownfield prefers living in oppression and frustration than in comfort as long as planned and initiated by a woman. This is the very demonstration that he does not abuse Mem because he needs a target to release his frustration, but rather to demonstrate his masculinity/manhood, to perform his masculine role as a man: his damaged pride and dignity rule.

Being violent on Mem, Brownfield attempts to be accepted by his male friends and his whole community; he tries to prove that his marriage to a well educated and beautiful woman does not make him relinquish his patriarchal traditions. Violence instills fear in women which eventually entails their subservience. Men use violence on women not only to subdue women, but also to maintain their masculine identity in front of other men and even for themselves to keep a healthy psyche. Leverenz declares that men try to weaken seemingly superior women, and this “is not [because] of fear of women but of being ashamed or humiliated in front of other men, or being dominated by stronger men” (451).

Holding a heavy hand, or using violence in the household is men’s strategy to establishing and maintaining authority over the family. Achebe raises the issue of wife abuse in his *Things Fall Apart* when reporting Okonkwo’s treatment of his wives “Okonkwo ruled his household with a heavy hand. His wives, especially the youngest, lived in perpetual fear of his fiery temper and so did his little children” (12). The character Okonkwo –as any other male character in *the Third Life of Grange Copeland*-- is obsessed by proving and preserving his manliness through holding the upper hand in his household.

The whites’ oppression stands against one’s desire of realising a masculine identity for black men. Their oppression manifests in different handicaps for the blacks while causing their poverty, lack of education, social ostracisation, political disfranchisement..., yet black men seem to have agonised over nothing as they have worried about their masculinity.

Brownfield and the other black male characters feel their sense of manhood is damaged. Therefore, they try hard to accomplish the roles that white patriarchy has always denied them. *To feel more like a man* is what the novel passages resonate. The black man character tries to assert masculinity through beating and humiliating women; an act that he

thinks would prove him a strong man. The chief reason of the black man's frustration rests on his inability to resist the whites' oppression and discrimination. He, therefore, finds false alternative in abusing his own wife. This is however not to alleviate frustration because he knows quite well that he could not, but it is to feel *man* in his own family. He thinks it necessary for a male to behave in a masculine way, behaviour that is, nevertheless, neither accredited to nor favoured for the blacks in the white society.

Controlling one's freedom is one issue of Violence. Brownfield manages to prevent Mem from dreaming and he destroys her hopes. If she tries to talk, he silences her with his offensive words; if she cries, he mocks her and if she laughs, he stops her with his blows. Brownfield smothers her personal freedom and stifles Mem's autonomy. He indeed intends to control and dominate her, her thought and her life. On the other hand, her silence too condones and legitimises his violence on her; her silence makes him feel her consent towards the sin he keeps committing on her 'self'. And she remains "too pure to know how sanctified was his soul by her silence" (54). "Woman's plight is to suffer in silence, to live the myth of the strong black woman. The irony of the myth is that it only enables survival under dehumanizing circumstances" (Harris 2). The patriarchal culture makes Mem feel guilty for Brownfield's emasculation through disobeying him; an act she has however never actually done. It coerces her into deep silence to gratify her man, for women's silence is ironically rendered to be thought of as a natural strength in them. "Her weakness was forgiveness, a stupid belief that kindness can convert the enemy" (162).

Most ironically if not tragically, this culture blinds not only men but also women and who are the direct victims of such a culture. As indicated by Bell Hooks "Many of us were raised in homes where black mothers excused and explained male anger, irritability, and violence by calling attention to the pressures black men face in a racist society where they are collectively denied full access to economic power" (75). All women characters are willing to please their husbands while they suffer silently. They all believe that by virtue of being males, their men are entitled to power, and authority and the privilege of dominating and abusing them. Cultural beliefs lead them to conform to patriarchy and to submit to their abusive partners.

Black female characters' submissiveness enhances their men's masculinity chauvinism and their disdain to them. Black men learn and conceive that their aggressive behaviour, their offences to their women are rewarding. Therefore, as Unama and Ohchr (30) put forward, if the offender exercises violence on his victim who shows no sign of objection, and shows submission and gratification instead, violence –in most cases- will grow. *“Soft words could not turn his wrath, they could only condone it”* (54). Black women's submission provides a positive stimulus or a rewarding cue for their men's violence which will logically increase. In this vein, submissiveness and silence appear to be as both cause and result for violence.

The Afro-American society is overwhelmingly patriarchal that it downgrades woman, for she is viewed as weak and vulnerable; the fact that really makes her subject to limitations and violence. Stereotypical gender roles prescribed and advocated by patriarchy subsequently bring forth intimate partner violence. Domestic violence against women is not “openly condoned but neither is it challenged nor condemned by society at large or by state institutions” (Unama 1). Although society is not directly or openly condoning wife abuse, its disregard of this phenomenon is itself supporting it.

At times, men themselves are not knowledgeable of the sexist nature of their violence because they take it for granted power and privilege. Brownfield usually comes back home with threatening orders to Mem, urging her to serve and satisfy him. He thinks his maleness grants him this right. He thinks it his right that of coercing Mem to submit to him. “Coming home from a hard day of work or feeling the burden of unemployment, an individual black man demanding, in a coercive or aggressive way, that his wife serve him may not see his actions as sexist or involving the use of power. This ‘not seeing’ can be, and often is, a process of denial that helps maintain patriarchal structures” (Hooks 74). This not seeing, or not knowing about the sexist nature of their violence, results from the taken for granted powerful position or status of men as compared to women that has long been culturally and socially endorsed.

From the different passages of the novel, it seems easy to notice that Brownfield tries to act out the drama of his own frustration -and oppression caused by the whites- through abusing his own woman. Indeed he treats her the way the white bosses treat him.

Analogously, the whites repeatedly force Brownfield to move from one to another shabby house without warning or even explaining the causes for him; and he –in his turn– continuously drags Mem (and the children) to move and endure another ‘more freezing’ house without any rehearsal. The reason that makes him coercively house her in shattered-windowed shacks full of hay and cow manure is then to make her suffer the way he is suffering from the oppression of the whites. “*His rage and his anger and his frustration ruled*” (55); he develops rage and anger for being dominated by others, he feels frustrated of freely expressing and performing his masculinity. He knows very well that he is dominated by the whites; a fact that he, nevertheless, never approves and never explicitly rebels against unless by committing violence on his own wife. In this sense, his gender polarisation leads him to conceive of his woman as his subordinate, as a property and as a legitimate victim for his violence. If he can do nothing in front of the whites’ violence, he can at least use violence on her; this is what he perpetually reasons.

The whites prevent Brownfield’s masculine identity to materialise and flourish, and when aggressing Mem, Brownfield feels –or assumes– his power; his imaginary manhood is possible. He cannot disobey Captain Davis or any other white boss’ rules, and when he coerces Mem to do things she does not favour, he feels killing the feelings of subordination. He then feels to be authoritative and dominant himself. His manhood is also crushed if his woman reacts against his violence on her; “he was annoyed when she despised him because out of her hatred she fought back, with words, never with blows, and always for the children” (59). He strives to freely perform his masculinity at the private sphere where he is not obstructed by any obstacle.

The reproduction of scenes and statements; though different in forms, setting and time, seems to exhibit the same kind of enunciation. This displays through different blacks and whites relationships on the one hand and through black male and female relationships on the other hand. Thus, Brownfield passes by a life continuum that derives from his own father’s life; believing that their masculinity cannot find room in the wider sphere, they restrict it to the most private one –to their homes. They both oppress and offend their women to feel their manhood is still alive. Manhood, masculinity and manliness for the black man in this novel are only titular/nominal, for they are *biologically* male but are

socially not recognised as such –they are denied their masculine gender--, because of the white supremacy.

His domination is nothing but a technique used to prove his manhood. “I ought to make you call me Mister”; he said slowly twisting the wrist he held and bringing her to her knees beside his feet. ‘A woman as black and ugly as you ought to call a man Mister’” (77) Walker straightforwardly clarifies the masculine intention of Brownfield as he favours gender discrimination as he strives for domination.

As a consequence, notions of *masculinity* fuse with those of *femininity* to help create wife abuse. Men believe in their basic role of domination and control and therefore of their necessary violence on their women. Women, on the other hand, believe in their crucial subordination and therefore in their commitment of enhancing and supporting their men’s lives through submission and understanding. At the meanwhile, female characters’ compassion issue them with endurance by which they could adapt to their men’s violence and cruelty, and this indeed reveals their strength towards this violence.

Generating a body to bruise, a mind to control and daunt, and a soul to crash, is plotted against woman to give a chance for *masculine* pride and welfare to live. Brownfield rather intends to turn Mem into a ‘stone’ that never reacts against his violence, but one that feels and suffers his intended harm. “The American social structure turns the Black man into a beast –suppressing his human qualities and accenting his animal tendencies. (...) He takes his anger and frustration out not on the social system or the people who exercise its power but on his children and on the black woman” (Lawrence 50). What drive violence against women to occurrence are institutional gender and sexist hierarchy of power in the American society in general and the black community in particular. What reveals this violence as a gender-based and as generated from the male-dominated culture --and not as frustration-aggression response—is that while the black man *physically and emotionally abuses* his woman, woman remains *non-violent* and even *submissive* to him. Each of them acts out his/her own *gender role* that is assigned for them by society and its culture. Though harsh, yet it is real that patriarchal culture authorises male violence on women and not the reverse. Gender is a coercive ascription, none of us is able to change, mend, abolish or transgress.

Trapped in a world of poverty, racism and mainly the institutionalised gender order that created women subservient position, Mem and the other women feel obliged to live with their oppressive and violent men, never trying to meet their violence with the same violence, never trying even to leave them. An insightful description of anger by Lerner would illuminate our study (mainly the anger of Mem that once leads her to exert violence on her man); “Anger is a signal ... it may be a message that we are being hurt, that our rights are being violated; that our needs or wants are not being adequately met or simply that something is not right” (Lerner 170). Anger is not allowed among women, nevertheless. Although it is a natural and social act, yet, it is denied among women. Women who freely express themselves and their anger are labelled as unfeminine; therefore, they usually try to stick to those traits that would introduce them as females. Love, care, self-sacrificing...these attributes are what we encounter in the character of female characters in Walker’s novel towards their men. It is a socially constructed concept that hegemonic masculinity holds an authoritative positioning of men over women that privileges men over them.

One of the problems that Mem faces is the lack of family support, for having no living relatives but her aunt Josie and who is extremely indifferent to her⁸. This isolation is what partly makes her much more vulnerable to Brownfield’s violence. ‘Without robust family support, girl victims will often not be able to proceed to take measures against gender-based violence’ (UNODC 46). At least, if her mother was present she would give her the psychological support that she is in intimate need of –exactly as she herself is doing with her three daughters.

Women remain in their violent houses with their violent men because they lack safe places to escape to. Mem and the others know that they have no protection from society. They, therefore, seem to be trapped in a social web without any clear exist. ‘Fear of going and fear of staying’ impede the black woman to take firm and strong decisions, to make a move and leave her tormentors. Fear hence generates her submission.

The patriarchal traditional beliefs are brought into practice through the use of physical violence, sexual and psychological humiliation of women. Brownfield represents the typical patriarchal man who ceaselessly abuses his wife. Tradition nurtures his violence

against his woman through practices and beliefs which can be summarised in gender inequality, which naturalises and justifies wife abuse, and which is handed to him by many previous generations. The handing down of gender beliefs and practices saves the preservation of patriarchal heritage. Hooks, and Epstein (3-4) state that society divides humanity into two roles or two poles: inferior, weak, passive, dependent and obedient women Vs superior, dominant, controlling --and if necessary abusive to women-- men. The African American society is a traditional one that is founded on male supremacy; it is patriarchal par excellence –the minute it lays social rules and beliefs that fit only man’s interests.

After each offense –whether physical or psychological—that Brownfield oppresses Mem with, he plans for another more violent and depressing way by which he can completely destroy her. This, in fact, imposes a paradox in Brownfield’s violence on Mem. Brownfield does not regret having murdered his wife, for he wishes her to stay a *myth* for her plumpness and beauty –the two features that Mem has been endowed with before marriage, and that Brownfield frequently refers to as two criteria of women’s femaleness. According to Brownfield and the other black men, women’s values are measured by their plumpness and beauty. “Ergo, he had murdered his wife because she had become skinny” (161). Mem’s skinniness and ugliness are the result of his, the whites’ and the whole society’s sin. By creating differences between the two genders; discriminating against women; assigning privileges for men while depriving women of; condoning violence against women the very minute they consider it as a valued attribute in men, society creates the very condemnation of woman.

Mem learns hatred from Brownfield; she learns spite and grudge that hinders her from loving and tolerating him. His violence has grown hatred in her; Mem cannot forgive him for addressing her as ‘ugly’ and ‘nigger’ –among many other curses and crudeness--; she cannot forgive him addressing her with blows instead of tender caresses. His offensive words and acts hurt her feelings, and with time, numb her heart so that it cannot bear ‘love’ or even ‘forgiveness’ anymore. His cruelty and his violence have lived long, and hence have made forgiveness impossible.

Social norms inculcate man that he can achieve the *well-being* only if he behaves as such (i.e. as a man) and that is –in fact- his natural place. He must order and command, control and dominate, and oppress and aggress, and at the end be positively rewarded and well served. “*Brownfield beat his once lovely wife now, regularly, because it made him feel briefly good*” (55). Beating Mem gives him momentary feelings of power; his beatings of Mem are nothing but the protective covering of his failure and cowardice.

One of Walker’s concerns is to represent the black woman as subject to two different forms of oppression --racism and sexism. She enunciates this concern through different incidents depicting scenes that show the black female character’s unique suffering as a *double oppression* under the tyranny of both the whites and the black man. Mem’s colour and sex make of her victimised twice. She becomes a victim for her husband who beats, berates, insults and humiliates her. Mem becomes a slave for him, *a slave for a slave* –as one may refer to the case of the *black* woman. Brownfield assumes, by his victimisation of and abuses to Mem that he is compensating for his own *slavery* caused by the white bosses. “*Brownfield beat his once lovely wife now, regularly, because it made him feel briefly good*” (55). This implies that Brownfield’s rage and anger finds some relief in abusing Mem, however, his conscience never *does*. His relief does not live long because it would sooner leave room to his conscience to keep nagging on him. This also conveys that his arrogance, his cruelty and his hatred is only a mask worn to feign *manhood*. Brownfield rather intends to release her of distress and depression he, in addition to the different institutions trap for her as a female. Hence, he ends her life substituting her torture for a final and eternal relief.

Beating his wife makes him briefly good for he would soon remember that he is black. His manliness could never be fully and thoroughly fulfilled as he constantly receives orders from the whites –as their subordinate. Thus, black men like Grange, Brownfield and even the black preachers try to carry out such masculine acts, which manifest mainly through home violence and mainly wife abuse.

The true fact is that Brownfield fails to challenge Captain Davis, or any other white, to defend himself and release his rage, despite his being the person who actually causes his rage and frustration by oppressing and humiliating him. As a man, he rejects being

belittled, and thus, he vents his rage on Mem, as a fitting target. Brownfield wishes to rebel openly against the white landlords; to confront and defend himself from their tyranny; a wish that he never makes it a reality, nonetheless. Walker strives to reveal this fact through both implied and direct statements. "*I ought to stick my feed knife up in him [the white boss] to the gizzard! ... He walked home slowly, kicking rocks and bushes*" (89). What impede him from rebellion, from open confrontation, from meeting their oppression with violence are the same reasons that hinder Mem --and the other women-- from confronting his --and the other men's-- violence; and which reflect patriarchy.

No sufficient details seem to be provided by the novel as to depict and describe the nature of the relationships that link Brownfield to other members of the black community except for those referring to his treatment to his wife and children. Mem, and their three daughters --Daphne, Ornette and Ruth-- are the only victims of Brownfield's violence. Thus, Mem is not the only sitting target for Brownfield's violence; he oppresses his daughters too, and deprives them of his love and compassion. He also victimises his albino baby when putting him outdoors in a cold night with the intention of making him freeze to death; and this is what actually happens to his baby son.

The black American man feels that his masculine identity is insecure and that it is subject to different threats. *To be one's own boss* is what can save a man from the scare of losing his manhood. Black male characters' wish to be bosses of themselves becomes a discursive fact that forms within the text. They however assure that they could never achieve such a dream, the fact that makes them turn more violent and dominant with the black woman.

When failing to achieve and realise such a dream, they seek other exit issues for their crashed egos; they demonstrate their power through initiating domestic violence. They use violence on their women and not on other black men --as members of their same marginalised group-- because they are conscious enough that women are socially and culturally unprotected. Culture authorises this violence the minute it describes the female gender as weak, distinct and inferior.

Women are victims created by their own society and their own men. They are controlled by the patriarchal society and the condemning culture that surround and govern their daily lives, and which make it possible for men to oppress and dominate them. Woman's position is determined by man's domination. Discrimination puts women in a subservient status and which gives a chance for violence against them to evolve.

Female characters, as victims of domestic violence in the novel, are denied autonomy, individuality and freedom as human basic rights. Walker makes clear that women are usually defined by reference to their body and sexual reproduction, through forced pregnancies, rape... Escaping social and cultural norms and traditions is impossible for women to end violence against them, partly for their confined freedom, and partly for their belief in their natural vulnerability and the submissive and subordinate position they have in the socio-cultural hierarchy. If women are granted equal opportunities in society with men, they could confront and eliminate gender-based violence against them and which is principally founded on gender-inequality. Bringing this issue up in public is another taboo for women. Female writers like Alice Walker, Toni Morrison, and Lessen Doris and many other feminist figures used fiction as a means to make the issue under a *public* discussion. In their works, women writers emphasised violence against women, and the bad conditions that woman suffers in androcentric society, in an attempt to alter gender attitudes and reduce gender-based violence which create and support the victimisation of women.

Walker has presented a stern denunciation on the gender codes, prejudices, and inequality notably within the African American community. It is ultimately necessary to point that despite the fact that Brownfield's and Grange's rage is an egress for them to vent their frustration created by the whites; it is not gender-bias free. Women suffer from constant inferiority which ensures deprivation of their fundamental rights. They are denied the right to make their own decisions. Hence, and in so being, they are mentally imprisoned because of these stagnant patriarchal ideologies. Walker brings to light the suffering of women in the hands of cruel husbands who crack their personality and identity.

Paving the way for his violence on Mem, Brownfield feigns jealousy (by falsely accusing her of betraying him with white men). He, therefore, is using one of his oppressing techniques to abuse her. Denzin (493) asserts that jealousy engenders hatred within the couple relationship and it eventually leads to more violence. In this light, Brownfield creates reasons that would so justify his violence on his woman.

However, whatever he does to offend her and to break her down, Brownfield usually sees Mem better than him, superior to him and stronger than he is. He considers her superiority as debasing him and therefore it makes him perceive his inevitable impotence, a failure that Brownfield –as a male- cannot accept and he hence responds to it by violence against weaker beings (women). Darden likens Brownfield in relation, to Mem to a slaveholder, for “The slave holder was out to change the slaves mentally to make them more submissive. Likewise, Brownfield had the same goal for Mem, and he eventually kills Mem, which was perhaps the only way he could prove to himself he was in ultimate control” (49). Through abusing them, black male characters intend to achieve women’s crucial degradation.

Brownfield feels as ridicule because of his inevitable weakness that is derived from his subordination to the whites on the one hand and his woman’s educational superiority and her opportunity of economic provision on the other. And his shame leads him degrade Mem through violence since it is an authorised means to him as a male. Brownfield proves his need to counterpart and compensate for his feelings of failure with his violence on Mem.

It seems to worth noting for woman to be educationally superior to her man. Brownfield’s violence on his wife, Mem, is more intense than that his father, Grange, exerts on his two wives. One reason that incited more violence on the part of Brownfield is his feelings of his woman’s superiority –which worsens his bitterness, for this lowers more his self-esteem. Her educational background defies him and threatens his already fragile sense of manhood; a psychic problem that he has carried within himself since their engagement and during their whole marriage life. Thus, he forces her to come down to his low level by changing everything in her starting by altering *her proper speech and manner*. “Every Saturday night, he beat her, trying to pin the blame of his failure on her by imprinting it on her face...” (55). Male violence makes women feel worthless; having no

self, no identity. Being subordinated to men (to fathers and husbands), women become identified through them.

Sexual violence or marital rape too finds a crucial ground in Brownfield's relationship with Mem. He thinks it a necessity to impose sexual power on her to maintain his domination over her. To satisfy his masculinity, Brownfield engages Mem in unwanted sexual acts using force, coercion and threats. Brownfield uses marital rape on his wife as one form of violence to tease her and exercise his power on her. "From long wrestles in the night he knew she despised his hands. He held one gigantic hand in front of her eyes so she could see it and smell it, then rammed it clawingly down her dress front" (84). Noticing that his hands cause disgust to his wife, he forces them on her, touching her body by force with his disgusting and obnoxious hands which have lately turned as a symbol of abuse and violence. "Sometimes he would be lying on the bed watching her get ready for work, and just as it was time for her to step out of the house he would reach out and grab her arm and try to get her to lie with him..." (118). Rape is one form of gender-based violence against women, for it is viewed as embodying "the social and cultural sense rather than physical or biological character" (Shayegan 28). Therefore, marital rape as one sort of gender violence evolves from social norms that assign different roles and distinct responsibilities for men and women which interpret clear discrimination against women.

Marital rape is another strategy that enables men to play out their domination over women. Forced sex in marriage is perceived as marital rape that is one form of sexual violence; it is, however, not recognised by many societies because it is assumed that "by consenting to contract matrimonially she [woman] has given herself to all sexual intercourse even when forcibly imported on her"(Oyajabi 18 cited in Cousins 91). Mem and Brownfield's marriage represents an abusive relationship; many scenes in the narrative describe Mem as she does not consent to intercourse but painfully resigns herself to it. Many instances show that Brownfield's words to Mem coerce her to submit; in a way that she recognises herself as a property.

The forced sexual intercourse that Brownfield exercises on Mem is one form of marital rape. He both sexually and physically abuses her when she refuses him, as a way to assert his manhood and perceived superiority over her as a woman by using sex as a means

to control her. Mem frequently suffers from the bodily fulfillment that is inflicted upon her by Brownfield and which is too animalistic in nature that one can liken to rape. The physical and psychological abuse Brownfield causes to his wife makes her feel torment while having intercourse. He violently forces her to have sex as she frequently tries to avoid him because she no longer feels safe with him. He then constantly rapes her. This is what is referred to as marital rape and which brings both physical and emotional pain for the wife.

While depicting oppressive men, Walker does not risk mincing words. The abundant language she uses is –itself—a kind of protest against the physical and emotional oppression frequently perpetrated on women. Walker uses vulgar diction, violent lexicon and scenes depicting sexuality and violence that may –to some extent-- be shocking to some readers. The raw language she uses reflects the realities of the community to which she belongs; a way that Walker follows to remain authentic and faithful not only to the people and places from which her writing is inspired, but also to herself – being a member of those little people, and being a woman who has herself experienced male violence (Hooks 76). She and other female writers defensively point to the accuracy of their negative representation of black men; they all endorse that these bad images are not stereotyped but rather authentic (Ibid70). More importantly, Walker uses this vulgar language –and sometimes erotic scenes—only to portray the linguistic and emotional violence that men exercise on women. Brownfield and Grange, as well as all male characters in Walker’s novel are realistic portraits of men and are therefore not, mere fabrication inspired from stereotyped ideologies. Walker, as any other Afro-American female writer, writes about her own life, the lives of her relatives and of all those who surround her.

It is ultimately true that Grange and Brownfield feel emasculated by the white supremacy, oppression and racial discrimination; as Harris, T. put forward that “Grange Copeland and his son Brownfield fit into this category of those who have been psychologically, socially and politically emasculated because of the sharecropping system under which they initially live and work” (36). Reactively, as it seems though, the black man beats his wife to re-establish his masculinity. Through beating women; they try to

prove their distorted identities of masculinity. Grange, and Brownfield like him, starts blaming the whites and their black women for their inactions.

However, their feeling of emasculation, which is caused by the aforementioned reasons, rather convicts them of being sexist and misogynist than absolves them of their faults in exerting violence on their women; it does introduce them as unworthy of the reader's sympathy. Feeling sorry for their emasculation and trying to do anything to counterbalance this loss of masculinity at the expense of their women never absolve them from their guilt. They prove themselves *misogynist* and *male chauvinists*, the minute they exhibit their *worry* at every action, behaviour, event or situation that presents a *menace* to their *manhood*.

In an interview with O' Brien, J (1973), Walker explains that she uses men's mental deterioration to highlight its effects on black women and their status from early 1920s to 1960s. "Because they are emasculated at work, the men exert a false sense of authority on the bodies of their wives" (Barr 4). Walker's novel acknowledges this vicious circle instigated by a male dominated world.

Hegemony that men enjoy makes a woman means to worth nothing, no matter what values or level of education she may attain. In this sense, Brownfield believes that a woman "*ought to call a man mister*" (77). In front of man, woman is always degraded to the lowest status in *The Third Life of Grange Copeland*. Sexism and gender role orientation have a strong hand to do in accordance with black male violence on their women in this novel. Black men see their strength only in this type of violence for they see women as the only opponent that is possible and easy to fight. Likewise, aggression (both physical and psychological) on women reveals their *manhood* and highlights their *masculine identity* which is one socialised or stereotyped trait of the male gender.

Durham observes that this sexual orientation is common among men by arguing that "*men are all the same, all just as sexist ...within patriarchy, all men share power*" (158). Brownfield's recurrent voicing of 'I am a man' and 'a woman as ugly as you ought to call a man mister' is a vivid illustration of men's stereotyped beliefs on their crucial male gender role as dominant and as oppressors of women.

3.3. Other Male Characters' Violence on their Women

Using violence on women becomes as a matter of fact for men because of the solidly based assumptions and which associate the male gender with violence. Non-violent men are therefore losing one of their attributes and hence seen as *nonmen*. Regarded as inferior and subordinate by their white counterparts, black men in the novel feel their masculinity is at risk of being lost, thus they double the violence on their women, i.e. they try hard to prove most violent, *the malest*, if one may hence minutely refer to it. Through her novel, Walker mirrors the acts her male characters perform to reclaim identity and power.

The black man's emasculation by the white supremacy makes him lose his socially recognised masculine power and pride that are coupled with the male gender. Hence, oppressing his wife and controlling his family become his only source of power. This reproduced and re-adopted power gains him the master-servant relationship that he otherwise never owns, cannot own, and in which he plays the role of the dominant male. He develops a rather snobbish character, and therefore, adopts a false sense of being proud.

Sexism of Brownfield and Grange as the main male characters of this novel, as well as that of the other flat male characters, appears in their application of gender stereotypes which discriminate against women on the one hand and which convey men's superiority on the other hand. Power relations gathering black male characters and black female characters are non-egalitarian, but asymmetrical. In this sense, power is echoed with obedience and submission. This inequality that occurs between men and women in the sphere of power exists in a hierarchy of accessibility to abilities, resources and advantages. It is needless to say, here, however that it is women who are least accessible to these abilities, resources and advantages; they are least entitled to this *power*. It does not require much of one's effort to recognise this power hierarchy as it displays through the different passages depicting inter-gender relationships; it can fully be understood if relating it to power relations between males and females in *the Third Life of Grange Copeland*.

Though, they experience all forms of disdain and of oppression by the whites, black men firmly believe in their natural superiority to black women. Being 'male' makes them feel stronger. Their inferiority to white people (as both men and women) does not impede

or stop them from expressing their *manhood* on the black woman. It is dispensable, here, to make a reference to the point that this manhood is effected through both physical and symbolic violence.

All black male characters are portrayed as wife oppressors and tormentors. Both main and flat male characters are represented as violent on women. Walker uses many flat male characters that seemingly perform a secondary role in the novel --like the black preachers with their wives, and the white soldier with his pregnant lover--, for the only objective of stressing male violence as being a common and general phenomenon. The author introduces flat male characters now and then in her novel; some of whom are even mentioned in one-sentence expression, like uncle Buster, Mem's father, and others; the fact that reveals the author's plot as to emphasise the issue of wife abuse. Indeed, any male character mentioned in the novel is employed to illustrate male violence on women. Black preachers, seeming righteous, are described to be practising all kinds of violence on their women. "*Every Sunday –the placid Christ-deferential self righteous of men who tortured their children and on Saturday nights beat their wives*" (133); this is what gender discrimination and gender role polarisation generate and what they allow the reader to witness out of male and female relationship. Throughout the narrative, one can identify different violent acts by black preachers on their female partners; they beat, rape, abandon, oppress, dominate and even kill them.

Many questions keep boiling in Ruth's mind, and which find relief while finally voiced by her. "Where and when had the violence started?" (137) is a question raised by the author through the mouth of the character Ruth while trying to figure out the causes of her father's and grandfather's violence on women, of *male violence*. The author sympathises with her readers who teasingly raise a debate about gender-based violence, a question that Ruth herself answers later on in the text, "'the white folks didn't kill my mother' she said at last. 'He [her father] did'" (143). That being the case, Ruth ascribed the full responsibility to the black man's violence on their women, for destroying the black woman, a charge that the whites are absolved of.

In the text, different scenes are repeated through the lives of different characters and by different ways and techniques to generate and stress the text salient ideologeme.

Obviously, the reader easily observes the recurrence of the same discursive formation through different pieces of the narrative. Aggression and domination of woman that are assumed as male gender roles appear to be predominant and unavoidable ideologemes of the novel. Hence, Walker describes all of Grange, Brownfield, Josie's father and the black preachers, as following the same track. They all show despise against the female gender and they all exercise violence on their women to prove strong, as strength and aggression are considered important components of masculinity. The visible text establishes a set of relations to enunciate black women's oppression by their men as an essential factor, along with a multitude of other objectives, to determine. Heterogeneous facts from the text display violence that is exercised by men on their women as based on gender discrimination and unfair power distribution. Besides the only scene that Walker uses to describe inter-gender relationship among the whites, and which reflects the same inevitable fact, different black men of different backgrounds and statuses in the black community come to represent this phenomenon; poor, well off, young, old, reverent religious men and criminals alike.

Black men in *The Third Life of Grange Copeland* are denied the necessary resources to fill male roles in the white society and which results in identity loss or confusion. They are hence culprits for using violence as a means to dominate women; while they put blame on the hard conditions of life they are encountering like poverty and racism and that pervade in them a strong sense of emasculation. "Mem ... you know how hard it is to be a black man down here ... the white folks just don't let nobody feel like doing right. I don't make much money, you knows that. And the white folks don't give us no decent houses to live in, you knows that. What can a man do?" (95). 'What can a man do?' this was Brownfield's question, or rather excuse, to his violence on Mem when pointed at with a gun by her. Violence on women occurs according to wrong notions of masculinity which prompt the use of violence against women as a manifestation of manhood. Through violence, black men think they become able to retrieve their wounded pride of masculinity.

Black people who could avoid the 'sharecropping system' (which is the very symbol of poverty and oppression of the blacks in general) could not escape other forms of frustration drawn by the whites. The author underlines this aspect through the hatchet

murderer who has been a minister before being imprisoned. As a black preacher, he “*could not feed his wife... on what he made off the gospel... he had himself struggled against the unseen force... and so killed his wife*” (166). Because of the whites’ racial discrimination and oppression that frustrate black men from getting decent jobs, as males, they all fail to fulfil the family economy provider, which is top-of-list male gender role. Therefore, black men’s use of GBV is a way to perform masculinity they are denied by the whites, and it is not a responsive reaction against frustration per se.

Hence, by the integration of the hatchet murderer and other black preachers into this gender socialisation game, the intent of the author seems to provide a diversity of illustrations to better demonstrate this notion. These abundant illustrations along with the writer’s flexibility of style make the reader have no choice but to trust the narrative’s moods, feelings and impressions, the thing that emphasises that this violence occurs as a response to gender theory, and not to a frustration-aggression theory.

Josie’s father, a preacher, unfairly treats and dominates her mother and stifles her freedom. Walker pictures this violence mainly through preventing his wife from voicing her views and interfering in any decision, even in what concerns their own children (Josie and her siblings). Restricting her personal freedom and autonomy is one type of violence that he exercises on her.

Mem’s father –also a preacher—too abandons her single mother (and whom he never marries afterwards) after having illegitimately conceived of their daughter Mem; he also refuses to help her after having been expelled by her father as an unmarried pregnant woman. He, on the contrary, establishes a new life for his own with another woman and gets other children for himself.

Grange, as a little boy, is represented as disapproving violence for he considers it an immoral practice against women; because, as a child, his masculine identity was not yet fully established. It is only in time that he comes to consider violence as a necessary expression of manhood. “Grange didn’t like him [Uncle Buster, another preacher] because he had seen him knock his wife, Grange’s aunt, through a plate-glass window” (130). The author does not supply any sufficient details about Uncle Buster, the way he exerts

violence on his wife, or even about his wife herself and who is Grange's aunt. This implies that the idea is expressed in an isolated, fragmented-sentence passage to underline and shed light only on wife abuse as the main theme of the novel.

What happens is that Brownfield and Grange develop into abusive men, for having been children witnesses of domestic violence. On the other hand, Margaret, Mem and Josie grow into abused wives who easily submit to their men because of their increased feelings of inferiority and weakness. The tendency is that as young boys who belong to family violence would develop into male abusers in their adulthood, Young women with a history of depression are more likely to become victims of wife abuse in the future. These girls generally have depression symptoms which develop into vulnerability to more severe partner violence in their adulthood. They are also less than other women to leave abusive men, for being emotionally (like Josie and Margaret) and/or financially dependent on them (as Josie's mother, for instance).

Children exposed to domestic violence develop a mental and a psychiatric disorder, low self-esteem and low self-confidence like the case of Daphne and Josie. Josie's background as an ex-abused child also worsens her vulnerability for abuse and manipulation by men.

Walker has not failed to depict violence as it is exercised by black men on their wives, and as it reflects an act of manhood motivated by gender discrimination. Many scenes in the novel –as being depicted by the author—illustrate this reality. Although there are many incidents taking place in the novel more appalling than the violent act and which involves beating and humiliation that Josie experiences at the hands of one of her clients at Dew Drop Inn, yet it is the most proving of all as a game of power perpetuated on women. “He beats her black and blue and people downstairs had come up and pull him off her” (223); he terribly beats her for she has refused to have sex with him for a second time –as he offers to reward her for the *humane act* she has done for him when she has offered him the first intercourse for free knowing that he does not make enough money and that he has a family (a wife and small children) waiting for him. She offers him gratuitous sex, and he punishes her for her refusal of his offer of a once-more sex as a reward.

Blocked masculinity means a threatened identity. Every black male character's violence on his woman reflects the blocked access of his masculinity performance. The black male character thus tries to mitigate the pain of his threatened identity by abusing his woman, i.e. he vents his affliction and his discomfort on her. Some obstacles stand as a restriction against the autonomy of the black male characters' masculine identity. Grange's role of 'the stone' in front of the white bosses, Brownfield's feelings of disdain and contempt by the whites; these are some illustrations elucidating the blocked access of black man's *manliness*. A hindrance that they can reduce, however, through violence, through expressing this most agreed issue of manliness, on women.

To generate this discursive necessity, the text repeats various cues revealing that Brownfield and the other black men exhibit a great deal of *fear* of losing their *manliness*. Once, when Mem complains about his own violence on her, he clearly confesses that he wants and tries to be nothing but a man. Avowing the real drive of his violence, he tells her; "You know, I never wanted to be nothing but a man" (95). For him, as well as for the other black men, being a man can be realised only by '*acting man*', which implies to be the opposite, the opponent, and the enemy of women through treating them in a violent way.

In reproducing these concrete references and these strong and authoritative forms through *the Third Life of Grange Copeland*, Walker reinforces and realises the text ideologeme. She determines that when the black man seeks protect or demonstrate his assumed manhood, he beats, insults and dehumanises his wife and children. Black men's confusion between actuality and expectation of their masculinity, lead them to sense an omen surrounding it; hence, they try to preserve it by performing acts that are viewed as men's, mainly by aggressing their female partners. The reader's witness of Grange's, Brownfield's and the preachers' exposure to humiliation by the white men –and at times- by white women makes him/her understand and not, however, give excuses to the black men's need for over protecting what is left of their doomed masculinity.

Male violence is not an obligation but a choice. This violence refers to a matter of strength and power, and of weakness and impotence in terms of polarising males and females as two distinct groups, and of designing each conception of oneself as belonging to the one or the other group. When telling Brownfield "The crackers whites could make me

run away from my wife, *but where was the man in me...?*”(207), Grange regrets his abuses to women; and through this piece of enunciation, the author refers to the guilt by which men together with culture and society create the victimisation of women. (Green 28) claims that “Violence against women erupts at the intersection of social forces and individual choices”. According to Green, undertaking a violent behaviour against his woman is optional for the man. Men are not forced to use violence on their women; although they live in a society that upholds it. Therefore, man’s choice to use the male privilege offered to him by social and cultural structures also plays a vital role in initiating violence against his woman. Violence is therefore an individual response. “Patriarchy does not cause violence if the man respects the woman” (Quinn 141). It is man’s underestimation of his woman that allows him to oppress her and badly treat her while being led by patriarchal systems which make him form such notions about women like those of inferiority and subordination. Brownfield’s violence –and the other black men’s- seems to be but ‘sexist’ than any other definition it could hold and convey.

Males are supplied with the power necessary to dominate and oppress women, and females are loaded with weakness necessary to enhance this domination, aggression and violence of men on them. These are the effects of the construction of gender.

Some tend to behave with doomed carelessness when treating their women because they believe that they could perfectly fulfil their gender role through emotionally hurting their wives. Grange seems in most cases to be irresponsible for and indifferent to his women; Margaret and Josie. They hold that it is necessary for man to belittle -and not to be belittled by- women in order to appear as *man*. The black male character “*could not stand to be belittled at home after coming from a job that required him to respond to all orders from a stooped position*” (56). Thus, he finds home as an accessible setting to play a *man*; a free castle where he *should* play a ‘king’. His being a man gives him the right *to do*; it gives him power necessary for his well-being at the expense of his woman and children.

Violence that black female characters experience at the hands of their men originates from a system of racial and sexual oppression. Black characters have to challenge the power structures, institutions and socially constructed roles which stand as

block foundation for racism and sexism if they intend to stop this violence and rebuild solid families and communities. “The injuries done by racism to black men's bodies and spirits are sometimes devastating, but this can never justify transforming that hurt into rage and violence against black women's bodies and spirits” (Allen 25).

Man’s sexuality is used to demonstrate physical strength and toughness. According to Jamieson who suggests that “the archetypal masculine man of popular culture exhibits an aggressive heterosexuality as if his sexuality were an aspect of general physical toughness. ... This is the hegemonic masculinity endlessly celebrated in popular culture from John Wayne through Arnold Schwarzenegger and beyond” (110).

Rape or sexual abuse has to do with any “crimes against one’s dignity, which affect a victim in a multi-dimensional way. Besides depriving one’s privacy, they subject the victims to depression and personality disorder such as psychological maladjustment and irreparable trauma” (Wamue-Ngar 3). Hence, as Nasir; Zamani; Khairouddin, and Ismail (53) grant, rape victims hold feelings of shame and self blame which develop higher levels of post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms and which mainly manifest in depression and low self-esteem. Josie’s feeling of low self-confidence and her psychological derangement are nothing but a sample of the bad drawbacks of the rape she was exposed to in her childhood and then as a prostitute in her adulthood.

Rape exerted on Josie can be referred to as a structured crime; for her becoming a prostitute is a result of her economic dependence and her social weakness and isolation, and which result from her being female. Her being a prostitute may desensitise people towards her case of victimisation; however, she is more than any other woman in the novel abused by men. As noted by Kiremire (207), rape of prostitutes is gender and class stratified crime, for prostitutes are generally trapped under social and economic vulnerable conditions. Josie has been sexually exploited and used by all the men in the novel including her own father; it is her father’s rape to her⁹, that has contributed most to engendering her feeling of inferiority and vulnerability, and to make her turn into a prostitute. Persistent nightmares are common to survivors of trauma (Levier, et al. 1). It is then not too odd to learn from the narrative that the deepest and most traumatic memories

of the horror of sexual assault keep recurring to Josie in her dreams. Women's cruel reality makes them feel abandonment, isolation and helplessness, and which makes them feel unable to stop male violation of bodies and souls on themselves in a male-chauvinist society.

Conceptualising rape through such a line invokes William Faulkner's novel, *Sanctuary* (1931) which is a grotesque novel that was evaluated by many as pornographic, atrocious and rather shocking with its portrayal of an impotent old man who raped a young woman with a corn cob. Being deprived of virility does not impede him of abusing women; which is the very demonstration that authenticates the patriarchal foundation of gender violence. Rape, here, appears as deliberate abuse intended on women aiming at causing harm and humiliation to victims and not as sexual drive. He rapes her because he is *masculine* though he is –biologically speaking-- no longer a *male*. Foster admits that “Popular notions of male sexual incapacity linked sexual capacity with larger features of personhood and masculinity” (743).

The psychological trauma shatters Josie's identity. She now uses her body for material gain because she thinks that it is the only way for her to empower herself while sexually exploits men after having herself been sexually offended and exploited by many of them through rape. Lorene, Josie's daughter is the physical evidence of Josie's rape. That is why, perhaps, she never feels her as a daughter; she probably reminds her of men's abuse on her. Neither of them is affectionate with the other, and hence starts to consider the other as an adversary, eventually they really start to compete for gaining physical attraction and concupiscence of the adolescent Brownfield.

The tragic irony in inter-gender relationships in *The Third Life of Grange Copeland* is that the source of the antagonisms leading to so much of abuse black male characters perpetuate against their own women is the very racism that they rely on them to cushion. Black women stand by their men to soften the harshness of racism, while black men find of racism a source –rather an excuse—to abuse their own protectors, i.e. their women. They even double the severity of the violence they exert on their female partners, as if they try to revenge the violence perpetuated by their white counterparts.

Black male characters like Brownfield usually attempt to find excuses and rationalisations for their violence towards their women. This is quite natural in any batterer who frequently searches for accounts which are nothing but pretexts through which they try to deny responsibility for violent behaviours; as all of Dobash and Dobash (1998), Hearn (1998), and Ptacek (1990) demonstrate while focusing on the excuses and justifications that batterers resort to so as to account for their violence.

Child Marriage is also another form of violence against women. Women in *the Third Life of Grange Copeland* become casualties of verbal, physical and emotional abuse as an outlet for their men's abused masculinity. Black women's inferior societal status has made them vulnerable to all forms of violence, among which child marriage. "CARE believes that CEFM [child, early and forced marriage] is both a cause and a symptom of gender inequality" (Boender 5). Child marriage is another form of abuse which is exercised on women and that Walker refers to in her novel *the Third Life of Grange Copeland* through the marriage of Rossel Pascal, Ruth's school mate. "He was old, as old as her father, Ruth thought [of Rossel's bridegroom]. Why would Rossel who was no more than sixteen, marry him?" (190). A child wife is a victim of cruelty and premature consummation of the marriage. Stockreiter recognises some of the most important impacts of child marriage on women. According to her, women victims of child marriage get "powerless, dependent on their husbands and deprived of their fundamental rights to health, education and safety" (147).

3.4. Male Violence on Women in the White Community

The only and unique depiction of white male and female relationship in *The Third Life of Grange Copeland* is that of the white soldier's desertion of his white pregnant lover. This scene seems inevitable despite of the author's intention which is to emphasise the black family life dynamics. Hence, the author intends to use this incident as an illustrative clue, and as an impetus to draw the reader's attention to assess black men's violence on their women as a masculine and a sexist attribution. It is a depiction which reveals that –as Norton and Alexander (402) argue- all men of all races and of all classes oppress women. And, on her part, Jackson asserts that "gender inequality varied in some ways by class, but women were uniformly disadvantaged" (177). This view makes the reader sense the

necessity of removing one's mono-cultural glasses and focussing on viewing the text through an intercultural lens, instead. In this respect, Walker finds the depiction of this event enough to arbitrate between the many causes that may seem possible for the reader, leading them to eventually judge it as gender-based violence rooted in patriarchy and sexism.

Dobash and Dobash also seem to concede this notion, and thus confirm the ubiquity of wife abuse while asserting that "It seems indisputable that in every society there is evidence that men have used violence against women with whom they have intimate relations" (20). They also add that this type of violence is not connected to such mindless, incomprehensible, unpredictable, or unpatterned behaviour that is executed by alcoholics or mentally unstable individuals or feelings of frustration or whatsoever. And they maintained that male violence on women is rather functional, intentional, and patterned (ibid141).

A good point in Walker's novel is this inclusion of white male/female inter-gender relationship. Although depicted only in one single scene only, and although the novel tackles only the lives of black characters in 1960's America; yet, the integration of this scene confirms and supports, to a considerable extent, the universality of male violence on women.

White men also exert violence on black women. Margaret --as a black woman-- becomes fully victimised by her white employers who sexually exploit her. This physical (or sexual) violence on Margaret, as a black woman, by the whites also demonstrates the sexist attribution of this violence. The white male is violent on both white and black women; whereas, the black male is violent only on his black woman. What impedes the black man from using violence on white women is his subordination to them because of his skin -for being racially discriminated against. Namely, white men would not overlook or forgive him this crime not because of their white women's sake (for they themselves oppress them), but rather to humiliate and boss around them as blacks.

This notion of sexism is a product of socialisation. Hooks, B (1982) explicitly exhibits that even the 21st century black male leaders like Malcolm, Martin Luther King

among others have supported patriarchy. Black men do not and cannot believe in the equality between men and women. Moreover, in order to keep women in their *assumed natural place*, they commit violence on them. “Insecure feelings about their selfhood may motivate black men to commit violent acts, in a culture that condones violence in men as a positive expression of masculinity” (Hooks, *Constructing* 104). Culture instructed black men to evaluate their women as a *property*, and see violence on them as an expression necessary for the viability and practicality of their manliness.

Black man’s sexist orientation generates abhorrence against his woman. These hostile feelings increase on grounds of fear of failure, fear of social symbolic castration, and therefore, extend violence –with its different forms on her.

Grange himself confesses that his intention by perpetuating violence on Margaret (his wife) and Josie (his lover) is to establish control, authority and domination over women; his scheme is to *own women*. He once says “*if I can never own nothing, I will have women*” (177); a confession that would indeed prove Brownfield right (to accuse him as intending to possess Margaret). Grange’s long talks, and his stories to his granddaughter, though seeming childish; also become as a useful source illustrating the patriarchal intention behind domestic violence in the black family in *The Third Life of Grange Copeland*.

All men of all races abused women. This violence is ‘sexist’, because it reflects what Johnson, M. P (1995) calls ‘patriarchal terrorism’, which is based on such ideas of male ownership of their female partners. Black male characters are the ones who initiate, and do commit, violence on their women and it is not the opposite. It is sexist because it is exerted on ‘women’ and never directed to men for the patriarchal social structure does not stipulate nor uphold it as an alternative.

Violence implies gender inequality. “It was in fact in the late 1960’s and early 1970’s in the US, mainstream feminist theory opened the doors to understanding rape and domestic violence as contextualized with socially constructed and culturally approved systems of gender inequality in society” (Sokoloff and Dupont 154). It is not surprising, nevertheless, that this era spanned and synchronised that of both the publication of *The*

Third Life of Grange Copeland (1970) and of its narrative's setting (1920's to 1960's); regarding that Alice Walker was a feminist and a womanist herself.

Dr Martin Luther King, one black fictional character that is based on a real person, is briefly and hastily described –in a hint by Walker-- as being mild and fair in treating his woman in *The Third Life of Grange Copeland* (although Hooks, B. (1990) admits otherwise); a fact that Alice Walker confesses in reality and fiction as well. It is not the same notion she has about her own father, nevertheless, and whom she represents as violent on her mother as any other black man. (*The Third Life*, afterword 250-251).

3.5. Men's Violent Reactions towards their Women's Superiority

3.5.1. Black Men's Feeling of Inferiority as an Impetus to Violence

Black male characters' disability to successfully meet their proscribed masculine roles –mainly that of carrying out the role of the breadwinner-- makes them fail to construct traditional *masculine* identity. Abusing their women become their only way of demonstrating their manhood; being in such a case a direct consequence of patriarchy, a *direct result of gendered power, and not a logical response to frustration.*

Brownfield usually says that he has been forced to be violent, to be an abuser because he is born to be male; designed to be aggressive, and besides that, he is only responding to different strains (social and economic) “Furthermore, many men say... they do not intend to hurt their intimate partner, ...they never intended to grow up to be the type of a man who batters a woman he loves” (Smith 172).

Not only does sharecropping, which is a modern form of slavery which appeared after the blacks' Emancipation, make black men dependent and subordinate to the whites, but it also makes them lose their traditional roles as the dominant figure in their own families by preventing them from accomplishing the *Family Provider* and Protector roles. They, hence, feel emasculated; and to restore their manhood, they turn to vicious assaults to their families (mainly wives/women). From this baseline, one can conclude that it is their gender (maleness) and not their racial oppression; poverty or frustration, which rules.

Hence, they abuse their women because they think that they are allowed to do. Whatever his socio-economic status and position may be, man dominates, victimises and abuses woman –whether physically, morally, emotionally; men’s hard and miserable conditions only increase and intensify the severity of violence that they perpetuate on their female partners as compensation for their lost pride and dignity. Hampton argues “when the institutional means for attaining cultural goals of masculinity are not available (anomie), an individual must find alternative means of adapting” (96); and alternatives, the black man really finds mainly in abusing his own woman. The rebellion of black men issues through a deviant way which includes violence against women, sex and alcohol use, like both of Grange and Brownfield, and the preachers as well.

All of Margaret, Mem and Josie are described as being family *economic providers* while Grange and Brownfield seem to be economically dependent on them. This power that is given to the black female character as far as the economic provision is concerned stands as a humiliating factor to the black male character; it serves as jeopardy to their male gender role and identity. However, woman’s superiority is met with man’s rage. It serves as a provocative force to both Grange and Brownfield leading them to inflict more violence on their women. Mem’s superiority indeed guides Brownfield to kill her. He sees her as a ‘threatening whole’, for her education, her tolerance, and her economic authority suppress him as a male chauvinist.

Woman’s decision to leave man also provokes his rage, which he releases through beating her and even through ending her life (like the case of Mem). A sexist man beats or kills his woman when she tries to end the relationship (Harris, A.P. 791). Therefore, he lives in a constant fear as his woman is going to leave him. Brownfield conceives of her attempt to leave him as intolerable threat to his ‘self’. “*If you could get your ugly ass up I wouldn’t let you go nowhere, make a fool of me, have people laughing at me!*” (108). It seems clear from his menaces that if a woman leaves her man, this would make him lose some of his worth as a *man*. Hatred, jealousy and fear generate crisis-ridden atmosphere within the black family in the narrative and which illuminated through GBV.

Both Brownfield and Grange envy their women’s strength; envy that derives fear for their threatened manliness, and which finally ends up in violence to feel more secure and to ensure a free expression of their manhood. Brownfield, for example, envies Mem’s

education and strength. “*She had embedded strength that Brownfield could not match –He had been, at the best times, scornful of it, and at the worst, jealous*” (226). When Brownfield feels his manliness threatened, he does not bear it to see his woman strong, for this reminds him of his own failure. Culturally legitimised violence is used to control women by limiting their rights to self-determination.

Women exploitation also comes to provide another arena in the novel. Both Mem and Josie are their families’ economy providers. Working outside home may be seen as reaching a degree of autonomy and superiority according to a mid-twentieth century American society; but in fact, “when women work, this can be another exploitation ... [for they usually] work in menial jobs for low wages” (Cousins 86). Besides, their husbands are free to take benefit from their whole money, i.e. they work for their husband’s benefits. Josie earns money from *selling* her body to *other* men; and Mem is forced by Brownfield to work as a servant –in spite of her being highly educated- only to offer the obtained money to their men.

Socialisation excludes *love* from the black family life context, “*But what about love? He asked himself... It is a lie!*” (226). No pure feeling gathers or unites the black family. Institutionalised ideology of gender destroys love and any other strong feeling that is likely to link male and female characters. Healthy interaction between the genders is prevented by patriarchal structures and by the negative impacts they have on both men and women.

3.5.2. Women’s Resistance to Men as an Impetus to Violence

What hurts Mem most is to be wronged by the closest person in her life. “But what had she thought, his quiet wife, when he proved to be more cruel to her than any white man, or twenty” she was not a fighter and rage had terrified her. Her one act of violence against him, which she must have considered as an act of survival, brought her lower than before” (226). It has indeed brought her lower than before when he punishes her for committing more violence on her and eventually murdering her.

Thus, no practical violence on men by women takes place in the novel except for the one -and the unique one- performed by Mem and which occurs as self-defense after nine years of torture and of abuse. In this scene, while threatening Brownfield with a gun,

Mem is described as assuming male behaviour to survive and not however to oppress or dominate. “They [men] depicted their violence as rational, effective, explosive, whereas women’s violence was represented as hysterical, trivial and ineffectual” (Anderson and Umberson 363).

Kleppe (19) too believes that women’s violence occurs as a sudden expression of frustration and as a wish to alter oppression. Violence perpetuated by men on their women is not based on phylogenetic but malignant aggression (as termed by Erich Fromm qtd in Greiff 10) in contrast to women’s violence, as the one Mem’s once exerts on Brownfield and which can be rather defined as phylogenetic because it emerges as a self-defense response.

Mem feels empowered by her ambition to live in a decent house and her strong hatred of living in shabby shacks. It is only then that she releases her anger through threatening her husband, Brownfield, with a gun. Although through this violence Walker gives voice to the silent and voiceless woman, this violent reaction of Mem condemns her to death. Brownfield could not bear it that his wife uses his own strategy, he does not bear to be treated the way he treats her because it is too humiliating; not too much to his person as it is to his *manhood*. Therefore, assuming masculine role and power mechanisms by Mem raises his eagerness to end her life: the price paid for her resistance to his tyranny was costly.

Mem and Margaret are entirely destroyed while starting to gain some power and rebel --each with the weapons she finds available-- against their men. Trying to raise their power and authority over theirs, both are killed by their men. Margaret is forced to suicide; and Mem is murdered before the bare eyes of her own daughters.

3.6. Gender-Based Violence Bad Effects

Repeated violence on women makes them believe in their natural helplessness and crucial weakness and inferiority, and this belief --or feeling-- leads them to develop cases of self-denial and low self-esteem and dissociation, which eventually makes it difficult to defy escaping this violence. They even start to deny their own rights. Hence, women’s silence and submission become natural as psychological attitudes built up by society.

Because of these patriarchal values, women's lives are ruined in *The Third Life of Grange Copeland*. A loose sense of life; this is what female characters develop because of endless violence and misery brought by their male partners and even their fathers.

“She was furious, more than furious, unable to comprehend that all her moves upward and toward something of their own would be checked by him” (57-58). All Mem's moves are checked by Brownfield. He has indeed achieved the principles of traditional gender notions and women control. He is indeed in a complete control of his wife; a control and power that frighten her and make her be indecisive, lose self-confidence, and mainly make her dependent on him, the fact that rises and gives freer way to more domination by him over her. “He was pleased to feel the weight of their [Mem's and his daughters'] tense and silent repose” (82) toward his tyranny over them. They cannot do anything to defend themselves. This makes him pleased by his wife's pain as she silently struggles against his violence; the fact that reveals him as a true misogynist.

Sometimes, battered women try to please their abusive men and avoid getting them angry with them. Hence, they often shy away from fighting back or acting powerful. It is in the same way that black female characters believe they have to bear the anguish of their men's feelings of emasculation by the whites in a phallogentric American culture. Under patriarchy, women are accorded a subordinate position. Thus, woman submission derives from her attempt to convince herself that her man's violence is not intended i.e. She tries to justify and find false excuses to his violence that she herself is not convinced of. As abusive partners (men) do not take responsibility for their violent actions, they put the blame on their women. This is actually what Brownfield reports to—while making Mem herself believe—she is partially to blame for his abuses on her.

Some women in the narrative are driven to insanity like Daphne and even Josie. The social oppression of women along with the physical and emotional abuses of their fathers and/or of their male partners limit and frustrate their lives and create hard and harsh circumstances that cause hysteric behaviours and extremely unbalanced personality. Others, like Mem, who also suffer oppression and wife abuse, are even estranged from the new culture that they acquired from education. The cruel exploitation of women by men; their narrow and confining lives, mutilate their bodies and spirits and tend to even drive

them to madness (Washington 139). Besides low self-esteem, Daphne develops severe mental absurdity because of the physical and verbal harassment she receives from her father. Josie too reveals clear symptoms of psychic disorder derived from the continuous sexual and emotional abuse by her father, her husband and other men. Josie's torture by her father –during her pregnancy—recurs to her as a repeated nightmare where she feels and sees her violent father rides her throughout the night. Ruth's reaction however is different while standing firm and rejecting the gender roles imposed by society.

Violence against woman is portrayed by Walker as a recurring and a naturalised practice that reduces her to an object. Many scenes depicting violence against women intertwine with the way women undergo terrible suffering to highlight the fact that male *fantasies* about *manliness* are fed with *women's degradation*. Men's abuses to women are perpetuated because of their virility which is a product of serious gender politicking. Brownfield exerts physical and mental pressure on Mem who feels tormented to restore his sense of identity as a man. Having married Brownfield, Mem feels trapped in a wrong marriage, and gradually begins to feel a great loss in her life. A sense of loss or gap existence in one's life is common to all black female characters. Walker has made visible the physical and mental suffering of women as they belong to different generations, and as they embrace different ages and background. She has provided her readers with a concrete portrayal of women who are not allowed to air their views, who are prohibited by the punitive patriarchal institutions.

According to Freud, S. (1917) as he admits in 'Mourning and Melancholia', melancholia results from the loss of something that the subject has been hardly attached to (libidinal attachment). Being oppressed by the racial and social system that underpin racism, gender inequalities, sexism against them, and being victimised by their men's continuous violence on them; black women characters feel a great loss in life because of their robbed rights. This makes them fall into melancholia and which causes them psychological stagnation. Mem, for instance is described by Sedehi, K et al. (1968) as melancholic because she develops a sense of loss. Mem has lost many dear things and persons to herself: beauty, health, books, education, job, proper talk, love, and mother and father's affection and hence turns melancholic. Her melancholia clearly displays through her silence. "The depressed speak of nothing, they have nothing to speak of: glued to the

thing, they are without objects” (Kristeva 51). Mem’s speeches are now punctuated by silence, and if urged to speak, her sentences –after having been too proper as opposed to those of the other blacks in the novel—have become “ungrammatical, repetitious and monotonous” (Sedehi, K et al. 970).

Most agonising of all, nevertheless, is the black woman’s awareness of her victimisation and her urgent resort to silence. “Just think how many times I got my head beat by you just so you could feel a little bit like a man, Brownfield Copeland” (94), Mem articulates to Brownfield her consciousness of being oppressed. Besides its being a response to frustration; Mem’s *silence* appears to be also a product of Brownfield’s jealousy. His feeling of intimidation by his wife’s education and proper speech makes him degrade her to withdrawal and silence.

What Mem experiences is “abyss of sorrow, a non-communicable grief” (Kristeva, 3). Her non-communication, silence or *mutism* is a symptom of her being a melancholic subject, for it is an expression of the profundity of her helplessness and hopelessness (Kristeva 43). Black women’s silence reflects that they are not able to put their sense of misery into words; they cannot express it through verbal language, mainly because they have no one to support them –as the case of Mem whose mother died at her delivery, and was abandoned by her father before her birth.

In spite of his being melancholic, Brownfield’s Melancholia --and which has been developed owing to the loss of his dreams (his unfulfilled and hindered dreams) -- is expressed differently from Mem’s. His melancholia finds healing in his use of power and domination over Mem and his three daughters, while, she remains repressed as he crushes her spirit. To some extent, Brownfield’s dehumanisation is caused by the white racist society but he is also to be pointed at as guilty; because, both black men and black women are enduring the same tough situation and hard conditions in the white supremacist society, and else, the black woman suffers more handicaps yet she never offends her male partner.

Mem is not the only abandoned child in the novel. Practically, all the female characters have been forsaken by their parents or the people they, are dependent on, love or

need. Also, she is not the only woman victimised by her male partner. Any woman --from any class, educational level or race-- can be Mem, as suggested by (Barr 14).

Different discursive approaches come to expose the same conception. The black female character transforms from a plumb, beautiful, and in some cases, intellectual woman into an ugly, skinny and an insane-like one. The character Mem is the one who may illustrate the case best. Her predicament is that of the beautiful, plumb, and a wise school teacher who is altered by her husband's excessive violence to a horrible, bony and hysterical woman. The black woman experiences all kinds of violence by her man and this violence destroys everything in her even her 'person' and this is what violence is supposed to do. It is the violation of the person, of their identity, and of their rights and of their body (see chapter one).

Walker tries to combine through her novel between black man's guilt, black woman's pain and societal denial of rights. The subservient circumstances of the black man are lessened through beating his woman. "They mete out undeserved punishments to their wives without offering an explanation"; an explanation which never exists because nothing is there to justify wife abuse (Cochran 84).

Indoor violence becomes his only and free field to exhibit all his manliness, however, in a more accentuated manner. Wife abuse thus appears according to an androcentric belief that asserts man's superiority and authority over women, and condones violence against them. It appears in accordance with the way Grange and Brownfield, as well as other male characters, view themselves and the way they view their women; although, it is, in some sense, grounded on the whites' mistreatment and racism. One last argument that may prove their violence as stemming from patriarchal ideologies is that domestic violence in *the Third Life of Grange Copeland* is exerted by men on women, and never the reverse case appears given that both black men and women alike suffer from frustration, oppression and racism by the whites. The whole community is frustrated; and only black men --and not black women--have the right to vent this frustration through abusing their female partners.

Violence creates violence and this would hence make it infinite process in the family. It is true that Grange's betrayal of Margaret affects badly on her and ruins her

morality; however, his bad treatment of their child, Brownfield, also negatively affects his perception of his identity and his manhood later when getting adult. Feeling victimisation by his father and the whites makes him assess his oppression of Mem and the three daughters to save his hurt manhood.

3.7. Frustration-Aggression as Misleading Theory

The power mechanisms and structure that the black man adopts in *The Third Life of Grange Copeland* is from the power structure of the white male. Thus, scenes of the victimisation of black male characters are all followed by those carrying and depicting their violence against their own women. This may be misleading for the reader, in the sense that he/she is likely to grasp the phenomenon from a frustration-aggression perspective, and dismiss its sexist attribution.

“Brownfield’s victim-focused identity itself a scapegoat for shunning responsibility is presented in the novel as absurd” (Mhandu 10). What Brownfield tries to introduce as justification for his massive violence is only an account/scapegoat to discharge himself from his *crimes* against humanity. Being himself a victim of the whites’ oppression never absolves him from his *own* faults. The Frustration-Aggression Theory does not apply to the violence perpetuated by black men on their women in *The Third Life of Grange Copeland*. Black male characters do not abuse their female partners because they are frustrated, but because they are males. Many signs and cues in the text reflect the sexist drive behind such violence. Domestic violence that they initiate on their own women as a response –as they assume--to their frustration from exerting their gender roles as men (because of their colour of skin), *to restore their wounded pride* indicates their very sexism and masculinity chauvinism. Insisting on restoring and maintaining their masculine identity foreshadows their sexist disposition; their deep belief in gender differences, their own superiority and women’s inferiority. Women, according to them, are creatures who are made to be abused, victimised and humiliated. In addition, the novel does not provide any signs that identify any aggressive or belittling act that is committed by a black male on another. Male Violence on women is therefore structured and institutionalised: it is intended. And in the web of *the Third Life of Grange Copeland*, black men’s frustration lays as just one part of their factors that create their violence on their women. “His crying was *just a part* of the life that produced his crime” (165/ my use of italics).

Similarly, and in her afterwards of the novel under study, Walker admits that black men's frustration represents no excuses for their violence on their black women. "The white man's oppression of me will never excuse my oppression of you, whether you are a man, a woman, child, animal or tree, because the self that I prize refuses to be owned by him, or by anyone" (*The Third Life Afterwards* 252). Nothing can possibly be more demonstrating than this confession by Walker herself. She absolves the whites and all other scapegoats from the violence that the black man exercises on his woman. Hence, another drive that stands as stimulus for this violence as gender and power based is this violence is always perpetuated by men and not by women; for it has much to do with their being males. It is a game of power and impotence, strength and weakness, domination and subordination, high and low social statuses, and that is interpreted by men's violence on women.

The American society constructed both concepts of gender and race on the basis of oppression and violence through linking individuals with statuses and labels that promote these behaviours (Lewis 25). In this respect, Walker explores the lives of her characters partly to confirm the notion of Hampton (96) that racial oppression deprived black men of fulfilling the role of family provider --because of sharecropping and other factors⁹. Similarly, she highlights her same characters' lives, while stressing their failure to perform the traditional male gender role of dominance and superiority. A link between these two angles of Walker's depiction of black characters brings about the notion that black male violence on their women emerges in accordance with their attempt to recover and demonstrate their lost sense of manhood. Their violence occurs as gendered issue.

3.8. Conclusion

Black men are in constant struggle for power with other men and which --they know—they can never obtain, hence they resort to other forms of domination using violence and rape against weaker individuals as an expression of their own rage. Therefore, what matters in *The Third Life of Grange Copeland* is a game of power; the lack of power with a group of people makes them work at gaining and maintaining power over another.

Black male characters' masculinity is a weak one, for it relies on violence, it feeds on showing and exerting domination over women as the only source for and evidence of

their power. Male figures are trapped within vulnerable masculinity as a compressing structure. Their subordinate masculinity makes them enter psychological devastating clashes. Black men in the novel seem to possess destructive power that stems out of their atavistic need to assert coercive authority and that lead to violence against their women as one way to control them. This atavistic regressive urge results from the constraints they encounter to publically assert their manhood. Men's frustration caused by poverty and racial discrimination is then to be excluded from the causes that lead men to inflict violence against women.

Male violence on women in *the Third Life of Grange Copeland* is *symbolic* because it stands for the patriarchal power which men feel and believe they have over women; it is dominating and gender-structured violence. It is symbolic in the novel because it occurs to voice Walker's notion of women's victimisation as being systematic, an organised crime against the self and against their human dignity.

NOTES

1. Although Grange never batters his son, young Brownfield, his violence on him rests in his avoiding him; refusing to talk to him and keeping himself away from him (emotional abuse).
2. The frustration-aggression theory puts forward that frustrated/oppressed people, regardless of the causes of their frustration, are very likely to execute violence on other weaker creatures as a matter of releasing anger.
3. Getting drunk conveys that the person's speech may be too serious or too insane-like. However, here, in this narrative, Grange's drunkenness seems to be rather a means by which the author directly and openly enunciates some serious and daring ideologies.
4. Grange builds up a farm of his own by Josie's money and the money he gets from the white drowning woman in the North Central Park. He uses Josie's money to build a private farm where he could produce food and goods, and rule himself by himself. Josie renounces her inn and sells it to offer him all the money. The private farm provides freedom for Grange; meanwhile, it causes Josie's economic dependency and poverty.
5. Grange degrades Josie because she fails to bring her daughter in a righteous way, and therefore, warns her not to interfere in his own granddaughter's upbringing.
6. Grange starts to economically exploit Josie –given that she has been better off as compared to the other blacks in the novel and this is owing to the money she has gained from prostitution).
7. Ruth strongly rejects the notion that black men abuse their women because they feel oppressed and abused by the whites.
8. Mem's father abandoned her mother when conceived of her and has never seen or acknowledged his daughter since; and her mother died at her delivery.
9. Josie's father was the first to rape her after illegitimately conceiving from her teenage lover and then expelled her from home making of her a vagrant.
10. Black men's poverty and illiteracy, and which have been meant and structured by the white man, have forced them to be trapped in the harsh system of sharecropping.

CHAPTER FOUR:
NEW PROSPECTS IN INTER-GENDER
RELATIONSHIPS IN THE THIRD LIFE
OF GRANGE COPELAND

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“I raise my voice –not so that I can shout, but so that those without a voice can be heard ... We cannot succeed when half of us are held back”

(Malala Yousafzai 2013, cited in Jonatahan, 2017).

We have seen in the previous chapter that *The third Life of Grange Copeland* depicts black men’s strong desire to feel more like a *man*. Both Grange and Brownfield use women to assert masculinity; they both beat their wives and children to express their manhood and strength as these two qualities are prohibited for a black man in a white supremacist society. Hence, black men try to show their manhood through the use of physical violence against their female partners as weaker creatures than themselves. They admit that their experience of psychological violence at the hands of white people’s supremacist ideology is what motivates this violence on black women. One way of striving for masculinity is then to use patriarchy in their families. This is not an excuse, nevertheless, as Walker tries to present alongside her novel. The author rather stresses the bad and dangerous effects of domestic violence and of mistreatment of women on the entire community.

The story is voiced over by an omniscient narrator who is practically aware of everything about the characters and the recounted events, witnessing, by that, the oppressions that women suffer at the hands of their very men. Several narrative voices, however, merge to intermingle within the text as Walker sees it a necessity to involve the main characters to intervene in order to voice the author’s ideologies. Grange, the main character and his granddaughter, Ruth, are Walker’s main mouthpieces employed to enunciate men’s guilt and which creates women’s suffering. Above all, these two characters are used as mouthpieces to the author to voice alternatives for the black community to live in harmony.

Women writers –and among whom Alice Walker and who have occupied a pioneering position-- have made considerable attempts to redefine the role of women in literature. They speak out striving to deconstruct and reconstruct the portrait of women that has long been distorted. In a variety of ways they have tried to reverse certain aspects of women marginalisation in order to approach gender equation. A new type of literature has developed as an attempt to correct the erroneous image of women as have been presented by their male writers counterparts, and hence a unique and daring exploration of areas and topics that have previously been defined as unexplorable –if not forbidden—was also noted. Difficult subjects have been embraced within female literature, because female writers believe that they have to expose their subjugation openly and frankly if they intend to achieve absolute freedom.

Similarly, Walker (310) in her Womanist Essay '*In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens*' attests that male writers distort the truth of the black American woman for they either ignore or misrepresent her. Being a female-authored text, and the main interest of which are woman, her anxieties and her struggles, *The Third Life of Grange Copeland* appears a feminist enunciation par excellence. It gives voice to women who have been long suffering in silence; who have been coerced and hypnotised into believing in their weakness and accepting their powerlessness.

Therefore, one of Walker's concerns --as they are expressed through her work-- is to accentuate that meanings created in the masculine structure to sustain the patriarchal system need to be put under question. So as not to accept domestic violence as a man's right, the community should question and bring about a change in societal, cultural and patriarchal structures which are responsible for creating violence, hatred and troubles within the whole society.

The most frequently present characters in *The Third Life of Grange Copeland* are Brownfield, Mem and Grange. However each of the other characters is consequential and is introduced to convey a given inevitable aspect or issue in the novel.

4.1. Factors Diminishing Male Violence on Women

4.1.1. Gender Tradition transgression by women

Women's marginalisation is indoctrinated in and founded on gender inequality, and it exists in all cultures. Difference between the two genders is produced and constantly reproduced. Different cultural institutions aim at preserving tradition, and worse, legalise the marginalisation of women. "Often it seems that women's history exists in a kind of frontier zone, respectable these days but still a little dangerous, part of the mainstream but at the same time peripheral" (Abrams and Hunt 191). Things have remained the same from many past centuries till nowadays and are still keeping likewise in the future; as Abouzeid, L justifies –in an interview with Ian Munro—her reason of ending her novel *The Last Chapter* with a quote from the Arabian nights. She explains that not much has been changed for women; while establishing a link with the past she intends to reveal that her female protagonist's story could much likely have been part of the Arabian Nights. (Munro 1-12). De Lauretis claims that woman occupies an *in-between* space, one that goes beyond the binary oppositions of *self* and *other* or *slave* and *master* (19).

Women who have a diminished sense of self worth are most likely to believe in societal norms, i.e. they are more socialised toward believing and accepting their inferior status as females within patriarchal society. This gives rise to women's submission which Wollstonecraft (103) called "slavish obedience". Tradition is an integral part of a person's identity, yet it is also seen as the force that empowers patriarchy and ensures, therefore, the gender-class-race triple oppression. Nagy-Zekmi (2) proffers that Djébar, A sees that women have to transgress taboos like those related to marriage and sexuality to break free from the constriction of tradition.

Society subordinates women's interests. All what society and culture prescribe for woman is to coerce her into her subservient status in relation to man. Being aware of gender inequality and discrimination against them, many women dare to transgress gender tradition and break down social and cultural boundaries that have always encircled the history of women.

Families are infused with patriarchal norms. As long as men's conjugal mastery over women can be rationalized as rooted in tradition and culture, the right to

maintain and enforce this mastery though discrimination in the family will remain unquestioned. This includes mastery over decision making, responsibility over housework, resource ownership, asset control, guardianship and custody of children, unequal rights to enter and exit (...) Often time, the conjugal mastery is erroneously accompanied by the right of men to commit violence as a means of resolving disputes within the family (Zarizand and Moussa19-20).

Due to their contrasting circumstances, men and women differ in their shares of restraint-opportunity tradition. Society has always naturalises masculinity as a source of authority. Gender advantages give men power over their women. Hierarchical gender order and unequal power relationships are maintained through the use of force –be it actual or implicit--, and which is exercised by violence and sanctions (Collins 1998). Lacking womanist awareness makes black female characters believe that sexism and violence are omnipresent issues that they can never change; and hence stay passive towards their husbands' tyranny. Jackson (176) clearly reveals that both women and men are influenced by gender law; that not only women but men, too, keep fulfilling their socially prescribed obligations; in a practical way, nevertheless.

Family and societal imprisoning conventions seem to be too penalising to women that many indeed try to cross the frontiers of gender, by adopting the opposite identity. Abrams and Hunt (196) assert that these women are mostly regarded as taboos, and that their transgressions are even controlled and countered whether openly or superstitiously.

Through her various illustrations, her male characters' and her female characters' accomplishments of gender identities, Walker demonstrates how gender norms are ambiguous, contradictory and unrealistic. Ambiguous norms of the black man's gender cause clashes in him that end up in dilemmas. Women express their feminine discontent through acting in ways that are traditionally prescribed as masculine. They are therefore seen by many as transgressing the social order. Female characters' aspects and actions can be resumed in the readiness to take on responsibility, interest in political and social issues and both moral and physical prowess --as they are depicted through different characters. Mem has always been portrayed as enthusiastic to take any responsibility concerning the household and the children –if not prohibited by Brownfield. Josie's engagement in a masculine act has also been necessary; she has actually acted in the only way open to her.

Josie resigns her very moral character and feminine virtues through risking her own reputation (as prostitution is an obvious transgression of tradition). Walker reverses the conventional understanding of gender norms and relations, and through portraying her female characters breaking conventional gender roles, she reveals the need to change gender hierarchies and structures. Never, however, do Walker's female characters reach the extremes; for though they engage in feminist acts they, remain 'womanly' women.

Acting against their own beliefs of right and wrong, acting against their strong traditional values is what indeed shows women characters' transgression of gender hierarchies. Walker's female characters' identities become problematic when each shifts to roles that are previously traditionally evaluated as masculine; the fact that gives rise to normal and other femininities. These other femininities are what the text tries to shed strong light on. It is what the author wants her female characters achieve to develop a sense of rebellion –not only against their men's violence but also against 'gender'. Walker – through her novel—allows much configuration of masculinity and femininity to be explored, while she allows transgression of gender.

Women who reject ideological constraints and even transgress prescribed gender roles gain the typical interest of different scholars. Some female characters like Margaret and Josie represent a moral collapse while they feel they have transgressed the traditional doctrines of gender (while appearing unwomanly in a world that is governed by rigid social division of masculinity and femininity). While, others like Ruth and Mem perceive from their crossing the frontiers a hope for a promising future that will bring about freedom and "a chance to escape constraints on one's identity and opportunities" (Abrams and Hunt 195).

Women's reasons to transgress the system of gender are more likely to help end inequality exercised against them, because of the net advantages they have long suffered from. Men, on the other hand, have always enjoyed net advantages in this gender structure, and hence, men's transgression of gender roles may be evaluated as absurd and groundless. "Although there have always been both women and men who resented the constraints of gender roles, women's expressions of this resentment produced pressures against inequality and men's did not" (Jackson 176). This is not to say, nevertheless, that men's

attempts to abolish gender structure through crossing the boundaries of socially prescribed gender roles are useless. On the contrary, men's transgression of gender tradition would serve women's fighting against gender inequality in a multitude of ways. Men and women's affiliation towards the abolition of gender renders the issue gain a common interest.

People negatively evaluate and perceive individuals who fail to conform to socially prescribed gender roles. However, some critics believe that males who violate their gender norms are viewed more negatively than females who transgress conventional female gender roles; and they are therefore thought of as losing status. "Woman's movement into the more highly valued male role is more acceptable than a man's movement toward the less valued female role" (Selcuk, et al. 120). This is because, men who cross the frontiers of gender/sex roles to assume feminine roles are more than women—who transgress gender roles-- considered as taboos.

4.1.1.1. Fighting Women's Submission

Violence has become a necessary way of expressing one's manhood. Hence, weakness of women (as being supported by society and its culture) facilitates and provides an easy access for men to exert violence on them. Likewise, the more submissive and weak the woman is, the more she is subject to wife abuse. In the meanwhile, women's seeming strength also creates a threat against themselves. Man regards woman's strength as an attempt to challenge him and his manhood. He sees that her strength predicts for his own weakness, that her fulfillment threatens his own; thus he starts using more violence to suppress whatever stands as a menace to his masculine identity accomplishment.

Masculine hegemony also emerges due to the consent of the subordinate; and hence 'democratising gender relations' is a real possibility as pointed at by Connell and Messerschmidt (853). Therefore, women's silence contributes in generating male violence. Once more in the narrative passages, Walker asserts her rejection of notions about gender and gender discrimination. Gender ideology makes possible the fact that of being man is echoed with causing harm and creating misery for women. At the same time, Walker also blames woman for her contribution to let him play *man*. This is clearly noticed through the diction she deliberately uses. "Mem whose decision to let him [Brownfield] be man of the

house for nine years had cost her nine years of misery” (86). Her selection of the word ‘decision’ is an attempt to focus on the possibility of change and of *rebellion*. According to Walker, it is up to the woman to submit or not to her man; it is up to her to or not create her own enslavement and misery through her silence. If Mem did not play the role of the submissive, she would never have helped him play the dominant role and hence oppress and blight her life. It is out of this announcement by the author that one deduces the responsibility of women in enhancing male violence on them. In this light, Walker interrogates the participation of both men and women in the gender-hierarchies creation, and the perpetuation of hegemonic gender structures.

The socially accepted structures of authority have to be fought. Walker tries to idolise the freedom of the spirit for both men and women. Women are victims of the social construction of femininity because of the subordination of the female gender, while men are victims too –even prisoners—of gender role ascription and the ongoing socialisation into male gender rigid patterns. Man should also know that though he escapes marginalisation as far as the hierarchal order is concerned, he –and in some way—does not escape commitment to prescribed gender roles.

To liberate oneself from social or family barriers, one has to start up by freeing him/herself economically; this is another articulation implied in the text. Virginia Woolf (in *A Room of One’s Own*) attests that in order to gain control over herself and her life, a woman requires an economic base. What happens to Josie may prove us wrong, for Josie’s emotional dependency on Grange is what weakens her and stands as a barrier against her celebration of her ‘self’ after being economically better off. Josie does not take advantage from the chance afforded to her by her economic ease, noting that she is the most affluent from a financial perspective; the fact that is believed to ensure her economic independency. Hence, she could have maintained control over her own life; however, her emotional dependency on Grange is the only motive that urges her back to her weakness and her downfall.

Women are capable to fight submission, and thus, can rise to power. Women are not naturally weak and easily defeated as it has long been wrongly reported. It is also important to mention that women are –more than men—callers for peace. Hsiago Lung

Ogle argues that women were pioneers in calling for an end to the First World War. It was in 1915, at the peak of the First World War that 146 women, coming from 14 countries met and gathered in Congress at Haye to make an end for the war. These women bravely encountered the difficulty of transportation and the opposition of belligerent governments (Mercieca 13-14), to participate in bringing peace to the world.

Feminist women are eager to live together with men without fear from the other, in dignity, harmony and respect of the choices and views of each other. Some, like Irigaray (31), think that the complete moral emancipation of women is utopian, yet they should not surrender to call for equality between the sexes and they should keep on fighting social and cultural institutions that constantly produce prejudices and reinforce stereotypes against women.

4.1.1.2. Female Characters' Switching from Silence to Voice

Walker represents the first step that the black woman takes towards her long and hard journey of liberation through Mem's, Margaret's, Josie's, and mainly Ruth's resistance to man's authority and oppression. The minute these characters stop to passively, silently and uncomplainingly endure their men's different forms of oppression, they are creating their first steps of resistance. This initiative, this first move, reveals the awareness that black women develop about their miserable situation and about all the causes generating it as well. However, Walker enunciates her stand through a male character, Grange, to address the whole nation, and not only women; she strives to raise awareness among humanity to re-consider gender related concepts. Hence, and regardless of what gender the author is, the reader may identify the narrative voice of the story as female only for the feminist discourse he/she delivers.

Walker has given voice to all women through her female characters who switch from silence (at the beginning of the novel, i.e. the first life, first generation) to voice and action as well (during the two other lives). They start speaking up for themselves, resisting and fighting back their oppressors. Although they have started to reveal a sense of challenge –as we have seen in the previous chapter–, female characters like Josie and Margaret could not grasp their oppression as a gender-based one. They have not been aware enough to evaluate their men's violence on them as rooted in deeply and solid belief

of men's superiority and women's inferiority, and of ownership of women. It is this lack of awareness that has made them lose the match and fail in canceling domestic violence.

Women in Walker's novel are capable of struggle and change. Even though she insists on portraying women as abiding by the traditional female gender roles, as a womanist, Walker does not seem to focus on depicting her female characters as completely destroyed and downtrodden. She rather stresses women's initiatives and attempts to struggle against any barrier that would obstruct her selfhood. She feels it her duty to grow seeds of pride among black American women through her literature –to make them ready to fight against gender discrimination and gender-based violence.

Afro-American women were eager and ready to restore their men's lost manhood through giving them the full opportunity to dominate and oppress them, as domination and violence are two necessary conducts related to masculinity. "In the early seventies individual black women decided that they could repair the damages done to black men within this racist society by repressing their advancement and assuming a secondary, supportive role; they found themselves in relationships where black male exercised power in ways that were dominating and coercive" (Hooks, *Yearning* 76). It is around the end of the novel female characters' lives era (around the late sixties and early seventies) that women finally start to grasp the nature of their men's violence on them as sexist; that it is morally illegitimate and unfair; that this tradition of gender is rooted in wrong reasoning.

The Third Life of Grange Copeland depicts women as developing a sense of rebellion; in the core of their submissiveness lays the sense of struggling. Their nurturance shows nothing but their ability and readiness to grow strength in their men and children. Being submissive only to their black men demonstrates that they intend to compensate for their men's hurt pride and crushed manhood. They try to fuel, nurture and even repair the battered ego of their men. But, realising that their kindness and their nurturance bear no fruit, they turn to reveal strength by being true fighters against the power structure that raise their men's authority over them and which victimises them. "In Walker's opinion, the 'true' black woman has always fought against all odds to survive and this is a reality that the black female writer should reveal in her writing" (Pasi 42).

The appearance of brave and strong black female characters in the novel, like Ruth and even Helen –wife to Quincy and worker in the Civil Rights Movement--, also reduces the intensity of black male violence. Ruth’s gutsy personality, her readiness to encounter black men’s chauvinism and to challenge the white oppressors’ racism makes them all admire her.

4.1.1.2.1. Female Characters’ Rise to Power as Failure

In spite of their being docile and submissive to their men –and this is because of their being socialised to be as such— women of the novel never fully submit to *victimisation*. The actions of Margaret, Mem and Josie may be defined as challenging to both racism and sexism, and through them, they could have reached a degree of autonomy and identity if not paralysed by society.

Female characters in *The Third Life of Grange Copeland* appear to fight for the same rights (freedom, independency, wholeness, fair-treatment by their men, and an end for violence against them); they are however driven through different lives’ journeys. Therefore; one can say that though they are different, they have the same backgrounds and the same objectives (for being black and female). Different strategies of resistance attempted by female characters: physically fighting back; committing infanticide; suicide and sexual exploitation of men (as Josie thinks she is doing) are all represented as problematic and as demonstrating women’s failures in achieving equality in the inter-gender relationships. All these strategies prove to be unsuccessful, and this failure rests on the patriarchal ideologies that stand as a basis for the social construction of gender relationships, and aim at the destruction of women.

Being excessively oppressed and feeling shame; suicide appears to be the only possible exit issue for Margaret as a woman. She turns her aggression on herself and on her illegitimate baby son. Infanticide and suicide are her last resorts to end the oppression of gender discrimination, both at work and at home, and that is mainly revealed by Grange and the other white bosses’ ill-treatment. Her fatherless child keeps as a stigmatic or disgraceful token for her. “The stigma of having a fatherless child is tied to notions of female morality. Regardless of whether or not the woman chose to have sex, responsibility

for a resultant pregnancy is always theirs” (Cousins 164). This notion indeed makes one recall the anxiety and *panic* that developed in Ruth when she starts menstruation (193).

Some women, hence, fail in their individual attempts to rise for power. To vanquish men, Margaret too plays the same lost game of Josie. She, however, sells sex for free ending in begetting an illegitimate child, with whom, she intends to attack Grange and provoke his jealousy; a decision and an act that make him merely desert her and the whole family. Margaret’s realisation that she has lost the struggle, leads her to suicide. Behaving in such a manner and finishing in such a fatal end do not make of Margaret a good example to illustrate Walker’s concept of *Womanism*.

Deciding either to murder or leave her, Grange, eventually, does both. Her challenge to his masculinity leads him to abandon her and then kill her (for he is guilty in some sense to lead her to suicide). Her courage, audaciousness and rebelliousness rest only in her taking the imitative to live a man’s life, doing what men do and what women are forbidden to do, which eventually deem her as a failure, for they only build up her painful end.

4.1.1.2.2. The Failure of Mem

Mem’s voice redemption is significant in the novel, mainly when it coexists with actual action. Though momentarily, she rescues her identity; and though she is subject to the same severe victimisation by men as the other female characters, her situation is much more optimistic because she—at least—undertakes an action that she has long been denied as a woman in a patriarchal society. Threatening Brownfield with a gun to let her and the children move to the town house is a daring action that both proves masculine and defying, and that revives her family life. Rebuilding her family is a temporary change that Mem does; a change by which she claims her identity and therefore maintains her *self*, an act that is male-recognised and that infuriates her man to use more violence on her while she persists until her death. Brownfield’s revenge on Mem is to render her down once more to her lower status, and then ends her life. Brownfield’s murder of Mem implies a way of paying back the assumed role of the *dominant* she tried to play when battering his head with a gun and laying down a ten-point resolution. Before killing her, he obliges her to sink anew into her traditional role of the submissive and the dependent to please his battered masculine ego.

Getting aware of Mem's ability of rebellion, Brownfield increases his violence – and hence his control-- over her to hamper any attempt of rebellion by her. In *Color Purple*, another novel by Alice Walker, Celie (the female protagonist) does what Mem does in *The Third Life of Grange Copeland* by standing up to her male oppressor; the fact that makes him “laugh(ed). ‘Who do you think you is?’ He said. ‘You can’t curse nobody. Look at you. You black, you ugly. *You a woman*. Goddamn’, he said, ‘you nothing at all’” (my own use of italic) (206). The word woman then is italicised by Walker to be used according to Albert, Celie's male partner, as a curse; woman signifies ‘nothing at all’. Woman does not have any sense of identity, be it racial, sexual, ethnic or any other. Woman is associated with worthlessness and insignificance. Through these stereotypes beliefs, woman is silenced; and her rebellious sense is prohibited.

Mem's failure symbolises women's failure; even more importantly it is to stress the notion that her failure to keep strength, to keep herself *man* with its whole social interpretation, is condoned by both their men and their societies. Her victory does not last long, nevertheless, because she is a black woman, one who occupies the most subservient status in society. The patriarchal society impedes woman from prospering to emphasise the masculine role. Gathering strength and rebellion, Mem ends up destroyed, because she is not socially strong and protected enough.

4.1.1.2.3. The Failure of Josie

Josie is forced by rape into a powerless position, and this eventually leads her to control *sex distributing* to her clients with full dominance. Josie's resort to prostitution for *avenging* herself from men's rapes and other abuses is also too preposterous and even puzzling. Women's Prostitution is one sort of men's exploitation of them though they are financially paid for. “The general definition of prostitution states that it is a sexual exploitation of women committed by another, most often men, for profit or in order to render pleasure”, Raymond, J (An American Professor and Activist) contending (cited in Johannsdottir 25). Josie ends up in prostitution, for she has no other means to earn her living; it is hence the only way to support herself and her family¹. In so doing, Josie is not avenging herself anymore but she is rather allowing men's more exploitation of her. “...The buyer is in most cases a man and the sexual service he is buying is most often humiliating and revolves around power and contempt” (Bragadottir 25).

Selling the body, though provisional, reflects the notion of ownership. By leaving her family, Josie escapes her father's violence but turns into a prostitute; a fact that makes of her an easily attainable sexual object for men, i.e. she once more allows men to own her. Josie's case is enigmatic because it represents weakness dressed in power; "Both the powerlessness and the poverty of many women have had the effect of leading them to engage in prostitution, which in most cases is a choice but yet, a coerced one" (Johannsdottir 32). She therefore tries to defeat men through her *powerful weakness*.

The absence of her father and the loss of Grange make Josie switch to another form of dependency which is *displaced dependence* while becoming a prostitute finding refuge in other men (her costumers). No other better choice seems to be served or available to Josie than that of turning into a prostitute, and so she eventually indeed becomes. Josie, this poor woman, who has been raped at sixteen and who has been expelled and rejected by her father afterwards finds no alternative for survival and revenge than prostitution. At the meantime, her female body which is a sign of weakness becomes a source for strength for her from which she secures economic superiority to and independence from men. No other black man seems to compete with Josie as far as financial resources are concerned. However, Josie's actual economic independency and her financial superiority to men do not prevent men's abuses on her. Being socially weak and defenceless, Josie could not defend herself from men who physically abused her (most of whom were surprisingly her father's male friends) and whom her father keeps friendly with, whereas he torments and batters his daughter heavily for an act (rape) for which she is not responsible. She has even been continuously wronged by Grange, her so-called significant other, and whom she financially supports. In the end, however, Josie shows her desire to be feminine again, by being a domestic wife to Grange. She feels that her becoming a prostitute makes of her adopt a dominant role, a masculine role; she thinks that she has deviated from society's traditional values through her profession and which proves rebellious. Thus, her identity is interrupted by a severe psychological crisis.

Josie never defies Grange, never rebels against his emotional violence on her. The daring acts she holds, when turning into prostitution, are against herself, against her being female. She does not intend to hurt anybody, and indeed she hurts none but herself. Prostitution for Josie has been a reaction against rape and sexual assault she received from

different black and white men. In the same way that Margaret has followed, Josie too directs her avenger towards herself. Josie submits to Grange's violence; because, she believes that as long as violence is an expression of masculinity, it is then an ordinary issue that cannot and should not be defied or resisted.

Josie suffers indifference from Grange who does not pay her the mind he would pay to a dog as she wistfully says to people around her. Indifference—as an emotional violence—is too probable than physical violence to bring about severe effects. Women would “Better have pain than paralysis” (Nightingale 29). Numbness and lethargy; this is what Grange grows in Josie's mind by his indifference. Her presence in his life is like a piece of furniture or worse as a void, and this really keeps nagging in her heart. She wants him to acknowledge her—at least—for the good she always does for him. Patriarchy creates the notion of woman as equating nothingness, as something with no real place to occupy in society.

Josie claims her identity and proves herself only in economic terms. She attempts to create her wholeness solely through her economic independence, which is a failure that ultimately leaves her back as a *victim* exactly like the other female characters. The minute she resigns her properties—the only element of her strength that ensures her independent identity—in Grange's favour, she once more victimises herself. She relinquishes her identity to be used by Grange and to Brownfield afterwards. She is also portrayed as a victim while desperately tries to gain and keep the male love she is denied. In front of Grange and Brownfield, she proves helpless and powerless playing again the role of the victim, assuming once more her traditional gender role as a female, and conceiving of her life as being desolate.

4.1.1.2.4. The Failure of Margaret

Resisting Grange's violence through other means, but never fighting back, rather shows Margaret's submissiveness than her rebelliousness; because Margaret vents her violence only on herself and the children. She exerts violence on herself when allowing Shipley's sexual exploitation of her and then by committing suicide; on her son Brownfield

while being indifferent to him; and on the baby when neglecting it first and then murdering it.

Walker has succeeded in bringing out the struggle and the frustration of the black woman in her fiction. Gender bias is one of the vital concerns for Walker to broach in her novel, through which she “wanted to explore the relationship between man and women, and why women are always condemned for doing what men do as an expression of their masculinity” (Walker 256). Women are seen as transgressing tradition if engaged in the same activities as men’s.

This change in Margaret’s personality is necessary, for she finds *relief* from her inability to cope with the pressures put upon her by Grange and society as a whole; however, it is a relief which does not live long and which leads to her eternal downfall – while committing suicide and homicide. This is an act which reveals that though Margaret frees herself from Grange’s physical domination, she is still emotionally dependent on him. Thus, Margaret’s end demonstrates that she has not succeeded in achieving a level of balance between traditional masculine and feminine roles. Margaret thinks she could no longer survive without Grange, because she has never tried to achieve a degree of independence that would give her some sense of power. Being emotionally dependent on her man makes her unable to abandon her femaleness; the fact that rises an inner psychological conflict which drives her to put an end for her life.

Margaret’s reasons of her earlier submission to Grange’s violence on her have stemmed from her belief in it as the right way and the only possible way to react against men’s violence. She never fights back to avenge herself from his physical or emotional violence on her. She does not take any stand against him when left her and headed North in search for a better life, either. What, however, stimulates her rage towards an active reaction is Grange’s taking another woman as a lover. Trying to take revenge from her husband, Margaret turns into whoredom. When she transgresses conventional gender role – as she thinks herself is doing, she does not offend her man anyway. Yet she feels too apologetic and accordingly she thinks of suicide; and suicide, she really does, and thus she dies believing it her most appropriate punishment. Likewise, Margaret’s crimes have been aimed at nobody but herself.

The aforementioned facts reveal that despite her resistance to her man, Margaret does not utterly get to the core reasons of her oppression. What is rather important to note is Margaret's rebellion has never emerged against Grange's intense acts of violence on her. Her challenge occurs only against his betrayal of her when taking another woman. Only then that Margaret tries to avenge herself by taking white and black men as lovers. Nonetheless, she regrets her resistance to her man and thus turns revengeful on herself while resorting to suicide.

“Margaret died because she could never forgive herself, Mem because she was too willing to forgive [others]” (Anurdha and Suresh 226-22). Regret –for Margaret-- too appears as key concept here because it accents her refusal of embracing masculine traits and attitudes to her identity as a woman. She is strongly predisposed into believing that what she did is transgression of tradition, it is opposing to the socio-cultural mainstreams and which she grasps as *natural* standards.

4.1.1.2.5. Causes of Women's Failure

4.1.1.2.5.1. Women's Regret for Transgressing Tradition

Although tradition and culture hold aspects that are discriminatory and devaluing to women, yet these aspects are seen to be respected and sustained, for the sole reason that they define one's identity though they may be wrong or built on wrong foundations. They are hard, if not impossible, to transform or mend because they are simply deeply rooted that there might be social punishments or sanctions for any individual who tries to transgress or show disrespect for these practices or beliefs (Siyanbola 2). Hence, switching to masculine deeds that are traditionally (culturally) prohibited for women, some women do not stop reproaching themselves. “His wife [Margaret] died believing what she had done was sinful and required death” (178). This is because, as Abrams and Hunt (196) reason women who are said to have crossed the boundaries of gender can never escape the reality of gender construction, never entirely escape the dominant construction of gender hierarchies, never completely break free from the confinement of femininity. This frustrating condition does not only deprive women from defending their rights but also engenders self-destructive psychological consequences for women.

Schumann and Ross, on their part, believe that women are more apologetic than men; “according to various academic and popular writers, women apologize readily for their transgressions, whereas men do not” (Schumann and Ross 1649). Besides, women of the novel are punished for expressing anxiety or anger, and therefore, they shy away from revealing any rebellion or protest. On the other hand, apology, according to men, is associated with weakness; the fact that makes them eagerly avoid it. It is, however, highly estimated in women, and hence they readily undertake it wherever they evaluate their deeds as wrong or offensive to others.

Though controversial, Walker’s *the Third Life of Grange Copeland* clearly enough crosses conventional gender borders through women characters like, Josie, Mem and Ruth. What female characters have done is an utterly necessary move for diminishing violence against them and cancelling inequality between the two genders although, they may see their actions as transgressing conventional gender role boundaries.

Women’s obligations to children, husbands and society have to be reconsidered. Women have to collectively take measure against all prejudices that have been created about them. They have to fight against preserved and condoned gender inequality so as to erode them, and hence mark a crucial role in the transformation of women’s socio-economic and political status. Individual attempts are at times fruitful, but they more often make women feel wrongdoers, transgressors of tradition. Collective rebellion is likely to gain them an acknowledged shield that would eventually protect them from any feeling of self-reproach that may keep nagging at them.

In an interview with O’ Brien, Alice Walker states her intention of writing *the Third Life of Grange Copeland*; “... I wanted to explore the relationship between men and women, and why women are always condemned for doing what men do as an expression of their masculinity. Why are women so easily ‘tramps’ and ‘traitors’ when men are heroes for engaging in the same activity? Why do women stand for this?” (O’Brien 197 and Walker 256). Before providing any illustration from the concerned novel, it seems urgent to refer to Nathaniel Hawthorne’s depiction of women as victims of the patriarchal order in his novel *the Scarlet letter*, through Hester’s condemnation by the whole society for giving birth to a legitimate child who clearly enough could have never come to this world without

a father. Strangely yet quite logically --as it conforms to the patriarchal norms-- that no one asks about the identity of the unknown father, and who is ironically a member of the Christian ministers who stand for Hester's punishment. Therefore, it is not surprising to learn that all of Margaret's, Mem's and Josie's fathers are preachers as well; and that they all have committed either one or all types of violence on their wives and daughters. Mem's father deserts her and her mother --given that she has been an illegitimate child. And Josie's father rapes her (at the age of sixteen) after he has realised her illegitimate pregnancy caused by her teen-lover and that has subjected her to endless rape by different men afterwards.

In the same sense, Margaret's pregnancy of an illegitimate child and that is followed by Grange's desertion of her and by her suicide; Mem's violent reaction against Brownfield and that entails his murder of her, Josie's prostitution and that is attended by her father's torturing vengeance; all of which depict daring acts that women --and not men-- are dearly punished for. "His wife [Margaret] had died... required death, and that what he had done required nothing but she get out of his life" (178). Influenced by tradition, Margaret believes that what she does is transgression, which is usually envisaged as perilous and undesirable and even a taboo, and hence she despises herself. While she relies on a form of power outside the social official power-scheme, she thinks herself a sinner; she knows quite well that everybody would denounce her. She indeed believes she has disrupted the order of the universe by adopting her man's roles and behaviours, that while she has not accepted her true function in society she has challenged the divine order (mainly because she is driven by her Christian beliefs).

Culture introduces gender roles as valuable and necessary for both men and women. Stepping away from the familiar terrain of her culture, Margaret could no more conform to the new social circle she puts herself in. She feels an alien from the gender male scope she has recently joined, and hence rejects all possible alternatives and degrades herself to her second-class status, and eventually ends her life with her very hands. Margaret resists *change in her*, because she wants to preserve traditional values. She believes that she deranges the logical social order, and thus acquires punishment.

Woman is socialised to conceiving that she exists only to serve man; that she is not made to mistake; and if she does she deserves a harder punishment than that designed to man. Woman is always made to believe that she exists only to ensure the welfare of others; and if she fails to execute these so-called feminine duties, people consider her, and she too considers herself, as sinner and as deserving punishment. Men and women are socially punished differently for the same crime; the punishment is used to suit the *person* involved --be it man or woman-- and not the *crime*.

What Josie is rebellious against is her bad fate, but she indeed has a very limited understanding of possible gender equality and social change. “Don’t say that... if you going to talk about your Daddy in any mean way, I ain’t coming here no more” (168); she tells Brownfield, her step-son, when he tries to convince her that Grange is only exploiting her, that she does not worth anything for her husband. Josie resists rebellion in her because she does not understand the true essence of gender issue, because of her inescapable ignorance of this phenomenon that creates and supports inequality and discrimination against women.

As first-generation women of the novel, both Margaret and Josie think that the separate line that nature has laid between male and female gender roles must be maintained by men and women respectively. Thus, both Margaret and Josie prove anti-feminists at the end of their journeys, by turning back to their submissive role first and then by punishing themselves for gender transgression. Josie and Margaret’s final actions are not justifiable as Jackson strongly asserts; “neither ignorance nor traditional values seem to explain antifeminism” (205). Black women have also to stop blaming themselves or the whites for their men’s violence and to start dealing with it as a gender-related phenomenon. It is only then that they get empowered and start to look and call for changes. They also need to cease considering gender inequalities as fair, natural, or as predestined. “in order to prevent violence against women, it is necessary to change the attitudes and behavior, of both women and men, which are often influenced by prejudices, gender stereotypes and gender-based customs and traditions” (Heissecke 9).

It is puzzling, therefore, for readers to attend the same acts performed by black men who are never punished for. On the other hand, it is clearly noticed from the novel that black women’s good qualities such as independence, intelligence, and assertiveness are

viewed as a direct threat to black men's masculinity. In the same sense, Brownfield feels intimidated by Mem's intelligence and education. These good qualities derive punishment for women who attain them because these women are believed to have transgressed social and cultural tradition.

People, and mainly women, need to understand why such violence happens. They have to understand that such violence is rooted in gender-inequality. Once grasping the root causes of violence against them; women start putting much more focus on these causes to help eradicate them and eventually diminish gender-based violence against them. Therefore, new perspectives and larger chances are available for women to end violence and gender-based discrimination against them and this is by fighting whatever factor that leads to its emergence. Linossier, et al. (33) introduced five (5) essential actions to reduce intimate partner violence (against women). In accordance with the study they guided, violence will stop if we challenge the social support of this violence, equalise access to power and decision-making in public life and intimate relationships, strengthen positive personal identities and defy gender stereotypes and roles, strengthen positive equal and respectful inter-gender relationships, and encourage and normalise gender equality in both public and private life spheres.

Luckily, the end of Walker's novel provides a new plot involving all these opportunities, and thus the *Third Life of Grange Copeland* launches a promising future for women in general and black women in particular to achieve gender equality and enjoy a life free of male violence and oppression.

4.1.1.2.5.2.Lack of Collective Action

Through the failure of her female characters' rise to power and challenge to domestic violence, the author tries to demonstrate that women should engage in collective action for a better outcome. Individual effort cannot do what collective resistance does in surmounting the barriers against women. Black women must unite and establish movements to fight gender inequality and gender-based violence. Walker might have used the Civil Rights Movements as an exemplar to raise awareness towards the possibility of successful unions in order to abolish not only race but also sex inequality.

Notwithstanding, the text does not underestimate the change, improvement and achievement of women's individual rebellions. Individual endeavours to achieve women's progress towards higher status are of no less importance than cooperative resistance. In fact, women's individual resistance to violence and second-class status has been necessary, for it reflects women's consciousness raising that would elicit their personal experiences before delving into any action, or collective resistance. Enhanced awareness occurs during this period of time to take positive action towards women's liberation and gender equality. In other words, Ruth's generation takes the initiative to translate their mothers' awareness into real tangible action.

The stress is rather put on "woman's organized rebellions against their inferior status [and which] complemented their continuous individual resistance to equality" (183). Although the CRM itself as a movement that has showed sexism against women while excluding them from the movement's leadership, it passes on other principles to other movements by women. The Civil Rights Movement stands as a guide and bridge connecting the aims of women's movements. Many ideologies and structures of the movement get inherent to women's movements; "previous participation in the Civil Rights Movement fuelled females' involvement in the women's liberation movement" (Jackson 11). Participation in the CRM affords women the opportunity to articulate their opinions. Women participants in this movement get empowered to challenge and change their subservient stratum; because, they realise that they possess the necessary skills to initiate such reform. Being black and belonging to an era where rebellions were not upheld and supported, female characters' circumstances do not allow any opportunity to join any collective resisting movements. Ruth, being a member of a more aware generation and one that enjoys a better circumstance, becomes conscious herself and zealous to participate in common rebellious movements.

First, the more that people experience both shared dissatisfactions and hopes, the more motivation they have to act collectively. Second, the more the individual freedom and resources that people in a group possess, the more able they are to join a movement. Third, the more a group's circumstances ease organisation the more likely it is that pioneering experiences ...succeed. (Jackson 184).

4.1.1.3. Successful Rebellions

4.1.1.3.1. Ruth as a Successful Rebel

Walker defies gender norms through her portrayal of women's transgression of tradition in an attempt to call for a change in women's conditions. The uncommon, audacious, courageous and wilful behaviour of women is particularly represented by Ruth. Unlike the other female characters that seem to have reconciled themselves to patriarchal life, to ignorance of the 'self', Ruth comes to defy this oppression. In wearing the mask of audaciousness, courage, and other qualities that have been traditionally defined as masculine while dealing with her father, she is secretly and indirectly destroying this patriarchal system. The portrait of Ruth as a rebel against patriarchal institutions led by white characters and the white society in general on the one hand, and by black men as, male dominants, on the other hand, conveys the *womanist* character and feminist aspect of the novel. Towards the end of the story, Walker sums up the black female's status in Ruth (Brownfield and Mem's youngest daughter) who develops a critical spirit. However, by adopting an open end, she gives a free room for the reader to imagine the future of the black woman, and to grasp the possible horizons she may encounter within society.

Walker has indeed shown that "For womanhood to win the obvious war of gender equity, therefore, she must address her mind to those innate powers that make her stand out as a human being and not only as a woman, the valor and ingenuity in her that can make her impact in the real world" (Gayle and Kahn 9); and she has clearly done so through Ruth. No other female character seems to be as *rebellious* and *womanist* as Ruth is. The conception of 'womanism' that Walker employs seems to display mainly through the character Ruth who adopts it as a result of her experience of racism and of sexism together, and especially after her father's uxoricide of her mother. At an early age, Ruth becomes aware of the double oppression –they as black women- are subject to. She, contrary to her mother, turns rebellious against her father by defying his chauvinistic masculinity. Meanwhile, contrary to her father himself, she dares challenge the whites. Her rejection of the history book cover, her devotion to contribute in the Civil Rights Movement, and other clues come to convey Ruth's daring womanist personality, which is an innovation used by the author added to her classical notion of the submissive black woman. The integration of this character in her novel reduces the patriarchal idea that men are always the winners while women the victims, in the few last pages of the text.

Ruth neither rejects her femininity, nor does she adopt exclusive masculine identity; which is an act that builds up her wholeness. As Tamalyn (54) explains, Ruth is the only character who completes the journey to wholeness while embracing both genders' attributes. She has achieved *wholeness* through a paralleled and balanced fusion of the two genders. Ruth rejects some of the female roles and others of the male roles, adopting –by that—only what she finds suitable to her well being, only what she perceives as necessary in building her personal identity that is based on equilibrium between the two genders. Ruth is also described as inclining towards male jobs and clothes in spite of her fondness of the pink colour and women perfumes². For instance, Ruth is dissatisfied with the hunting game --and which reflects a masculine gender role-- that Grange often feels like having with her; whereas, she is fond of wearing dungarees and building fences with her grandfather for their farm, and driving their car to do the shopping in town–, which else, are masculine gender attributes. This notion is what Walker effectively intends to convey through Ruth; *femininity* and *masculinity* complement each other, neither can exist alone if one searches for wholeness. If one intends to reach firm identity and balanced personality; neither can be attributed to a given gender or another.

Employing the character Ruth in the novel is peripeteia, a turning point that surprises the reader while unexpectedly introduces a divergence in terms of the development of female characters. Ruth's audacious personality opposes the reader's expectation and introduces her as a landmark for extreme expressiveness that compensates for the other women's victimisation.

Unlike her mother, Ruth seems to embody an *androgynous* nature, but in fact in so being, she is building her fully rounded personality which neither male nor female characters are able to match. Embracing both masculine and feminine characteristics makes of Ruth a real, complete and balanced individual. Traits and roles assigned to men and others assigned to women should not be seen as two *distinct* poles to be adopted by *two genders*, but as *complementary* and appropriated to *both sexes* if one intends to realise a healthy and well balanced personality, i.e. the individual, be they male or female, has to embrace both gender roles and attributes to be a complete and complemented human. “We humans have two eyes, two ears, two arms, two legs, two hands and two feet; we were created with two in one mind. Walker realizes the importance of two as it applies to our

physical make-up. According to her, qualities from two genders simultaneously working together within the individual equal one person” (Tamalyn 82). Thus, the author creates a ‘new sphere’ that is neither masculine nor feminine for Ruth to dwell in. this new sphere suggests an opportunity for a new gender to exist and which reflects only feminine and masculine virtues. It is a site for human morality; an entity where all human virtues overlap.

4.1.1.3.1.1. Causes of Ruth’s Awareness and Audaciousness

Ruth’s identity is created by the convergence of the three generations together. Her personality is built up on Grange’s three-life experience. Her discovery of the self, her claiming for identity is considered as the starting point for Walker’s female characters to escape subjugation in a traditionally male-dominated arena. Ruth also appears as contrasting the other female characters and that are in many ways the embodiment of traditional ideals of the frail woman. Walker focuses on her portrayal of Ruth’s strength and self control to denounce the image of the weak woman.

Various cues from the narrative demonstrate the way Grange, Ruth’s grandfather grows in her such a deep insight and acumen. However, Alice Walker does not seem to provide any detail of how Ruth develops such rebellious impulses. Though this may seem quixotic, Ruth is fortunate because she has the opportunity for a life without male domination and violence. What Grange wishes for Ruth is “joy, laughter, contentment in being a *woman*; [that] someday there must be happiness in enjoying a man, and children” (214/ my use of italics). Grange does not want Ruth to adopt the same wistful sighs and regretful words her mother and her eldest sisters used to exhibit their wishes to be men. He rather wants her to fully enjoy her being a woman, for he wishes that someday she will achieve equality with *man*. Hence, Ruth’s life/world is --in some sense— a utopian one as Walker tries to represent through Grange’s third life.

Grange’s aim is to teach Ruth everything he knows and to introduce her to both worlds of gender. “He had already taught her how to drive, and now it became her duty to drive into town to do the shopping ... Grange’s plan was to teach her everything he knew. Already, he liked to boast” you aims a heap better than mine!” (214). Consequently, Grange opens new tracks for and articulation of womanhood.

Walker, in relation to her grandfather, sees herself in Ruth's with Grange. She reports serious facts about her grandfathers while having been interviewed by David Bradley "I knew both my grandfathers, and they were just doting ... However, as young men, middle-aged men, they were ... brutal. One grandfather knocked my grandmother out of a window... But when I knew him, he was a sensitive, wonderful man" (36). Although her two grandfathers had been violent and masculine in their youth; Walker has known them as compassionate and kind in their ripe old age.

Readers are invited to witness Ruth's maturation as she gradually keeps growing into a wise strong and self-confident person. Her cognitive moral development escalates gradually thanks to her grandfather's sermons. Ruth does not seem to be concerned with following gender conventional rules. Therefore, woman's moral weakness is contradicted and rejected through the depiction of Ruth as the embodiment of cognitive moral developments by which the text imposes a completely different set of gender ideologies. Hence, it is through Ruth that gender stereotypes are broken and subverted.

As we have seen in the first chapter, the representation of gender and gender roles in young or children literature plays a remarkable role in the way young adults develop their gender traits and roles. The depiction of males and females in fiction leads to two-way responses from readers. Readers can either change their already perceived concepts of genders or confirm them (Dietrich 7). However, it is too difficult to change stereotypes or ideas that are hardly internalised in society and its culture. Therefore, one vital way is to help young readers read with critical minds, to make readers ready to develop their opinions avoiding –by that– to absorb stereotypical messages conveyed by these texts. Ruth in *The Third Life of Grange Copeland* is a critical child reader of literature. "She liked mythology, the Bronte sisters, Thomas Hardy..." (197). In her book shelves, there exist different fiction books; of which she takes advantage to promote her awareness and her sense of self-esteem, though loaded with notions of gender and traditional gender roles.

Ruth has been extremely fascinated by *Jane Eyre*, a first-degree feminist novel written by Charlotte Brontë about a female character, Jane Eyre, who suffers a lot under the tyranny of the chauvinist, Mr. Edward Rochester, and other male characters who all exploit her femaleness to achieve a sense of power. Miss Eyre's final decisions –of leaving

Rochester and preferring starvation instead and which are seen by many as feminist—seem to have an impressive impact on the adolescent Ruth, who suddenly develops a critical and feminist perspective. *Jane Eyre* as a feminist work is very likely to have raised in Ruth the feminist drive.

She might also have gained the daring and the rebellious character owing to her attendance of the Civil Rights Movement news on TV --besides the confidence, love and security that Grange again tries to supply her with and which no other black female character is favoured with, i.e. she is endowed with the necessary conducive conditions that enable her do what the other women failed --or rather, never attempted or thought-- to do. Grange, hence, is represented as undergoing a basic and cardinal transformation from an abusive father to Brownfield to a caring grandfather to Ruth. A focal point here is that Grange rears Ruth against her father's will on the one hand, and against the socially gendered mainstreams on the other hand. Grange also grows in her the seeds of *peaceful* rebellion against all the *isms*, among which racism and sexism seem to be at the peak; an idea that Walker tries to articulate through this character to encourage all people of her race to embrace.

Therefore, Ruth' courageous character and self-confidence derive first from her grandfather's love and support and second from her strong rejection of the notion of frustration-aggression premise as it is applied to black male violence on women, as it is agreed on by the black American society. She refuses to forgive her father's violence on her mother and rejects the plea that this violence occurs as a response to long suffering and frustration of the blacks.

No person can oppress because he is himself oppressed by someone else—seems to be Ruth's rallying cry to encourage black women to reject their men's excuses of their violence and rude treatments. Although she never says it; yet her very actions loudly announce and strongly affirm that men oppress women because they are *men*. Therefore, she resolves to stand and face every violent man, for she conceives him as wrongdoer, offender and guilty and hence deserves to react against accordingly. Men's violence cannot be reduced through women's tolerance and great hearts but through fighting back and defiance; this is what the audacious Ruth comes to eventually realise.

Collective rebellions that are held during Ruth's generation also raise her awareness and insight. Better circumstances, opportunities and resources are those of Ruth's female generation. The era –as the text reveals-- witnesses different ways of life and of thinking from those of Margaret's or even Mem's generation. Women's new insights combined with their new circumstances allow more feminist organisations and collective action, which --in turn-- allow more consciousness in women.

4.1.1.3.2. Mem as a Successful Rebel

In several pages of the novel, Mem has appeared as a non-fighter feminine female. Part of Mem's selflessness rests in her constant suppression of her emotions, mainly to protect her daughters. She keeps both her emotions and her tears hidden so as not to upset them despite their being witnesses of her daily exposure of Brownfield's physical and psychological violence. Nonetheless, though at the beginning of her exposure to Brownfield's excessive violence, Mem has been represented as silent and submissive, yet we notice a grudge and contempt in her tone against him and his backwardness, never because of his being uneducated but because of seeing her inferior just for being a woman. This is the very fact that presents her as more aware than both Margaret and Josie –who have rebelled against violence and oppression without seizing its true causes-- as far as gender and gender-based violence are concerned. Mem –at first—seems passive towards gender-based violence and oppression, yet the way she persists and keeps strong in front of her children shows her as partaking in the process of eradicating gender discrimination. “Women helped erode gender inequality through several levels of action including *passive* responses to altered circumstances, active efforts as individuals, and collective action in social movements” (Jackson 173).

No other scene in the novel carries woman's violent reaction except that where Mem –after a long time of tyranny and torture - tries to defend herself from Brownfield's violence and to create an end for his offences on her. This violence can be regarded as a last resort; it refers to her self-defense against longstanding abuse from man and by which she calls for justice and fairness in the power relationship between her and Brownfield. Walker calls for more power and freedom to women through giving her female characters an access to male areas, through giving them an opportunity, and right too, to transgress

these social boundaries and to explore and challenge the separate spheres for men and women.

Meanwhile, this exceptional scene carries with it and articulates certain ideological conceptions putting forward that fighting black male violence would only make things worse. This is what indeed happens to Mem after her first and last attempt to meet Brownfield's violence with the same violence. This daring and audacious reaction from Mem costs her own life. In a word, while Mem reacts with violence, Brownfield resorts to murder. Hence, the case of the black woman in this novel is similar to what Denzin refers to by arguing that; "If the wife meets the husband's violence with violence, only more violence is produced. If she reacts passively to his violence, this will also produce more violence, for her actions reinforce his violent attitudes towards her" (Denzin 495).

Therefore, women's submissiveness is not a matter of choice but it rather refers to *denial of choice*. Women *become* submissive because they have been socially constrained to make strategic life choices, i.e. their capacities to make strategic choices in their lives are limited. Women—as a subordinate group—accept their lot in society, because they may evaluate it as unchangeable destiny. Cultural or ideological norms deny the existence of power/gender inequalities, for they falsify that such inequalities are unfair. Hence, denied of power --and which is a fact that derives from the inability to make choices-- women have to work for their empowerment.

Although Mem feels incapable to provide anything to anybody as Brownfield robs her of everything good, she remains to care for her three daughters. As deprived and empty as she herself feels, she strives to do anything she could for protecting them. Her sense of her children's weakness and need alone keeps her surviving. Though devoid of love, nurturance, endurance, patience, and affection as her man has made her feel; yet she always tries hard to save these virtues to her children. Nurturance, care, and the sense of giving merge to build up the personality of black female characters; these traits which are considered as feminine are the very qualities that prove them strong, as compared to their men.

Before her death, Mem embodies both traditional feminine virtues (like nurturing and compassion) and traditional masculine traits like (action and independence). She therefore assumes untraditional women responsibilities. It is her breadwinner status that helps her gain independence –although it is confined to the economic sphere. And, she also shifts to action, while her man could not rebel against the whites, to save their daughters from sharecropping and the miserable life it entails. She alone –for example— works outside to provide for their children; she attends to the house repairing, like fixing and covering the wall holes and starting fire for the children’s warmth. She also manages to rent a new house in town that is more fitting to human inhabitation for her children instead of the freezing stables (the only dwelling their father could supply for them); these are masculine actions that her husband cannot accomplish. Through actions like these, women characters introduce alternatives and attempt to redefine gender norms. According to the traditional African American family, the husband (man/father) is the extreme authority who makes decisions; and who assumes responsibility for the whole family, be it moral or financial. Depicting Brownfield as losing the breadwinner role is a way of feminising his natural authority of a man of the house. Men’s failing to take charge of ‘the man of the house’ in these terms, makes women, by necessity, take on responsibilities that would normally belong to men and give them ‘power’. The text highlights the fact that undesirable helplessness and weakness exist in any person, regardless of which gender they are. Walker’s female characters’ strength and feminist side are highlighted and enhanced through contrasting them with their weak men’s reaction against the whites’ oppression; notably the contrast that takes place between the audacious Mem and the weak Brownfield when it comes to assertiveness in front of the whites.

The basic incompatibility between Mem and Brownfield is her educational and her humane superiority. Brownfield could not grasp that degrading Mem to his lower level would never devoid her of her superiority to him because her superiority and her beauty are intrinsic in her and they indeed rest deep inside her. Whatever techniques he would apply on her to make her down to his level could not fit for his purpose. Mem proves her strength while embracing both moral and physical courage. Her moral courage lays in her patience and her wisdom in dealing with the hardships that her race and sex foist; and her physical courage rests in her ability to take on men’s decisions and actions that her own man does not dare to do. A case in point would be the act she takes against the white

landlord, freeing herself and her family from the bounds of sharecropping (by moving to the town and working in factories). Strength of character and willingness to accept responsibility develop in Mem; although, we –as readers-- learnt the opposite about her earlier. This shift in character that is noticed throughout all the female characters is what can be referred to as gender tradition transgression.

The female characters reveal themselves above the social norms for women in their position, by switching to male defined roles. Therefore, while advocating women's capacities and rebellious force in contrast with men's, *the Third Life of Grange Copeland* presents new norms for gender which are more or less radically feminist. Another way of revealing women's capabilities and agency is working outside home which is also an action of empowering women. Walker's depiction of her female characters' earlier excessive submissiveness to their men is a way of criticising women's limitations; the limitations that the female gender imposes. The concern of *the Third Life of Grange Copeland* as a discursive text is thus to stress that unless imbalances between females and males are actively altered, domestic violence would persist --and even grow more intense-- against women.

As desperate as he makes her to be, Mem never ceases to illustrate the potential strength that is implied within her weakness; that is concealed behind it. She is endowed with a solid inner power that makes her ready to encounter the pitiful conditions in society and to cope with Brownfield's violence and brutality. However, Mem never attempts to escape; forced subordination really hampers her and hinders her from foreseeing a prospective change. She dreads change, because as a black woman, nothing is there in society ready to support her.

Black manhood and womanhood expectations face troubles under the name of racial discrimination and which subsequently creates crisis for one's identity establishing. "They [women] had to become strong, for their families and their communities needed their strength to survive", so professes Angela Davis (231) in her 'Women Race and Class'. This is actually what makes Mem shift to a position of power because she realises that her husband, Brownfield, never believes –cannot believe—in a better life for himself and his family. His numbed actions are meant by the white landlords, and are engendered

from the hardship of sharecropping life. In a word, Brownfield can never achieve a strong position in society; and in his absence of strength, Mem feels obliged to acquire it herself to help her daughters cope with and even fight against racism.

No other black woman character of Mem's generation is shown as defiant to the whites as herself proves to be. Mem stands as a rebel against the cultural dominance of the whites that generates bad circumstances for her children's health, education, and general care and survival (as they impose them to move from one place to another and live in freezing shacks).

She might have lacked the initiative to protest against Brownfield, to protect herself from his abuses; but what she has really required is to cease 'giving' without 'taking'. She has needed to switch from thinking of first pleasing him and conforming to his desires and expectations to thinking about how to please herself first. Therefore, the very minute she starts thinking of herself and her own children she vanquishes him (when moving to the new decent house).

Walker's utilisation of a three-generation-life narrative is done to depict how socio-cultural stereotypes about hegemonic masculinity and others about femininity pass on to males and females respectively and from one generation to another. In this sense, each life cycle -of the three cycles- introduces the life mechanism of a group of male and female characters, and in turn the socio-historical life cycle of black people in the American South (Georgia) from the 1920s towards the 1960's.

Hence, discussing the types of female characters in Walker's work, Washington (40) admits that they represent the black feminist, or else the historical emergence of the *womanist*, movement. According to her, black women in *The Third Life of Grange Copeland* grow and develop from victimised (by both society and men) to more conscious and controlling selves. Therefore, she considers three types of women (in relation with three historical cycles): the first category is that of 'suspended women', i.e. women victims of physical and emotional abuse and by whom she refers to the majority of Walker's female characters. The second cycle represents the 1940's and 1950's women who endure psychic violence that resulted from their assimilation of their *problem* (the generation of

Mem, Ruth's mother). And the third cycle is concerned with women of the movement (womanism) who rejoined their roots and have then developed a sense of creativity and awareness together (the case of Ruth and which is the third life in the novel, that is Grange's third life).

The title of the novel is selected as a fitting label to the last life cycle of Grange Copeland, father to Brownfield and grandfather to Ruth. Grange lives and witnesses --and hence, the incidents of the narrative recount as well, three life cycles-- the last of which is the one that portrays the beginning of black women rebellions in America and which are led under one type of feminism that is called *womanism (black feminism)*. Women belonging to this group are depicted as not only aware and conscious but as rebellious and brave. They are however pictured in only one single character who is *Ruth*. The second life of Grange is the one highlighting the life circle of Mem, Ruth's mother, who though is conscious yet lacks the initiative to revolt or call for a change for womankind (she tries to do but so late), and thus, lives in constant psychic depression. And the first life gyration of Grange portrays that of Margaret and Josie and who are totally oppressed by their men and excessively submissive to them, and never, never consider the causes or the nature of their problem.

In the same vein, Karpetovà also states that the reason for which Walker entitled her work as *The Third Life of Grange Copeland* is her intent to put focus on the third type of women (30); on Ruth's generation women who --in spite of the oppressive life, they could reach a level of wholeness and achieve a balanced personality disposition. She attempts to raise black women's awareness of the necessity of fair combination between feminine and masculine roles to achieve a well-balanced personality.

The employment of Mem as a victimised and at the same time still-firm woman in the web of Walker's work incidents reflects hope, or a beginning for a better future for female characters and which will be symbolised by Ruth, her daughter, later in the narrative. Being an educated woman is likely to assimilate her problem as woman; and keeps determined and firm in spite of her extreme privation and weakness. Her love to her children and her devotion to a *change* are the best illustration in such regard. "I am going to git well again and git work again ..." (107), she assures Brownfield who contemptuously

answers her, “you can’t do nothing but lay up there and moan” (107). Brownfield’s sexism still drives him to despise women and see them as weak and inferior.

Mem proves and establishes her identity through *education* by which she becomes a threat for the patriarchal and racist society. As a result, Brownfield challenges her power to create her powerlessness, and he indeed succeeds to do the minute he endows her with silence and inferiority; the minute he trades her voice for silence. Mem’s courageous behaviour and her love and empathy to her daughters, however, introduce her strength as a womanist character. Mem proves herself stronger, smarter the minute she could save him, herself and their daughters from the system of sharecropping and the exploitation of the whites when she moves herself and her family to a more decent house in town and start working in a factory.

Mem fully understands her actuality as a woman oppressed by her husband. She knows very well that her being female is what makes her devoid of power in front of Brownfield and that this lack of power is an outcome of gender inequality and which simultaneously grants Brownfield with the right to exert all types of violence on her. However, her only weakness is that she has believed in change. She and her daughters “thought he had changed ... [until they realised he] was not much changed as changeable. He could put on a front to fool the trusting” (108). Mem thinks she can convert Brownfield through forgiveness, compassion and patience. He, on the other hand, takes more advantage from the role of the submissive his wife plays, “she was not evil and he would profit from it” (103), until she trades her silence for voice when threatening him with a gun coercing him to end his violence on her.

Her assimilation of the problem mainly is reflected in the rules she sets for the new home in town and of which the absence of violence gets at the summit and seizes the main priority. Besides, Mem is smart enough to have chosen the most appropriate time to defy Brownfield and call for her and her children rights. She never fails to fulfil her role as a devoted mother for her children, but she pays for this ultimate devotion and sacrifice by meeting her own death at the hands of her own man.

Including the aforementioned facts, one could not disregard the solid source that Mem provides for Ruth through her rebuilding of the family and from which Ruth could build her firm and strong *self*. Due to the courage Mem grows in her, Ruth is the only one who harshly responds to, and defends her elder sisters from, Brownfield, their father. At the age of four, and noticing the tough beating of her father to Mem, Daphne and Ornette, she shouts at him: “You nothing but a sonnabit” (108), to which he responds with a strong blowing to the head. Although they are failures, or rather do not live long, Mem’s actions stand as a good beginning, a good foundation and model for her daughter, Ruth, making of her the most outspoken female character.

The minute Mem stops Brownfield from playing the role of *man* of the household and decides to take control of her and her daughters’ life, she exhibits signs of masculinity although she has always been financially (economically) *the man* of the house “I have just about let you play man enough to fine out you ain’t one...” (94). One outcome of Mem’s defiance to Brownfield while trying to take on the role of the household’s upper-hand is to give her daughters the chance that she herself has lacked. Mem refuses to hand over “Today’s inequalities [which] are translated into the inequalities of tomorrow as daughters inherit the same discriminatory structures that oppressed their mothers” (Kabeer 16) to her three daughters. She exchanges this inherent weakness among the womankind with potential power to transmit to the new female generation. Women characters who were initially described as owing their husbands much obedience appear now as defiant to whatever does stifle their autonomy. Although denial from the norm has led them to lose the battle, still women characters have experienced courage and the spirit of defiance and left it to their daughters as a legacy to replace their inherent weakness. They have left their daughters a chance to carry on the feminist task they have started before them.

Mem defies traditional feminine roles by obtaining the head of the household position which reflects her independency (a trait most often associated with men). Basically, such attributes as rudeness, aggressiveness and dominance are more associated with maleness; and are hence odd for a female character. Reconsidering her power after long-term violence (both as verbal and physical) by her husband, and under a gun threats, Mem beats, threatens, intimidates and humiliates him in an exclusive unparalleled scene. In so doing, she appears defiant not only to Brownfield, but also to the white dominant

landlords. Shifting to this authority position and borrowing her own man's rude language, Mem begins laying down rules for him to follow, to respect and abide by:

If you intend to come long I done made out me some rules for you, for make no (...) Now, first off you going to call me Mem, Mrs Copeland, or Mrs. Mem R. Copeland. Take your pick. And second, you is going to call our children Daphne, Ornette and baby Ruth (...) Third, if you ever lays a hand on me again I'm going to blow your goddam brains out (...) Fourth, you tetch a hair on one of my children's heads and I'm going to crucify you—stick a blade in you, just like they did the Lawd (...) Fifth, you going to learn to eat your meals like a gentleman (...) Sixth, I don't care about your whoring round town but don't you never wake me up on Sunday morning grabbing on me when been out all Saturday night swinging your dick. Seventh, if you ever use a cuss word in my new house I'm going to cut your goddam tongue. Eight, you going to take the blame for every wrong thing you do and stop blaming it on me and Captain Davis and Daphne and Ornette and Ruth and everybody else for fifty miles around. Ninth, you going to respect my house by never coming in it drunk. And tenth, you ain't never going to call me ugly or black or nigger or bitch again, 'cause you done seen just what this black ugly nigger bitch can do when she gits mad! (96)

The rules put forward by Mem to Brownfield sum up her years of agony and suffering and which reflect his violence against her, they also provide a network of criteria for true manhood.

4.1.1.4. Productive Outcomes of Women's Rebellions

Whether successful or not, women's rebellious reactions or attempts to fight prove their selves and identities. Many actions and words that female characters perform to defy patriarchal ideology reflect their sense and readiness of struggling to gain self-realisation and self-respect. Each woman uses her *own* way to deal with the racist society and to revolt against her gender subjugation. Regardless of her behaviour's immorality, Josie makes her sex a weapon to fight against the world in search for survival and in an attempt to discover her identity; Josie finds no other better weapon than sex through which she challenges patriarchy and rebel against her subjugated status. Through this stratagem, in spite of its

being unethical to many, Josie is using her *only* means to reject subjugation and revolt to discover her own identity.

Despite their being individual, these actions challenge constraints on women's identity, because they reveal the common interests and shared ideas of women. However, individual actions against gender inequality and/or domestic violence are not as efficient as collective resistances and challenges. Women's common resistances are more significant, safe and highly recommended, because gender/sex inequality is securely involved in socio-economic and political positional inequality structures. Women's individual challenges and resistances "may have prevented it from getting worse but could not make it better" (Jackson 181). However, individual resistance to unequal power between the genders can lay models for other females in the same family –such as daughters. As Mem takes the initiative and tries to gain some power in her intimate relationship, so does her daughter, Ruth in an attempt to defend her rights from her cruel father. Mem, therefore, serves as a model pioneer for Ruth; for she has inspired her to imitate the new standards she has tried to set in their household.

4.1.2. The Civil Rights Movement

The writer portrays another cooperation that exists between men and women when referring to collectivism through her allusion to the Civil Rights Movement. Walker represents black men and women marching together and calling for justice between the whites and the blacks. "Walker might be asserting that after such brutal racial and sexist oppression of black women, if the resources are made possible, black men and women can live harmoniously together and even work together" (Pasi 40). Though it is quite logical, yet this act seems paradoxical, for while calling for the well-being of the whole community (fighting racism), the black woman has disregards her own personal rights (fighting sexism).

Walker tries to demonstrate through *The Third Life of Grange Copeland* that the black community cannot overcome racism until they fight sexism and the intra-racism existing between black men and women. Inter-gender problems further weaken the black community to fight against racial discrimination that they encounter in a white supremacist society. Through its discursive and different scenes, *The Third Life of Grange Copeland*

makes it visible to the reader that the Civil Rights Movement is a necessary inclusion. The CRM opens new horizons for the welfare of the inter-gender relationships in the novel. The author deliberately mentions the Civil Rights Movement, its collective peaceful marches and other activities related to it, to lay alternatives for the new generations to live together in unified harmony (all, man and woman; young and old; black and white as the narrative reveals (235-236)).

Walker's depiction of the CRM as involving blacks and whites, men and women, marching together and trying to convince others to join the movement, conveys awareness-raising campaigns (in different areas) to call for equality between all people, critically, the unacceptability of violence against women. The Civil Rights Movement's generation's inter-gender relationships are represented through Quincy and Helen, as a young newly married couple. Their harmonious intimate relationship best illustrates Walker's notion of the possibility of gender reconciliation. Each shows sympathy, love and compassion towards the other. No gender discrimination is to be noticed in their relationship as a husband and a wife. Through this paradigmatic couple, Walker reveals that this gender harmony is the fruit of the Civil Rights Movement and that the success of such movements is also determined by this abolition of gender theory. The unity and the formation a harmonious whole of black men and women help these types of movements' prospect.

The basic bonds of valuable emotions like love, care, protection, and support seem to find no opportunity among previous generations' black male characters in relation with their women. Their past and present depressing context negatively influences the way in which they express these emotions for them. This eventually results in the definite exclusion of intimacy, compassion and love from the black couples' interpersonal relationships. Hence, starting to vow these emotions to each other opens new felicitous perspectives for black American inter-gender relationships (as it is the case with the young couple, Quincy and Helen).

Young black men like 'Quincy' --a young marcher and worker in the movement— start showing love and respect towards their women. This kind of respect and compassion among black couples, and which has never existed before in previous generations, helps create unity among the blacks, and therefore, helps spread their consciousness and

enthusiasm to raise and organise rebellions against the whites' oppression and racism. Ruth's generation, which coincides the period of the Civil Rights Movement's occurrence in the novel, gets aware of the possibility of rebellion and actually starts calling for fundamental issues of freedom, and of economic, social and political equality between the blacks and the whites, men and women. Meanwhile, these kinds of rebellion held mainly against the whites also offer some horizons for black women to free themselves from their men's violence and domination by raising their awareness to call for their own rights as women.

Consequently, more potential is awaiting women in the novel at the closing of the narrative. Helen confidently tells Grange that "Quincy's going to run for Mayor ... I'm going to be first Lady of Green County" (241). Great hope seems that of Helen; a hope that Walker is likely to grow in women.

Wife abuse in this novel is a matter of *inheritance*, which is not natural or biological, nonetheless, but which appears in the acquisition of either masculine or feminine aspects and features that move from parents to children and which contribute to effect *patriarchal terrorism*. Children learn to behave in agreement with their sex deriving out of the daily witnessing of their fathers' violence on their mothers. Male children become dominant and violent men who batter and humiliate their women, and female children become inferior and submissive women regularly battered by their husbands. Consequently, if one starts to reduce domestic violence –if not stop it altogether; children would develop healthy and strong identities. Boys would grow to non-violent men, girls into self-confident women. This is the atmosphere that collective movements, like the CRM, assure, and that Grange strives to create for Ruth, because he wants her to 'survive whole'.

The portrayal of the C.R.M generation, as bringing about healthy and balanced inter-gender relationships, is a way for the author to demonstrate that the wellbeing of the black community rests in this union between black men and women and which would raise the blacks' self-confidence to fight against other social phenomena and injustices. Walker's depiction of black people's acceptance of solidarity, cooperation and compassion, through the couple Helen and Quincy is an attempt to call for promoting

familial relationships. Helen's too much laughter conveys the welfare, prosperity and contentment of women if gender equality is achieved. "Helen laughed. She laughed a lot. She seemed a carefree as a bird ... Quincy put his arm around his wife loosely yet completely... as if she meant everything to him" (240-241). Sincere and beautiful feelings are allowed among black men and women inter-gender relationship. This is a kind of a fine world that Walker represents in her work and through which she tries to exhort the whole community to engage in this union and start afresh.

The novel also implies that the whites favour the lack of harmony among the black family and community, for the blacks' unity contradicts their plots. Therefore, they –and whenever possible—help loosen black male and female relationships and increase domestic violence by exercising all forms of pressure on black men. "How she feel about moving over to JLS"? 'Oh, she fine! She fine, and she all ready for the big move to Mr. JLS''; he could not breathe normally and felt black and greasy under the man's cool gaze" (88). This embarrassing scene is followed by kicking, slapping and cursing Mem to make her accept moving to Mr. JLS' human-unfit barns (90). Putting him under pressure, the whites indirectly makes him coerce her to accomplish unfavourable acts. Notwithstanding, the whites never serve as an excuse for black men's humiliation of and violence on their women, because violence in men is a matter of choice as clarified earlier.

In Search of our Mothers' Gardens, Walker (251) argued that in order for a family, a community or a race to keep healthy and strong, they should fight domination and annihilation of one another. If people could reach unity, there would be no humiliation, intimidation or violence --at family and community levels-- that is based on the patriarchal overtones in African American culture. Therefore, a deliberate strategy has to be held so as to prevent gender-based violence from occurring in the community. Part of the comprehensive prevention strategy is to raise men's and women's consciousness about the dangerous outcomes of domestic violence.

4.1.3. True Manhood

Although *the Third life of Grange Copeland* is a gender-unscripted text which puts forward signs to be decoded in different ways, violence --in this novel-- is a matter of false power that black men assume to have. As victims of society and its injustices because of

their 'race', black men in the novel try to cope with their emasculated manhood by discharging their anger of frustration through violence on women; an action that introduces them as losers while resigned to their un-repairable fate. Fitting into the masculine role within their own families is the only way they reckon compensable for their helplessness and subordination in the white-dominated world. Loss of identity yields a void that the black male character tries to fill by exerting *false power* on *wrong targets* that are defined as more vulnerable and defenceless than he is.

True men have to accept women's superiority to reach gender equality. The text ideology seems to contradict the traditional male gender attributes and notions, for it associates a good man with a non-violent one. A good example is that of Judge Hurry who although does many other nasty things, he is described as a good male as long as he does not use or condone violence. "All in all, however, he was not a bad man as men in the South go. He had never personally trafficked in *Violence*; he had not even strenuously condoned it" (244). Grange's hatred of Uncle Buster for the mere fact that he has watched him once beat his wife from a plate glass window is not innocently reported through the text, but it rather holds a deeper insight to communicate for readers. This ideological enunciation is analogous with opposing violent men, or alternatively said, supporting non-violent men. According to Walker, non-violence is hence a criterion through which good men are to be measured.

The real essence of true manhood is defined by Walker through her sober and mature character Grange when talking to Brownfield --in the first scene that gathers father and son—in an attempt to righten his and his son's wrongs, emphasising by that the necessity of taking responsibility for one's behaviours and actions, (and by which he mainly means responsibility for inflicting physical and emotional abuses on women). Docility and emotionality are two characteristics which are exclusively seen as signs of weakness and which --in turn—are assigned to the traditional female gender role. However, these two so-called feminine traits, among others, are indeed necessary for any human being disposition. Therefore, adopting these nurturing and moral qualities makes of anybody a whole individual. To be independent, assertive, confident, and strong does not impede man to be docile, emotional, compassionate and humane. Embracing feminine along with masculine attributes together creates a whole, full-rounded, humane person.

In his third life, old Grange starts performing domestic tasks, helps his granddaughter do her homework, buys her feminine objects and helps in house works. In a word, he plays the role of a mother to Ruth who lost her own while murdered with the very hands of her own father. In this sense, the role model of the benevolent black male is shown through Grange Copeland. Walker has well implemented qualities like nurturance, trust, faith and love –and which are contradictory to the traditional male role-- in a male character as an attempt to fight the notion of gender and gender roles to further expand these virtues to reach the coming generations. Hence, Walker tries to fight wife abuse, as well, through her fight of gender stereotypes about male and female roles, for gender ideology is basic in the emergence of domestic violence.

In this light, and according to Walker, true masculinity is embedded only in old Grange who serves as a mediator for proper family relationships which would subsequently allow welfare for the whole black community. Grange witnesses a true conversion by trying to amend for his previous mistakes and atone for his sins. He, therefore, develops a new sort of strength that is embodied in his humane individuality; and which becomes sexist-free. This strength rests in his new racial self-consciousness and racial pride and in his passion for life. It has only been after two stages of his life that he comes to realise what true manhood really means. Walker introduces the best model of *man* in Grange –in his ripe old age—as lately as he comes to understand that taking care for one’s family is rather a sign of strength than it is a sign of weakness, a masculine trait rather than inferiority. It is only in his third life that he converts to maintain that his manhood and his identity cannot be possible unless he challenges or even ends up whatever really suppress it.

Some critics, like Ensslen (218) even argue that the thematic proposal of *The Third Life of Grange Copeland* rests in the self-renewal and constructive process through which Grange goes during the last phase of his life, and which Walker suggests for the black community to follow at all individual, family and community levels to survive whole. Grange’s extreme transition as he achieves maturity conveys the instructive function of the novel. While Grange converts from a destroyed and lost man to a regenerated and self-respectful gentleman makes of *The Third Life of Grange Copeland* a *bildungsroman*, while

all the emphasis is put on the protagonist as he undergoes psychological and moral growth in the course of his life (from youth to adulthood).

Grange transfers from self-denial and self-degeneration to self-resurrection and self-regeneration. The third life, as making a dramatic metamorphosis of *the self* that Grange undergoes, comes to illustrate Walker's belief in that the person (man/woman) is not really a product of nature, but they can transform into different selves. Grange, for instance, renews himself and comes back to the rural South as a 'revived man' after the white scornful pregnant woman dies before his very eyes and through whose death he conceives the suppression of the whites' oppression.

Ruth's success and independence has been dependent on Grange's cooperation; without Grange's grace, care and love, Ruth would have never achieved success and harmonious self. Walker, through her novel, has well stood up for the idea that woman's life and welfare need a significant contribution and support from man. This is the true role of the ideal black man. Through the character Grange, Walker conserves the notion that "being macho, virile and belligerent is not being male, but being loving, caring, and understanding is the most virile aspect of black manhood" (Hasanthi 110). Despite the fact that all the men in the novel are violent and virile, the stereotyped male role is mainly shown through the intransigent character, Brownfield. Hence, Grange does not hesitate to put an end for Brownfield's tyranny by murdering him. Grange destroys himself by killing his son, but succeeds to make all the good he has produced to continue to live in Ruth, his granddaughter (Smith, F 450).

Therefore, realising that Brownfield could never grasp this new thesis of warmth, compassion and harmony between all the members of the same community, he finds himself urged to create his end. By killing Brownfield³, he provides an opportunity to Ruth to live at peace. Murdering Brownfield is Grange's sole possibility not only to save Ruth from the tyranny of her father, but to save the womankind from the oppression of men. Grange thinks that by killing Brownfield, he would contribute in finishing this patriarchal ideology which condemns both men and women.

However, what is rather strange in the narrative thread is only when he gets old, that Grange becomes more humane mainly with his granddaughter, Ruth. In this perspective, Stets, J.E. (505), reasons that when getting older, men get sober and non-violent. Surprisingly, men even become able to surrender the pride of hyper-masculinity. Grange Copeland never was that loving, caring, and affectionate with anybody in his two previous lives as he is now towards Ruth in his third life. Being the only one left in the family, she is the only one to enjoy his *never shown before* virtues as an old man. Before, he thought of these virtues as female attributes that he had to ultimately avoid.

When getting older, black male characters turn non-violent, more thoughtful and solicitous. “The older Grange got the more serene and flatly sure of his mission he became. His one duty in the world was to prepare Ruth for some great and herculean task” (198). The older Grange gets, the more sympathetic he is. As an old man, he feels and shows pity for Mem, his daughter in law, and his granddaughters—especially Ruth for whom he sacrifices all his properties, and eventually his own life. Age plays a great role in male violence as it is intentional in establishing power and control; because, old age helps men surrender the *pride of masculinity* and which is intertwined with authority. Male chauvinists generally become more unassuming when growing riper. If old age adjoins the relief from frustration, wife abuse may disappear among the blacks --as when *old Grange* frees himself from the economic dependency on the whites while building a farm for his own. Hence, the disappearance or even the moderation of frustration and of the feeling of masculinity chauvinism ensures the disappearance or remission of home violence in this novel.

Mem’s father also changes from an absentee uninvolved father to a caring one to his granddaughters after their mother’s death. “The other girls, Daphne and Ornette, were whisked away by a smooth-talking Northern preacher (Mem’s father), and his wife, who were all quivering chins and amazement. The old guy was sadder than his wife, so moved by the tragedy that he wanted to take all the children, though he had *not*, so long *wanted their mother*” (140) (My own use of italic). Mem’s father appears to have regretted his abandonment to his daughter, Mem. He tries to make amends for the wrongs of his young age which has been punctuated by emotional violence on their mother.

Both of Grange and Mem's father—as the only male characters who are represented as achieving the ripe old age—skip the role of the uninvolved father to readopt it in their grand-fatherhood. Being a residential absentee father to Brownfield, Grange provides full involvement to his granddaughter Ruth. Mem's father—a non-residential absentee father to Mem, he offers both residence and compassion to his granddaughters, Daphne and Ornette, (Ruth's eldest sisters) driven by their mothers' hideous incident. “the cultural and social context is probably the most known, but age is another determining aspect that cannot be overlooked since it plays a major role in the deviation from hegemonic masculinity and consequent development of alternative types of masculinities” (Torres 36). These two old men's metamorphosis from violent, non-caring fathers to compassionate nurturing grandfathers indicates that the defining characteristics of hegemonic masculinity are not permanent (as they are not biological too). Old age negatively equates with the ideals of masculinity since the embodied characteristics of male youth are defined as masculine.

The Third Life of Grange Copeland introduces masculinity as temporary and as subject to change. Masculinity is neither stable nor self-determined, but it is rather relational, contingent, negotiated, and mainly constructed. Grange—and Mem's father alike—switches to humility “as an essential component of mature masculine grace” (Cools 80) to oppose his young age's aggressiveness (as one characteristic of wrong manhood). Newly gained attributes make Grange live in peace and harmony with himself.

Grange's change happens because of his previous constant struggle in his life that gradually broadens his sense of responsibility towards Ruth (his granddaughter). Aging, or growing old, therefore implies a reconstruction of masculine identity from wrong to true manhood. It hence does not convey any loss of value for men; on the contrary aging validates them as true men. Getting himself away from the ideal of hegemonic masculinity, Grange develops a new sense of manliness, demonstrating—by that—that there are many other models of and alternatives for socially-accepted masculinity than hegemonic/traditional masculinity, that traditional masculinity is not the only option available for men. In this light, and as mentioned earlier, Grange's change is the most convincing cue for masculinity as a social construct. Grange's ability of gender metamorphosis stands as a demonstration of possible subversion and redefinition in terms of gender attributes and roles.

Towards the end of the novel, Grange becomes Walker's mouthpiece when he confesses his guilt of abusing both of Margaret and Josie. He admits that his violence was an attempt to demonstrate and display his super-masculinity. Therefore, he plainly tells his son in the presence of his beloved granddaughter that his violence on women was "*a sign of my manhood... but where was the man in me that let me [abuse them]*" (207). The conception of manliness for the *old* Grange turns to be a kind of power which does not, and should not, manifest itself through 'violence' but rather through tolerance, provision, love, and protection of women; and this is what he really does, as an old man, for his granddaughter, Ruth.

Thus, asserting manliness through bossing around and even abusing women is an action that Grange –but never Brownfield—sincerely regrets at last while he realises that it is not a way out. Better late than never; this is what Walker reveals through her character Grange who seems to realise (at a very late age) that in the hardest times of one's life, they should keep closer to their own family (women) because it is only those who love us that could help us overcome the hardship of life.

Could he tell her [his granddaughter and who thinks him a Saint] of his own degradation, his belief in a manhood devoid of truth and honor, of the way he had kept Josie always tucked away for himself, as men tuck a bottle away against despair or snake bite?... Could he tell her of how Margaret grappled with his explanation that Josie was necessary for his self-respect, necessary for his feelings of manliness? If I can never own nothing, he had told her, I will have women. I love you he had assured her [Margaret], because I trust you to bear and rise my sons; I love Josie because she can have no sons. (177)

Grange's conscience secretly reproaches him for the violence he has committed on both Margaret and Josie in the name of manliness, in the name of the necessary male domination over women.

After a long time, a long life that has been punctuated by violence against women, Grange seems to realise the imperative need to keep closer to one's family to overcome life hardships. This announces one primary enunciation of the text and which is to call for

harmony and unity between all the members of the black community in order to mitigate problems that were previously hard and impossible to solve or even discuss. A coherent link between the narrative's passages and scenes avouched Walker's belief that the strength of the black community (and any other community) lies upon its unity.

Once, Grange starts taking full responsibility for his behaviours and deeds instead of putting all the blame on the whites or his black woman as scapegoats; he develops a sense of optimism in survival whole for the next generation, Ruth's generation. Taking responsibility for one's personal actions and showing readiness to social change is one important and recurrent theme that takes shape out of the woven complexities of the narrative. Grange's theory is to beckon the future instead of—as Anuradha (226) opposes -- keep on blaming the inconveniences of the past.

From this outlook, Grange reaches true manliness only in his *third life*, in *his oldness*. It is only then that he realises his malice. During this stage of life, the concept of gender is narrowed in Grange's mindset, and so he sees in his granddaughter, Ruth, the powerful and prosperous future of all the blacks, men and women. He starts repairing the bad seeds her father Brownfield has grown in her and this is by growing strength, self-confidence and self-esteem in her, instead. He even encourages her to adopt traditional *masculine* attributes and perform *masculine* deeds (like building fences, hunting rabbits, and driving cars).

Gender equality as feminists assure is possible. “[Gender] Roles may change dramatically until a new balance is achieved” (Hipple and Hipple 148). *The Third Life of Grange Copeland* is a feminist work, for although it depicts gender discrimination through the different gender roles males and females accomplish, it fights it and never condones it, as male-authored works have done.

The novel apparently displays in a patriarchal plot, for men characters take the center stage while women are doomed to keep the subordinate position; however, it is based on a feminist perspective. The novel is then distinct from male-authored works which intentionally aim at institutionalising gender inequality and male violence on women. This distinction rests—at the first stage—in Walker's concern to explore the causes

and the devastating drawbacks of intimate partner violence; and in simultaneously suggesting solutions and keys to eradicate this violence among her black community in particular and in the world at large. Thus, it can be considered as a counter-discourse where the author, as a woman activist, raises domestic violence as an established issue to be rebelled against. Walker's representation of cruel and shocking scenes of violence is not an attempt to further accentuate the stereotypes of woman's weakness and inferiority or to increase wife abuse in her community; however, it is a way to show not only to her community but to the world as whole that violence is destructive not only to women but to the whole humanity, and that there are alternatives so as to live in harmony (and this is by abolishing this culture of gender).

Grange decides to redeem his sins by breaking their overwhelming life cycles –and which were earlier furnished with violence and abuse-- and to start anew. Hence, he teaches Ruth to “preserve within her a fighting spirit against oppression” (Primasita 18); he teaches Ruth fighting or rebellion which does not necessarily need to manifest in violence, echoing –by that—Walker's call to avoid violence in fighting oppression in its all forms.

To stop reproaching the white system, and start accounting for one's own action; this is what Walker intends to foreshadow throughout her novel, and which she believes would promote inter-gender relationships in the black family. Ironically put, however, is that Grange continues his abuses to Josie even after having realised his faults and after having got firm decisions to restore them. Having benefited from Josie's money to economically secure himself and his granddaughter Ruth, he abandons her, while devoting all his time, love and money to Ruth.

Being good and gentle with her, Ruth wonders what makes her grandfather, Grange, be violent, careless and tough with his second wife, Josie. “Ruth tried to fathom the mystery of her grandfather's contempt for and inevitable capitulation to Josie” (127). Comparing him with –the only model of man she has ever known and that is assumed in her violent father—Ruth thinks of old Grange as a Saint. Nothing else than his emotional violence on Josie that raises her confusion. For many misogynists, old Grange may seem effeminate for viewing women as his equals rather than his subordinates. Notwithstanding, what Grange believes indeed contradicts his actions. He calls for gender equality while he

confesses his and his own son's guilt towards women but at the meanwhile he keeps on abusing Josie, his second wife. In this sense, he may not regard Josie as a woman or even a human being; for Grange, Josie is merely an object. Through Grange's insistent violence against Josie, in spite of his immense transformation into a benevolent old man, Walker persists that this culture of 'gender' can never dissolve; that it is deeply engraved in us. Jackson (177) further explains this idea while clarifying that motives and understandings of gender inequality differ from man to man; however, all men reinforce inequality between men and women when fulfilling their traditional role obligations, and mainly when using the very opportunities that are associated with them. Grange is hence using the very opportunities that are connected to the male gender, victimising --by that-- poor Josie.

In addition, although Grange manages to liberate Ruth of the chains that her *being female* submits on her, yet he still believes in gender and encourages gender differences. Grange fights against gender inequality and discrimination against women but still supports gender differences. "For all what he liked to see her self-sufficient, he was against her acting boyish. He grumbled when she spoke of cutting her hair, an unruly, rebellious cloud that weighted down her head. He insisted she trade her jeans for dresses at least on weekends, and placed jars of Noxzema and pond's hand cream on her dresser" (214). A taken-for-granted amount of gender differences and a clear gender-*unconsciousness* display in Grange while asking his granddaughter to act feminine. He may see these gender differences as a part of tradition that one should never transgress. Hence, gender differences are deeply engraved in the minds of men, and women alike; and which is not the case with the young rebellious and *womanist* Ruth. Ruth shows such a rebellious attitude towards gender through her acting boyish and her rejection of attributes and conducts culturally ascribed to women.

4.1.3.1. Criticising Grange's Late Benevolence

Some scholars, like Saxton and Cole (98), think that old men lose masculine status ideals, the fact that deprives them of principles or criteria for being real men. This is what the text minutely reports about the old Grange who is no longer able of accomplishing such tasks that are traditionally defined as masculine and which require physical strength. His impotence and his heart disease would illustrate his weakness best; "and with your [Grange's] heart full of holes' [Josie denounced] (...) 'When he sang, he seemed to be in

pain. But Ruth knew nothing of the physical condition of his heart. She knew she was in it, and that seemed enough” (133).

What also introduces Grange as non-masculine in his later life is his consent to reveal feelings of vulnerability, and to show weak emotions. He also trades aggression with compassion (for Mem, his daughter in law, and her daughters). Hence, Grange has an opportunity to redefine himself. His despise to Josie, his second wife, is the only deed that is likely to judge him as still involving and upholding part of his masculine identity. Although the text seems to provide some details that stand as excuses for his neglect to and his psychological violence on Josie; yet it introduces them as no convincing pleas.

He had done her wrong, and the thought nagged at him and had finally begun to make himself appreciate her for the first time ... but then there had been Ruth, breaking in his growing love for Josie, his acceptance of her genuine goodness and adoration. Ruth, who needed him (...), He felt himself divided, wanting to comfort the old but feeling responsible for the new. And then there had been Brownfield again. And though he had forgiven Josie Once (true not out of love but greed and expediency) for her attachment to his son, he did not know if he could forgive her a second time. Josie and Brownfield sought to retaliate against his indifference to them; but even for this was he not to blame? (133)

His persistent oppression of Josie is unjustifiable; the pretexts that he tries to introduce can never absolve him of the guilt he relentlessly presumes on her. Grange can never flee from the finger of blame that is pointed at him as women abuser.

Hence, it is weakness and impotence which are associated with men's old age that make them turn nonviolent. The white Jewish man who is dying of mouth Cancer is also depicted as nurturing and as compassionate, mainly with Mem (being his black servant). The representation of this frail man as renouncing one of the most important ingredients of masculinity is likely to reflect sickness, old age and impotence as being responsible for men's nonviolent character.

4.1.4. Punishment

Punishment also has its own considerable impact on wife abuse among the black community in the novel. Black women's rights are not only neglected in society but also by law (in courts). It is explicitly mentioned by Walker through her novel that American courts of justice reveal explicit discrimination against women in the 1960s. Besides, white judges do not allot hard punishments against offenders –whether white or black-- if the victim is black; hence, violence and crime against black women increase in the Afro-American community. “A hatchet murderer [who had been a preacher] had dispatched not only his wife but his wife's mother and aunt, was paroled after three years” (163). Light punishments, like these --as have been evaluated by the author's mouthpiece, Grange-- help increase violence and crime against women.

If punishment increases, crimes will be reduced. Many scholars have dealt with the notion of punishment against violence and crimes in general, like Gould (1940), Fox and Spector (1999) and El-Aissaoui (2005) asserting that crimes increase as long as punishment is not severe. While women feel unprotected and uncared for by society, men enjoy greater privileges –though moral more than they are tangible- and, therefore, they find it a free field to exercise violence on their women in an attempt to prove their manliness at their very expense. Thus, “the state should treat violence in the private sphere as it does violence in the public sphere –that is, a crime” (Heise 71). In this sense, Heise holds the state as accountable for women's rights denial. It is society which creates this ‘culture impunity’, and therefore, it is society itself which must create an end to it. Similarly, women's access to power and justice has to be expanded by the legal and justice system.

If law and society severely punish woman's offenders, this will lessen abuses on her. If punishment stands as a legal and a lawful protection in favour of the black woman, there will be no wife abuse within the black community. Under this societal and lawful protection, woman's rights will be recognised. It is only then that she can be able to face her offenders and to defend these *rights*; it is only then that she can be strong herself.

Severe or fitting punishment, I believe, is capable to righten the wrongs that society has created and condoned. Society –or community- is man's great supporter, for it gives

assistance to his actions and even to his violence on women. Woman, on the other hand, does not have any defender or protector. Therefore, legal punishment can avenge her. This is what Grange clearly mentions to his son when denouncing Brownfield's very light punishment for committing homicide (of his wife). "The punishment was made to fit the man not the crime" (163). Thus, in the absence of fair law, and as its name suggests, domestic violence in this novel seems to be restricted to a private problem; yet, it is largely fed on social general phenomena and it therefore influences the wider society.

4.2. Walker's Appeal for Survival Whole

The text also articulates the necessity of abolishing gender notions to guarantee for both women and men the whole survival. No domestic violence would dwell in homes where gender ideology is fought. Walker also tries to upgrade the sense of freedom for the spirit among her characters, be they men or women. Whole freedom, she thinks, is necessary for one's survival whole. If one aspires to survive whole, they must be free; bodies and minds free. This lofty sense of freedom cannot be achieved unless they start overcoming their fear and dependency on the whites, on the one hand, and their stereotypical beliefs in the naturalisation of gender and gender inequality between the sexes, on the other hand. It is only then that they can indeed fulfill a balanced identity and reach full strength that would free them from the social bonds they are subject to and which make them prisoners of their own minds. Black male characters live in a constant fear of emasculation; fear of superiority, and fear of inferiority. They think they are superior, just because they are men, and they know that they cannot preserve or maintain this superiority because they are blacks. Black female characters, on their parts, have no better fate and are confined by their own thoughts of their natural and crucial inferiority to everybody else --white men, white women and black men. The minute they get enlightened and could dispose of these stereotypical ideologies, they find no one to support them. Therefore, the text induces women not to lose hope, and to carry on the struggle against patriarchy and gender inequality.

Mothers are --more than fathers-- supporters of gender neutrality in their children (Our Watch 4). Since parents are the first and primary source of learning gender and leaning about gender prejudices, they have to behave in ways that contradict gender stereotypes. While Mem strives to bring up her daughters to be gender neutral, Brownfield

reinforces traditional gender stereotypes, and upholds traditional female gender roles in them. Grange believes that rigid gender roles and stereotypes have to be fought, yet he –at times-- acts in ways that oppose his belief.

Gender, gender differences, and male violence are aspects and behaviours learnt from society and are counted as traditionally institutionalised and supported. “Men who use violence are not naturally violent; they become violent through socialization and social interaction and they can, therefore, change their behavior. This means that violence against women can be prevented from happening, if interventions address the range of factors that trigger or enable it” (Heissecke 9). Hence, and according to Heissecke, since violence is not natural in men, it is possible to erode it through awareness-raising campaigns and initiatives, like those organised by the Civil Rights Movement.

Since violence against women is supposed to have arisen from gender-stereotypes and gender-inequality and discrimination, it is hence significant to fight this gender cosmopolitanism to eradicate this type of violence. Through Mem and Grange, who strive to wipe out some of gender stereotypes from the mindset of the new generation, the text clearly shows that fighting socially-established ideologies and gender stereotypes have to start in the family by both men and women; and that men are --more than women— responsible for pioneering towards a *change*. It is very likely that this is the reason for which the author uses Grange (a male) to reflect and enunciate her rejection of gender structure through being a model of the ‘nurturing affectionate man’ for the child Ruth.

Male violence on women has an opportunity to an end through the abolition of the normative beliefs about *gender* and *gender* discrimination against women. “The image of women as we know it is an image created by men and fashioned to suit his need” (Millet, 46). This makes women prisoners of the image that their male counterparts are drawing for them. In a very similar way, men are also prisoners of the image they have created for themselves while making of themselves the opposites of women; the fact that leads them enter a perpetual battle, to frequently try to prove themselves as men, and hence get tortured by an uncertain sense of masculine identity. Black men (and men in general) are in a nonstop struggle to abide by, achieve and maintain the normative masculine identity, or the so-called prototype of masculinity. They all feel incompleteness as far as their

maleness is concerned. It is in this vein that black men in *the Third Life of Grange Copeland* have recourse to both physical and psychological (domestic) violence to reassert themselves as males. None of the black characters could enjoy the standards of masculine perfection that they are supposed to achieve. In other words, if no notion of gender had been created, no men (black or white) would be tortured by the feeling of frustrated masculinity, and then there would be no need to dominate other weaker groups (like women), and eventually no domestic violence –under the name of domination-- would emerge.

Bell Hooks (76) claims that even the common language used to describe black men's suffering, such as expressions like *being castrated*; *being emasculated*; *that racism breaks male gender norms*, and *that racial discrimination deprives black men of fulfilling their sexist-defined roles* –among other terms and expressions—is itself bearing discrimination against the black woman; it is itself sexist. Hence, eradicating such language would be a good starting point for fighting gender discrimination among the blacks.

In this light, and regarding that women themselves help spread this sexist language, and at times even justify their men's violence on them, women are to be hold active contributors in the construction of gender ideology. “The white folks was just pushing him down in the mud. You know how it is ... they just made him do things when he didn't mean them” (206); Josie pleading for Grange's violence and hegemonic masculinity. Women are not only innocent victims but also as scapegoats who are given the full responsibility for their men's failure or *violence*. The minute they cease seeking excuses for their male partners' wrongs against them, they will be able to alter the unfair discrimination against the female gender and even find their *selves* and reconcile with their own *identities*. This is what the novel reveals while portraying women characters as gaining firm initiative to promote women's status. Ruth as an emancipated and revolutionary female character reveals her defiance to women's subjugation and stands firm against her own tyrant father, Brownfield. She also shows readiness to all the forces that oppress the womankind. Ruth believes that the traditional family structure is no longer relevant to the modern society she lives in. she wants a change, and therefore works for it. Although Mem --Ruth's mother—once plays the role of the submissive, she too proves to

embrace the role of the woman who fully grasps her existential situation and even has the courage and tries to make choices and decisions. It seems a bit late --but still better than never-- for Mem to realise that she can be free and even to reorganise her own life without necessarily being dependent on any man's presence. Hence, using an intellectually sensitive female character like Ruth, Walker approaches women's initiative and commitment to change their status quo.

The omniscient narrator allows Grange, once more, to serve as a good mouthpiece for Walker to voice her notions of black men's violence on women. Grange's wish is survival whole for the whole community and this is through eradicating violence and abolishing gender. He wholly accuses the black man for his abusive and violent treatment of women,

You see, I figured he [his son, Brownfield] could blame a good part of his life on me; I didn't offer him no directions, and he thought, no love. But when he became a man himself, with his own opportunity to righten the wrong I done him by being good to his own children, he had a chance to become a real man, a daddy in his own right. That was the time he should of just forgot about what I done to him – and to his ma. But he messed up with his children, his wife and home, and never blamed hisself. And never blaming hisself done made him *weak*. He no longer have to think beyond me and the white folks to get to the root of *all* his problems. (...) For they is the cause of all the dirt we have to swallow (...) I know the danger of putting all the blame on somebody else for the mess you make out of your life. I fell in the trap myself (206-207).

Through caring of Ruth, Grange tries to make amends for the wrongs he has caused to her father and grandmother, Margaret. He insists on her education while he had denied it for Brownfield. Grange creates –by that- a felicitous environment fitting for Ruth's growth and survival.

Likewise, Grange wishes happiness and surviving whole for his granddaughter, Ruth. He reckons that she is born to be happy “And still in her living there must be joy, laughter, contentment in being a woman... But to survive whole was what he wanted for

Ruth” (214). From Grange’s wishes of contentment and surviving whole for Ruth, one distinguishes an ideology that sounds *womanist*. He actually executes a mouthpiece role in Walker’s work --only in his third life- to voice and further spread this womanist ideology. Woman’s well-being and mainly *whole survival* is what Walker tries to articulate through the voice of Grange and the actions of Ruth. Woman has a right to a balanced-personality that is achieved only by the combination of male and female gender attributes and roles together. In this sense, the conception of gender and gender discrimination will perish, and male violence against women will disappear.

Walker’s work is *historical fiction* which is defined by Adamson (ix) as fiction that recreates a particular historical period with or without historical figures as incidental characters. Thus, having a great deal of reality embedded within its fantastic structure, this novel –while it is a work of fiction-- requires reference to such real theories applied on real people to be fully fathomed. “Walker is a native of the South and has firsthand the devastating and dehumanizing effects of living in a segregated, male-dominated society... As a matter of fact, Walker’s hometown of Eatonton is the setting that furnishes real life situations about women, which she deliberately draws upon for most of her novels” (Tamalyn 4).

The author uses a ‘real material’ as a basis for depicting her fictional characters, such as Frederick Douglass, Martin Luther King and others whom the author finds –more or less- inspiring to the work. Mem is built on a real personality as the author herself confesses in the novel afterwards (251), and who is herself Mrs. Walker (the name of the woman is coincidentally same as that of the author). What Walker attempts to depict is reality of her own community; the suffering of black American women because of men’s oppression in a hostile male-run world. What she offers to her audience by the narrative of *The Third Life of Grange Copeland* is the authentic reality of black America of the mid-twentieth century. Walker wanted to present her work as “a very realistic novel. She wanted it to be absolutely visual. She wanted the reader to be able to sit down, pick up the book and see a little of Georgia from the early twenties to the sixties... to feel it, to feel the pain and the struggle of the family, and the growth of the little girl Ruth, she wanted all of that to be very real” (Tate 176). The author is then transforming reality into a fictional text.

Being a realistic portrayal of social life, these fictional events are constructed in accordance with a message that the author, while representing the real life, is attempting to convey and transmit. It is this same realistic foundation of Walker's work that has made her grasp the causes of male violence on women among her community as gender-based ones; recognise its bad effects on the whole community; and even draw and suggest possible solutions to end wife abuse.

If one could only change laws and warn people against the false and dangerous prejudices against women, they could then erase gender discrimination. This education against erroneous ideologies, and that is mainly done at the person's first stage of life (childhood), would enable woman express and even exercise autonomy in life by supplying them with opportunities that are equal to those of men. Much interest, analysis and criticism have been devoted --and still should be directed toward--the existing systems of power. Marginalised and oppressed women's problems can never be solved if the socially structured systems of inequality are not to be posited. The first and most important initiative is then to postulate society with its different institutions if one aspires to question --or simply gets to the root causes of--male dominance and male violence issues, i.e. to question radical social domination with its various forms.

A blissful ending the text seems to provide for the fatherless Ruth, and who has always regarded herself as such, while she really loses her monstrous father who has been murdered by Grange (her grandfather). New horizons are hence awaiting Ruth (as a symbol for the new generation women) to be her own boss, to live without male violence, and to invest the feminist ideologies directly taught to her by her grandfather and indirectly transmitted to her by her mother.

4.3. Conclusion

Male violence on women is generated from social cultural ideologies that create gender differences and condone gender inequality and discrimination against women. These differences between men and women are responsible for the emergence of power hierarchy that warrant men with superiority to and authority over women, and which --in turn-- allow violence against women. To help eradicate gender-based violence against women, both men and women have to struggle against socio-cultural institutions supporting gender and gender inequality in order not to erode domestic violence on women

but to survive whole themselves. Men have to well grasp the true meaning of manhood. On their part, women have to fight submission in them and attempt to rise to power through both individual and collective action. And society has to reconsider the false stereotypes condemning women and to assign harder punishments against women abusers.

NOTES

1. Josie's father welcomes her money and her precious presents but does not accept her to come back home and live with them since her exposure to rape.
2. Grange has bought Ruth a pink dress, and lovely talk smelled like warm rose, to which Ruth is not depicted as showing any objection.
3. Grange kills Brownfield, for fear of his granddaughter Ruth; when the corrupt judge (Judge Hurry) awards custody of Ruth to Brownfield instead of him.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

GENERAL CONCLUSION

Patriarchal violence, or unfair use of power, and which occurs in accordance with man's sexism and his socialisation towards dominating women, perceptibly features in the inter-gender relationships in *the Third Life of Grange Copeland*. Aggressive and violent treatments involve belittling women and the intention to exert control over them. Domestic violence or wife abuse in this novel is an exit for the black man's blocked access of manhood in a society that rejects the *blackness* of the skin, in a society that condones man's violence on his woman. Socialisation plays a great role in shaping men characters' conception of themselves and of their roles within the family as male patriarchs. Therefore, society accords *man* with authority, domination and urgency with violence; while, it does orient *woman* towards inferiority, subordination, weakness and eventually to submission to men.

However, many other difficulties and barriers encounter the *black man* too to meet and perform his culturally expected roles within the larger *society* --and which is exclusively *white supremacist*. *Home* therefore, seems to provide unquestionable autonomy for him to freely exercise his stereotypical gender roles. His woman, being in a rather weak and subordinate position, becomes his only target to oppress, aggress and control, i.e. to express and practise all his rights and privileges that the whites deprive him of in the larger society.

The causes of domestic violence seem to interrelate in Walker's narrative. Because of their subordination to white people (mainly white women), black male characters feel socially castrated; they feel that their hyper-masculine power is frustrated. This subordination brings feelings of shame and of humiliation to the black man that provokes extra rage and violence on other targets and who are none but their own women. Women are socially and culturally thought of as men's subordinates, inferiors, and even as their properties. The different strategies that black male characters use to bring and keep their women under their rule and domination are all grounded in violence, be it physical, psychological or sexual. In order to feel much more as *men* as expected of them by a society that polarises gender and gender roles, they start battering, cursing, sexually assaulting, swearing at, intimidating, threatening, and even murdering their women.

Using physical and emotional violence, Grange and Brownfield (as the main black characters in the novel) erect bad effects on black female characters; and which can be summed up in identity disorder, bodily and mental health problems, low self-esteem and psychological vulnerability. Margaret suffers a terrible and stressful situation, because of Grange's desertion and refusal of her and because of his threats of murdering her, and which ends in committing suicide. Mem falls within serious depression and anxiety because of Brownfield's cruel battering and humiliation. This anxious life of Mem makes her develop loss of self-confidence, and some serious illnesses like melancholia and certain body or physical deformation.

Josie is the most afflicted woman by men's abuses in *the Third Life of Grange Copeland*. Since her childhood, Josie has been subject to the most traumatic circumstances; first, because of her exposure to rape (which is a sexual abuse) by many men –and among whom her father takes part--, second, because of the disruptive abusive home environment (caused by her father's different forms of violence on her, physical and emotional), and third, because of Grange's exploitation, desertion and contempt to her. The three kinds of abuses fuse to contribute in developing severe behaviour difficulties for Josie, which appear in a form of melancholia, depression and constant unjustified panic. Josie's recurrent nightmare (about the horrific events she has experienced with her rapists, and mostly, with her cruel father) is the most detectable symptomatic drawback of male violence on her.

Women's conceptions of themselves as females start at home. Women's feelings of and beliefs in their weakness are a reflection of different kinds of abuses they are exposed to, and of the different negative images that they receive about themselves throughout their life cycle.

Black female characters' psychological vulnerability generates feelings of low self-esteem, lack of self-confidence and submission. What they come to perceive of themselves and of their values is that they have been undesirable, unwanted and unappreciated since their childhood. Besides the whites' oppression on them, violence on them starts in their homes with their own fathers' tyranny, and it develops into intimate partner violence (wife abuse) and which accompanies them throughout their whole lives. As children, black

female characters are oppressed within their own families, often victims of a tyrant father and a miserable mother. Black female children come to the world to submit to and to execute orders under the violence and threats of tough and cruel fathers, and to suffer and feel the pains of abused and victimised mothers. They are discriminated against and even oppressed by white people too who force them to perform dangerous labours, and who humiliate and rape them. In a word, they are subject to multi-faceted oppression: as low class workers, as blacks and as women.

Likewise, woman grows weak and dependent, and thus, submissive to man. The others' humiliation of her teaches her not to appreciate herself, to be weak to face all those who wrong her; it discourages her to stand firm and to defend her own rights.

Black fathers in the novel participate in the construction of the black woman's conception of her worthlessness. They are hence responsible for their daughters' self-effacing and low self-esteem. The minute they feed their daughters' souls with fear and distrust instead of compassion and support, they do manage to destroy their self-evidence and to interrupt the construction of their 'whole' identity. Female characters' exposure to their fathers' violence and disdain predisposes them for future exposure to the violence and the disdain of their own husbands/male partners. Therefore, violence pursues women characters throughout their whole lives; it is a phenomenon present with them at any time or place setting, it starts with their fathers' cruelty and is followed by their own men's.

Black men in the novel use their oppression and frustration as an account to justify their cruelty and violence on their women. They accuse the whites to absolve themselves of their own guilt. It is indubitable that they suffer harsh, miserable and frustrating conditions of life because of the whites' oppression and racism, and which are indeed provocative to one's own anger and rage. Venting their anger of frustration towards their women in a form of physical and emotional aggression is their way to deal with their oppression. However, it is necessary to mention that, too much accusation of the whites and of their own frustrating lives is to conceal their malicious sexist intentions against women. They use violence to externalise their beliefs of female partners' inferiority and to inflict power and control over them. Feeling frustrated by the whites, they oppress black women; this fact never submits an innocent thesis, nevertheless. In other words, black male

characters' violence on their women is a matter of power, status and domination, i.e. if black women were not socially and culturally counted as inferior, as subordinate; hence, their men would never try to dominate, rule or physically and emotionally violate them. If they enjoyed full rights and higher status in society –like white men or white women in comparison to black men-- , black men would never use them as a target for repression.

It is their belief in their crucial superiority to women that guides them to disdain and inflict violence on them. Society, through its creation of gender differences and inequalities according to different sexes, imposes and justifies different roles for men and women. Hence, the inferiority and subordination of women are cognisable with passivity, withdrawal, and submission; while, the superiority of men is actualised through domination and violence. This authority and priority offered to men create and enhance the notion of men' ownership of female partners.

However, it is quite indispensable to broach the case of black men as it is atypical or exceptional, because of their subordination in the larger society and their rejection by the whites. This inferiority stands as a barrier against the growth and the maintenance of their masculine identity. It also stands as an obstruction against fulfilling the traditional role of the family economic providers. Nevertheless, it does not hinder them from playing a masculine role in controlling and aggressively treating their women; it does not impede them from exercising violence on women partners.

Men's sole interest is to achieve patriarchy in their households –if not in society as a whole-- and this is mainly through behaving in accordance with what the traditional male gender role prescribes for them. The foundation of patriarchy is controlling and dominating female partners; the core matter of patriarchal ideology is the submission and oppression of women. Likewise, and to justify his tyranny and frustration to women, the black male character adopts the slogans of 'I am a man', 'I want to be nothing but a man' and 'what can a man do'; and this is the very fact revealing him as ideologically brainwashed that his masculinity gives him the right and the warrant to dominate and torture his wife.

Sexism fosters and condones male violence against women. Moreover, the black man maintains that he has been socially castrated (because of his subordination to white

women). He may even fancy that the black woman has been free from this persecution and that has even contributed to his emasculation. He therefore lives in a ceaseless fear as his power is inevitably and consistently subject to threats. Thus, he considers any sign of superiority by his woman as an attempt to defy his power, and so he utilises more intense violence to stop any purported or outward strength and superiority of her. Within this framework, Brownfield hates and envies Mem's seeming superiority. He works hard to eradicate her *formal dialect*, her *knowledge*, which suppresses him as a *man*. He, like every man in the novel, tries to prove his *manhood* through *violence*; in a way announcing him the *dominant figure* in his family.

He feels that the only way available for him –as a black man-- to defend or preserve his identity and worth is to practice *patriarchy* in his household. *Patriarchy* makes the oppression of wives a cultural necessity, the minute it forces men to be –not only leaders, but even-- monsters in their own families. Caring for one's family becomes a token of shame for the black male character, and therefore always avoids sharing or showing any emotions with his wife and children.

Black men's identity and worth face more threats than other men's; what is feasible, hence, is this fear of worthlessness which makes them act with more patriarchy and violence in their own families. Grange, equally, tries to compensate for his lost value and dignity --in front of the white landowners-- through beating and humiliating Margaret and sexually exploiting Josie. He tries to impose his domination on black women to uplift his *dignity* and heighten his *self-esteem* as a *man*. Dignity, identity and worth, as Grange Copeland thinks (like any other black man does) can be obtained by economically freeing oneself from the whites, and by controlling women and which is evinced only through oppressing them.

Furthermore, black men are jealous and envious of their women's superiority. Brownfield envies his woman's education because he assimilates her abilities, her knowledge as parallel to those of their white oppressors. As a consequence, he conceives that her education draws her closer to *whiteness* as the author appears to vow throughout the narrative. Grange, too, envies Margaret, for her strength and tolerance in enduring the hard, miserable and the distressing situation they are all subject to. He envies Josie as well, for her patience and for her capacity of forgiveness and endless love to him in spite of his

affronts and of his continuous refusal of her. As a result, and while grasping that they could never challenge any valuable qualities of women, they strive to destroy them as human beings; and hence they eventually end their lives by either killing or encouraging them to suicide.

Black men in *the Third Life of Grange Copeland* deprecate their women's strength, for it conveys superiority to them which would destroy any sense of manhood that they could keep and maintain. Their pride –if they have any- can have a chance to live and coexist only with their women's subordination and submissiveness. Their women are however gradually showing awareness and acumen in addition to their natural strength; they are gradually becoming serious opponents to black men. Black male characters cannot tolerate this fact, because as being subordinate in the larger American society, their women's strength is their own *death-blow* or *coup de grace*. Their women's superiority will definitely entail their final failure and inferiority.

Black female characters, like Mem, show readiness to object to the whites' oppression; however, their men are there to hinder any initiative that can be introduced or issued by them. They distinguish black women's spiritual strength, and they envy them for their stronger sense of rebellion against the whites. Hence, they strive to make them weaker than they have ever been. Forced withdrawal makes some black women, like Margaret, resort to suicide and others, like Josie and Mem, suffer psychological uneasiness.

The black woman is necessary for the black man, for his sense of pride and masculinity; he needs her to soothe him and to tolerate and bear his foolishness; he needs her to supply him with care and affection. The black man sees his woman as a slave to play a boss on, as one to vent at his long kept suffering, without getting any reverberating reaction. The black woman, indeed, has well accomplished her traditional gender role of the victimised female in *the Third Life of Grange Copeland*. Although it is a matter of socialisation and social strata hierarchisation, in some sense, the black woman has to be blamed for the rank her man puts her in because of her *excessive* submission to him. It opens the track for and enhances his neglect and indifference and his violence on her.

Black female characters contribute, in various ways, to increase male violence, with its different forms, against them.

Hence, ambiguity and confusion encounter any attempt to tackle intimate partner violence in the novel. Frustration, male chauvinism, and women's submission; they all mysteriously coalesce with one another to bring about and to achieve –though thorough yet not accurate– understanding of this serious phenomenon known as wife abuse in *the Third Life of Grange Copeland*. Thus, violence in this novel is *paradoxical* because it is deliberately violent and non-violent. Many passages reveal that black men hold deep and concealed love for their women; though it is confusing, yet, love exists between them. However, beautiful feelings are handicapped because of strongly founded stereotypes that encourage control and domination over women.

Grange loves Margaret, although he shows his care and love for her only after her death and at each time he gets drunk. Grange's sincere and genuine feelings are shown and expressed while drunk. Brownfield loves Mem too, and he secretly reproaches himself for the misery he makes her suffer from. He, too, vows his love of his woman after her death -- after having murdered her. He may have even planned to kill her to relieve her from the torment of being a *black woman* in the American society, to succor her from his abuses and from himself as a violent husband. He, then, designs for her death as an eternal relief, for he knows that nothing else can provide safety for a black woman but death.

Black male characters jealously and wistfully watch the whites' sexual exploitation of their own women; a reality that teases both their minds and conscience. They feel responsible to defend and protect their women. Simultaneously, they find themselves, powerless in front of those white tyrants. They feel menaced and intimidated to have their women, as their identity and as anything else have been, robbed of them by white men; therefore, they render them into hideous and old looking women to insure that they remain theirs and nobody else would yearn to have them. One illustrative instance is Brownfield's urging Mem to feign limping to discard any white men's intention to admire her.

On the other hand, they wish to make of their women great ladies. They are satisfied to make their women's beauty and charm a myth finding room only in their

dreams, only in their minds to possess it and adore it alone. Brownfield's day dream of having a charming black woman for a wife to whom he purchases nice and expensive dresses may demonstrate this truth best.

They perceive and recognise the ugliness of white women's souls which are filled with racism and hatred (against the blacks) through their beautiful faces. They therefore admit the intact and the natural beauty of their black women. Grange's experience with the white racist pregnant woman --while trying to figure out any familiar map out of her face-- is a good elucidation used by Walker to depict this notion. With this analogy, they start to distinguish black females' love and to recognize their tolerance and support, and above all, their altruism; a virtue that neither white characters nor they --themselves-- do possess. They try hard to be good with their women. They recognise black women's beauty of soul and their great hearts, and they aspire for treating them --in their thoughts and never in actions-- the way that they merit, but each time they put a step forward to make it a reality they return ten others backward. It is as though a strong and an unseen force is always pushing and orienting them towards the opposite direction.

Black women themselves *indirectly* support and uphold their men's violence on them. They intend to give them an opportunity to feel *men*. Regardless how aggressive or offensive they may be to them; they strive to provide and ensure a free atmosphere for the black man to assert his manliness that the whites suppress.

The black woman in *the Third Life of Grange Copeland* is also blameworthy for her man's cruelty and violence against her. She destroys her sense of selfhood the minute she promotes his own. She lets him attack her inner core as a person by letting him oppress and hurt her feelings, to transform her into an object while underestimating her moral and personal worth. The black woman nurtures her man's self and feeds his soul while he strives to make of her a *living dead*. Moreover, it is rather shocking for her that her offender is her most confident, *alter ego*, closest person. Feeling harshly wronged, she therefore withdraws, loses trust and confidence, and even gets hopeless in him, in life, and even in herself. The black woman, nevertheless, has no better choice concerning her reaction to her man's violence on her. Her *passivity or submissiveness* is what society determines for her as a *fitting female gender role*. What the novel reveals throughout its

different implied and explicit statements is whatever the woman's reaction towards her man's violence is, whether violent or submissive, it is considered as a infuriating and provocative for man.

The black woman can never escape those *destined* abuses. Her guilt rests in her *biology* as having born *black* and *female*; two handicaps that assure her inferiority in a traditional patriarchal society. Similarly, she can never enjoy any privilege, any support and any protection from society. Her socially-made *natural* status is already determined to be down, under white and black men's disdain and offence. *Silence* forcibly replaces her *voice* to widely express her surrender and which designates her final destruction and failure. The whole black family, however, is doomed by the black woman's destruction. And hence, the failure of the black community becomes an inescapable reality; because the victimisation of one generation entails and ensures the victimisation of the other. Children, while witnessing and/or being exposed to their fathers' violence and the misery and torture of their mothers, are always the most innocent victims.

Whenever the black woman attempts to show some strength or superiority (never through violence as men do) over her man, he seeks to render her to a worse and a lower position than before. Thus, she withdraws, loses enthusiasm and liveliness, and she never makes efforts to improve or redesign her status quo. Under her man's tyranny, the black woman sees no prospects for a better future. Her man interrupts her serene life, kills her hopes –not to say her being. He stifles her autonomy and independence by harshly and violently establishing his own authority. Black woman's family economic provider function threatens her man's power and authority. It makes him feel that his domination over his family is still wanting; the fact that makes him strive to recuperate this loss of power with violence displayed through battering, contempt and intimidation of his female partner.

The black woman establishes her social identity on the foundation of her portrait drawn from the way racism and sexism merge to generate her continual victimisation. However, out of these two handicaps, her *femaleness* seems to create more barrier and harder obstacles for her than her *blackness* does. Although they are both enduring hard and miserable life because of their race, the black woman is subject to a more intense kind of

frustration than that of the black man because of her *sex*. The politics of gender lays power inequality and other differences between males and females among all the classes and races.

From an early age, black children develop detectable psychological disorders. Their belonging to a family where violence nests, hampers their moral development; it badly affects their views of themselves and of the world, their conceptions of the meaning and the aim of life, and their perspectives and expectations of any prosperous future. Therefore, some of them may annihilate themselves, like Josie and Ornette, who have always felt unloved, uncared for and mainly unprotected. They are scared of the world, for they perceive it as unsafe. Their fear and their lack of self-confidence have derived dangerous consequences on their personalities.

Black mothers are not able to protect their children from the dangerous atmosphere they grow within. They sometimes get firm to leave their violent husbands, but their prior-conception of the world as unsafe prevents them from taking any initiative. They indeed know if they run away from their violent homes, they will be trapped in another more dangerous social web; because, it is society which intends their destruction by upholding their very inferiority.

The daily stress and exposure to high degrees of frustration causes black male characters' psychological disorders. Personality disorder has its own great regulations as far as domestic violence is concerned. Therefore, --though it is not fully responsible-- this psychological uneasiness helps black men proliferate their violence and aggressiveness over their women. Nevertheless, it is, and to a great extent, noticed from the novel that black men rely on their unbalanced psychological personality, or loss of control, as an account to justify their wrong conducts and their rude words against their wives.

The Third Life of Grange Copeland can be considered as a feminist novel because of the terror and pity that it evokes about women's conditions. Male chauvinism notion occupies a remarkably greater part of the novel. Misogyny and the hyper sense of masculinity destroy them all (men and women). These unfair social conventions resulted in the construction of unhealthy family. Black men in *the Third Life of Grange Copeland* seem to develop a kind of *schizophrenic* personality; being decent and respectful outside

home, and outrageous and violent at home with their wives and children. They are double-faced individuals; suffering from unbalanced personality. Therefore, an absence of self-confidence governs their lives. Men, women and children as well suffer because of these gendering processes and hence racism and sexism in the African American community caused their genocide. Black male characters' refusal of their subordination and which indicates rejection of disfavoured female roles and feminine traits leads them to engage in constant struggle with their masculinity, a struggle that results in too unbalanced disposition and in violence against their women as a way to recuperate their lost sense of masculinity.

Female characters too are not well-balanced individuals. They all exhibit *suffering life attitude* by being docile and subservient to their male partners. Mem suffers silently from Brownfield's regular beatings. Margaret, Josie, and all the other black wives voicelessly endure pains and agonies caused by their men's physical and emotional violence. A sense of anxiety and isolation grows inside them and accompanies them throughout their whole lives.

As denied as she thinks herself of freely expressing herself, Mem—once and led by anger—shouts at, threatens and beats Brownfield who responds by putting an end for her life. He is ultimately convinced that women do not have the right to openly react to their violence on them. The cultural paradigms and traditions silenced and marginalised women. Patriarchy has always resulted in urging women to be one step behind men.

If one could only change laws and warn people against the false and dangerous prejudices against women, they could then erase gender discrimination. This education against erroneous ideologies, (and that is mainly done at the first stage of life (childhood)) would enable woman express and even exercise autonomy in life by supplying them with opportunities that are equal to those of man. Much interest, analysis and criticism have been devoted --and still should be directed toward—the existing systems of power. Marginalised and oppressed women's problems can never be solved if the socially structured systems of inequality are not to be posited. The first and most important initiative is then to postulate society with its different institutions if one aspires to question

—or simply gets to the root causes of—male dominance and male violence issues, i.e. to question radical social domination with its various forms.

Women all around the world are still robbed of their rights; they are still domestically exploited and abused —although this can be referred to as much more symbolic than literal. Most feminists like Sherry Mercierca, and many others who took the initiative in raising the question of female gender marginalisation, believe that there would be no peace in the world if the world itself is founded on inequality and violence against women. The world would lose its order if we exclude the half of humanity (women). They also believe that no woman would be free while certain others are still oppressed.

Woman should be seen a symbol of life, protection, knowledge and dialogue. For many generations; women have been educators for peace both in their families and in their societies; while, there are many men with too much sense of ego implicated for the destruction of the world (Sherry Mercieca cited in Zennouche (18)). Hence, woman's place is crucial and ultimately essential in society. Feminism, at the first grade, calls for the liberation of the individual and rejects any manifestation of oppression. It also calls for a revolution aiming at the transformation of the interpersonal relationships between men and women. Feminists think that this will necessarily ensure the same rights for all the individuals; it will produce a world where men and women are equally estimated. The very first principle that feminism appreciates is that problems are to be solved and conflicts are to be set without violence but through dialogues and mediation. This is what Walker loudly utters through the voice of Grange Copeland while trying to teach and fix in Ruth.

Violence against women should be recognised as one form of gender-based discrimination, and as violation and deprivation of human rights if one intends to address the issues and reasons of its emergence. The symbolic violence in *the Third Life of Grange Copeland* appears because of, and nests in the pressure to accept gender and gender roles as *natural* order. Walker tries to demonstrate through *the Third Life of Grange Copeland* that the black community cannot overcome racism until they fight sexism and the intra-racism existing between black men and women. And to fight the intra-racism that occurs within the black community, society should eradicate such cultural and traditional stereotypes underestimating woman and creating her very inferiority. Punishment has also

to do with inter-gender problems and which take the shape of wife abuse. Men getting riper; women taking the initiative to call for their rights and fight whatever opponent or obstacle that may stop them from realising their aims; severe punishment against abusers of women, each contributes to end gender-based violence against women.

Likewise, being black and female prevents any initiative by her; by contrast, and being handicapped by one single prejudice, the white woman benefits from more power and support from the American society than the black woman does. This is because their inferiority and subordination differ; black and white women, indeed, differ in their being females. In this novel, black female characters' oppression is an outcome of a set of family, society and culture hostility, and which refers to racism, patriarchy, and sexism and gender role polarisation. Those factors –while fusing together—settle her final and eventual mistreatment and oppression, and determine this exceptional violence against her.

Male violence in the black family is then strongly associated with tradition and culture. One generation appears and another withdraws, but violence remains as a sign of their existence. Being excessively depressed, nothing could mark their lives but this violence, for it is the only thing that proves their being alive. What mostly highlights the black family life is indifference among its members; hence, nothing could connect them together but this violence, for it is the only link that reports an interaction –though harsh and destructive- among them.

Society creates *domination and subordination* plague while designing two extremities; and yet, it is society which sustains its burdens. Domestic violence vandalises the health and the strength of families, communities, races, and nations. Confusion displays at the level of social roles assigned to the blacks. The subordination of a group of people guarantees their being dominated by some others and entails their domination of others. The subordination of black men makes them condemned to the whites' domination, and it makes them dominate black women to repair the damage caused by their own subordination as men.

Some people's guilt creates the oppression of others and the oppression of some people creates guilt on others; this is the wheel of life in *the Third Life of Grange*

Copeland. The question that seems persistent and stubborn, and that has been put under scrutiny in this piece of research may run as: Who is to be reproached for intimate partner violence against women in *the Third Life of Grange Copeland*, is it the whites, the black man, the black woman, or rather the larger society? This question, though approached and granted some tentative in this thesis, it remains unsolved, controversial and open to endless discussion. Although my reasons of choosing *the Third Life of Grange Copeland* as an illustrative case for this study have been firm and clear as stated earlier; it would have been more consistent if it had focused on more works of fiction to demonstrate the gendered nature of male violence on women. Yet, both time and material constraints have stood as barriers against the realisation of this endeavour.

In this piece of research, I tried to relate domestic violence among black American people from the 1920s to the 1960s as it appears in *the Third Life of Grange Copeland* with the authentic and genuine culture of the American society. As Alice Walker (1987) herself discloses that *the Third Life of Grange Copeland* is fully loaded with the authentic lives and reflects real experiences of black American people of that time. Her characters are not only fictional characters, but they are rather, historical and *symbolic* beings. Hence, references to sociological, psychological and literary theories have been made to back up the whole research. This investigation has just meant the beginning and not at all an end to a subject that still leaves much unresolved. It has only served as a starting point for much profounder research objectives. Enough demonstration, sufficient documentation and objective data represented a significant constraint against the realisation of these objectives.

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RÉSUMÉ

La violence contre la femme, comme étant un phénomène globale, a toujours occupé une grande part dans les œuvres littéraires. Mais, les causes de cette violence restent une mystère. Alors, cette étude cherche à savoir les facteurs fondamentaux qui mènent à ce type de violence comme étant présentée dans le travail littéraire de l'écrivaine Afro-Américaine Alice Walker « La Troisième Vie de Grange Copeland ». Une Multitude de questions se pose pour approcher ce problématique comme: Quelles sont les causes de la violence contre les femmes ? Quel est le rôle d'inégalité entre les deux sexes dans cette ouvres ? Quelles excuses que la frustration du l'homme Américain noir apporte pour sa violence contre sa femme. L'hypothèse qu'on a supposé est que la violence domestique contre la femme est crée par un système du genre institutionnalisé par la société et qui assure la supériorité de l'homme, et la discrimination contre et l'infériorité de la femme. Suivant une approche du genre, on a arrivé à une conclusion qui confirme notre hypothèse et que cette violence est associée avec un jeu du pouvoir et dominance que l'homme exerce contre sa femme.

Mots Clés : La violence contre la femme/La Troisième Vie de Grange Copeland/
L'inégalité entre les genres/ La discrimination contre le sexe Féminin/ Le pouvoir/La dominance.

ملخص البحث

تناول هذا البحث الأسباب الرئيسية للعنف ضد المرأة كما هي ممثلة في رواية الأدبية أليس والكر تحت عنوان "الحياة الثالثة لقرانج كوبلاند"، بحيث طرحت بعض الإشكاليات تحت ضوء المناقشة أهمها: ما الذي يربط هذا النوع من العنف الأسري بالتمييز بين الجنسين؟ إلى أي مدى يؤثر الإحباط الذي يعيشه الأمريكيان السود على كونهم عنيفين مع نسائهم. لتحليل هذه الإشكاليات، طرحنا الفرضية التالية والتي محتواها أن العنف ضد المرأة هو سبيل للتعبير عن الذكورة و تنفيذ لقوة الرجل المعترف بها اجتماعيا وثقافيا. اعتمادا على نظرية الجنس، توصلنا إلى أن أساس هذا العنف هو اللامساواة بين الجنسين والتي تؤيد تفوق الجنس الذكري والذي يقابله نقص و انحطاط الجنس الأنثوي. من جهة أخرى اثبت هذا البحث أن الشعور بالإحباط بسبب العنصرية و ظلم البيض للسود لا يقدم أي عذر للعنف ضد المرأة في المجتمع الأمريكي الإفريقي. وبهذا فقد أثبتت الفرضية المطروحة سابقا.

كلمات مفتاحية: العنف ضد المرأة- الحياة الثالثة لقرانج كوبلاند- اللامساواة بين الجنسين- التمييز الجنسي ضد المرأة- الشعور بالإحباط لدى السود.