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Resisting Patriarchy through Female Bonding: A Study of Cleage's Flyin' West

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By

Asmita Risal

Symbol No.: 283372

Regd. No.: 6-2-479-4-2006

Central Department of English

Kirtipur, Kathmandu

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Tribhuvan University
Central Department of English
Kirtipur, Kathmandu

Letter of Recommendation

AsmitaRisal has completed her thesis entitled "Resisting patriarchy through Female Bonding: Study of Cleage'sFlyin' West" under my supervision. She carried out her research from February to October 2015 A.D. I hereby recommend her thesis be submitted for viva voce.

Mr. MahesworPaudel

Supervisor

Date: _____

Tribhuvan University
Central Department of English
Kirtipur, Kathmandu

Letter of Approval

This thesis entitled "Resisting Patriarchy through Female Bonding: A Study of Cleage's 'Flyin' West'" by Asmita Risal has been submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University. It has been approved by the Undersigned members of Research committee.

Internal Examiner

External Examiner

Head

Central Department of English

Date: _____

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Abstract

Pearl Cleage's *Flyin' West* documents the situation of women and their raising consciousness for resisting patriarchal domination in Nicodemus, Kansas. The patriarchal domination of Frank Charles compels all the female characters to revolt against it for their betterment. Black women who were facing the domination of patriarchal thinking go against their husband and male relative as they become conscious and strong toward their self-identity. To go against the male domination black females make an unconventional bonding with each other. To protest this domination Cleage gives black female characters a central and strong position and advocates female bonding among them. By making the oppression visible, Cleage advocates for woman's empowerment and freedom to overcome patriarchal domination. Black females' support for each other leads them to the goal of freedom and their unconditional support to each other leads them to the victory over patriarchy.

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I. Introduction to Pearl Cleage's Play Flyin' West and the concept of Black Feminism

The present research is an interactive study on Pearl Cleage's play Flyin' West, in the light of Black Feminism. In the play the female characters develop the sense of consciousness and resistance for their rights and protest against patriarchy inherent in the contemporary African society. The protagonist Sophie and other female characters such as Fannie, Minnie and Miss Leah are heading towards the goal of freedom and independence with the emerging sense of resistance to escape from the patriarchy and develop their new identity through female bonding. To prove the hypothesis, this researcher has drawn some theoretical insights from the thinkers like bell hooks, Patricia Hill Collins, Lois Tyson and others.

In the play Flyin' West, Cleage's focus is on Black Women, who grow to reside in a larger world and struggle to achieve independent identities beyond male domination. In the play, the protagonist Sophie is a more conscious female who is aware with the concept of female's consciousness and independent identities. Cleage's female characters are strong, their strength resides in their helpfulness, friendships and bonding among women. These strengths are celebrated in Cleage's work, along with the problems women encounter in their relationships with men, who regard them as less significant than themselves merely because they are women. The byproduct of this belief is, of course, violence. In Cleage's play, the black women's struggle to claim their selves, in order to change their lives and secure a rightful place within the social network of relationships they themselves constitute, usually absorbs the psychic pain involved in such a struggle and shatters the iron bars of patriarchal domination which limits self-empowerment.

Cleage thinks writing as a way to correct wrong that she observes in the world and has dedicated herself to expose the sufferings of Black Women, caused by: racism, sexism and patriarchy. Her women characters display enough strength, endurance, resistance,

creativity, resourcefulness and forgiveness in confronting and overcoming oppressions in their lives. She is aware of the layers of oppression of Black Women. Cleage's works admire the struggle of Black Women throughout the history to maintain and essential spirituality and creativity in their lives, and their achievements serve as an inspiration to other. Thus, the main theme of her play is the lives of Black Women, their battle with the patriarchy for their self-identities for equality in everything what male get. She emphasizes the healing power of mutual understanding to get victory over patriarchy.

Being a black woman, they must endure a lot of sufferings in the society and the family. In the play, Sophie, realizes the pathetic condition in the patriarchal society. So, she arouses a dream to be free from the restriction created by the patriarchal society to discriminate females. Though women are dominated and marginalized in the patriarchal society, they are conscious for their roles and responsibilities in the society. They are well informed about the ill treatment of male upon female. In this sense Sophie, the protagonist of the play says:

You know as well as I do there are no laws that protect a woman from her husband. John beat Belle for years and we knew it. And because the Sheriff didn't do anything, none of us did anything either. It wasn't a crime until he killed her! I'm not going to let that happen to Minnie. I'm going to watch him prance across this yard and then I'm going to step out on my front porch and blow his brains out (Act 2, Scene 4, 110).

Pearl Cleage's works are noted for their insightful treatment of African-American history and culture. She is an Atlanta based writer whose recent works include *Flyin' West* a full-length drama commissioned and premiered of the Alliance Theatre in 1992, and deals with the 'Devil and other Reasons to Riot', a book of essays published by Ballantine Books in 1993. Since its premiere of the Alliance Theatre under the direction of Kenny Leon, *Flyin' West* has had thirteen other productions across the country, including The Brooklyn

Academy, The Alabama Shakespeare Festival, the New WORLD Theater, and the Intiman Theatre in Seattle, Washington, The St. Louis Black Repertory Theatre, and the Long Wharf Theatre. Pearl's another play: 'Blues for an Alabama sky', premiered of The Alliance Theatre in March 1995. At works on her first novel, Pearl is also a regular columnist for The Atlanta Tribune, a contributing editor of Ms. Magazine and a regular contributor to Essence Magazine. Her work has also appeared in numerous anthologies, including Double Stich, Black Drama in America, Red Clay and New Plays from the Women's project. Pearl is also an artistic associate of just US Theater Company in Atlanta and editor of catalyst, a magazine of pearl and mind. Pearl is the mother of a daughter, Deignan, and the wife of a novelist Zaron W. Burnett. Jr.

As a third generation black nationalist and a radical feminist, the primary energy that fuels her work is a determination to be a part of the ongoing worldwide struggle against racism, sexism, classism and homophobia. In her book *Flyin' West and Other Plays* she says, "I approach my work first as a way of expressing my emotional response to oppression; second as a way to offer analysis, establish context, and clarify point of view; and third, to incite my audiences or my readers to action" (p. 11). further she says, "My work is deeply rooted in, and consciously reflective of African-American history and culture since I believe that it is by accurately expressing our very specific and highly individual realities that we discover our common humanity" (1).

Cleage's focus is on African-American women, who grow to reside in a larger world and struggle to achieve independent identities beyond male domination. Her female characters are strong hearted, supportive and co-operative. Although her characters are strong, they get many upheavals in their lives. Their strength resides in their understanding, mutual cooperation and helpfulness. These strengths are celebrated in Cleage's work, along with the problems women encounter in their relationships with men, who regard them as less significant than themselves merely because they are women. The byproduct of this

belief is, of course, violence. Hence, Cleage's story focuses not much on the racial violence that occurs among strangers but the violence among one's race, friends and family members, a kind of deliberate cruelty. She emphasizes on the Black women's self-definition, self-identity, against the evil of patriarchy, racism, classism and sexism. Her writing portrays the struggle of black people throughout the history, and is praised for their insightful and riveting portraits of black lives, mainly the tragic experiences of black women in a patriarchal, sexist and racist society, suffering of black women at the hands of men and their struggle for identity. Her characters want to survive with their own identities; they want to achieve it at any cost.

Pearl Cleage examines in her play the black women's search for identity through an analysis of the individual's relationship to the group. Cleage's play *Flyin' West*, is a historical tribute to the Black women, who moved west, a safe place for them, after getting freedom. Through characters, the play makes us familiar to the difficulties that Freed Black slaves faced even after the end of slavery. In Cleage's play, the Black women's struggle to claim their selves, in order to change their lives and secure a rightful place in the society. In the play, they face many physical as well as mental tortures, their experiences and suffering leads them to scatter the iron bars of patriarchy which limits self-empowerment. The very play *Flyin' West* gives us a glimpse of the tribulations that freed Black Slaves faced even after the abolition of slavery. They get freedom with problems, difficulties and with sufferings.

A theme throughout her work is an exploration of the individual identity of black women. Her women value the importance of relationship with one another, they want to make strong bond of female. In her book *Flyin' West and Other Plays* Cleage says about her play *Flyin' West*:

Facing problems ranging from the inevitability of long, cold winters, to the possibility of domestic violence, to the continuing spectra of racial conflict, the women of *Flyin' West* include Miss Leah, the old woman whose memories

of slavery and its aftermath comprise a living oral history ;Sophie Washington, whose determination to protect her land and those she loves puts to rest forever the requirement that Western archetypes be white and male;Fannie Dove, the gentle sister, trying to civilize the frontier with fine china and roses, who finds herself falling in love with their soft-spoken neighbor,Wil Parish ;and Minnie Dove Charles, the head strong baby sister whose mulatto husband, Frank, introduces a danger into the household that tests their sisterhood in unexpected ways. (7)

Cleage's play, *Flyin' West*, is about the black women's pathetic condition even after the end of slavery of Nicodemus. The play discusses about an evils of patriarchy a harmful practice from which women get suffering throughout their lives. It also discusses about women courage and their daring act for their identity, it is about the women's struggle to get their right. One of the critics Kerry Reid, writes in Chicago Tribune writes: "*Flyin' West* serves as a tribute to the power of independent black women and the importance of community(4)".

Sophie Washington, protagonist of the play, is a black woman of 36, born into slavery. She is elder among three sisters, Fannie and Minnie. Fannie Dove of 32 and Minnie Dove Charles of 21. Minnie is a wife of Frank Charles a very light-skinned black man of 36 and born into slavery, he has got skinned because he is a mulatto. Miss Leah, a black woman, born into slavery, age of 73 and Wit Parish of 42 born into slavery. When one gets adversity they become united to face the problems. In order to get one's right they become united; they help each-other as they can. Sophie Washington use to give speech in the Church, later reaches to the extent of poisoning her own brother-in-law Frank Charles, for the sake of her little sister Minnie and her freedom. Sophie and Miss Leah have their own revolutionary background. One of the critics of *Flyin' West* writes his view on New York Times: " Cleage writes with amazing grace and killer instinct."

Cleage, tactfully describes about an importance of female bonding to resist patriarchy, to get one's own freedom, through her characters in *Flyin' West*. As a result of their revolution Minnie's life has got changed. Minnie gets physical as well as mental tortures from her husband Frank Charles in her pregnancy; Frank even does not think about her pregnancy and beats her frequently. Sophie, a revolutionary black woman becomes surprised by seeing the pathetic condition of her own sister, Minnie. Minnie even does not speak a word against her husband. That's why she loves him a lot. Minnie wants to protect her husband by hiding his cruel nature. She pretends as if Frank bears a good nature. Frank thinks himself superior than blacks because he is a mulatto; he has a pride of being mulatto. He even introduces his wife Minnie as a black woman, to his white friends. Sophie and other characters know his savage behaviour. As Frank's savage nature increases, all female characters become united and reach to the extent of poisoning him.

Sophie dislikes Frank but she pretends to be normal to him for Minnie's happiness. Sophie tries everything possible to be friend with Frank, because Sophie knows Minnie loves him too much. Frank not only thinks but treats them as inferior and himself superior because his father was a slave owner, being mulatto he feels superior. He tortures Minnie only because her father was a slave, she is not a mulatto. After the death of his father, instead of getting property he becomes alienated, that's why his white brothers hate him.

The study minutely examines how female bonding is presented to resist patriarchy, and to get their identity. Here, black women haunted by slavery and patriarchy become united to resist patriarchy for their self-respect. Sophie Washington who has a deep consciousness of self-identity encourages Minnie to take revenge with her husband, Frank for his domination. Gradually through her consciousness Sophie makes everyone conscious of their self-respect.

Being a black woman they must endure a lot of sufferings in the society and the family. In the play Sophie realizes the pathetic condition of Minnie under Frank's

domination. So, she arouses a thought of female bounding to be free from the restriction and domination created by patriarchy to discriminate females. Although, Minnie becomes dominated and victimized by her husband. Finally, she becomes conscious for her identities. Sophie gets success to unite females for their right.

Here, in the African American society racial discrimination is also another major problem along with patriarchy. White people consider themselves as superior and civilized than the black people, so does Mr. Frank Charles, a mulatto man. He has a pride of having white's blood.

The play *Flyin' West*, has received much critical appraisals since its publication. Different critics have viewed it from different perspective. Some of them define it as the quest of self-identity and other defines it as the collection of women's voice and the doctrine of their movement towards freedom and emancipation.

Freedom is the thing which encourages human beings for self- independence; likewise, independence is the sole key to the success. In *Flyin' West*, newly freed black slaves fled together in a community where they can feel safe among others, where instead of being ashamed of being Black they could feel proud for their past, that's why; they fled West. Black women's strength and co-operative behaviour finally led them to the pick of success.

Since, its premiere at the Alliance Theatre in 1992, Pearl Cleage's *Flyin' West* has become something of contemporary classic. Over the past two decades not a year has gone by without a theater somewhere mounting a production of it. And in the new revival at Marietta's Theatre in the square, onstage through April 8, it's easy to understand the play's popularity and success. It's a funny lively-touching show that humanizes a seldom-noted corner of American history. At this sense, producer Andrew Alexander writes:

Pearl Cleage's play *Flyin' West*'s emotional corner lies with its two lead characters: the independent and driven young Sophie and the powerful

matriarch Miss Leah. The land Sophie lives on may not be much in the world's eyes, but it's clear that she knows its true value: it's beyond priceless as long as it remains a spot where she can be left alone. Her simple but profound connection to the land can be notable. (5)

Before discussing about Black feminism it is important to discuss about the feminism in general. Female is just a nature constructed, biological contrast to male known as 'sex'. This sexual difference has been changed into gender difference long time ago by the patriarchal society. The patriarchal society has drawn big gap between male and female. That defines male as a rational, strong, decisive, intelligent, responsible, protective, etc. while it describes female as irrational, weak, submissive, irresponsible, etc. from the beginning of human civilization women are victimized by sexist oppression. They are always treated as inferior creature while males consider themselves as superior beings.

Feminism is a movement that started in the early eighteenth century giving focus on the emancipation of women from all kind of disparities, inequalities and justices privileged in the society. It is a political and an intellectual movement that seeks justice for women and ends the supremacy of male domination. Patriarchy has always been the central problem for feminism. For women, it is always been hard to survive in the patriarchal society with their own identity. As time passed, female became aware of male domination and their secondary position in the society and began to question on it. They slowly began to revolt and resist against the male domination and suppression. They began to fight for their rights directly or indirectly. Thus, feminism came into practice as an attack against female marginalization as our society and civilization is pervasively patriarchal. Mary Wollstonecraft was the first most influential feminist writer to raise her voice against the patriarchal society in her book *A Vindication of the Rights of Women*, she mentioned that men consider female rather as women than human creature and sink them still lower, merely to render them alluring objects.

Black Feminism regards that the earlier feminist movement led by white middle class women largely ignore the oppression based on race and class as it narrowly over emphasizes the oppression based on sexism. Black feminist regards that black women experience more intense kind of oppression which is completely different from that of white women. Not just for being woman, but they also have to suffer for being black and economically low in social status. This is why, black feminism argues that sexism, class operation and racism are inextricably bound together in determining the overall condition of black women. But the attempt white feminism imitated during the decade of the 1960s was univocally valorized oppression based on racism in deteriorating the lives of black females. With a motive of searching the specificity of oppression, black feminist scholars rejected the essentialization or biologization generally found in white feminist culture and focus on political and emotional analysis of various forms of domination. Therefore, the institutionalization of Black Feminism was an attempt of developing an ideological separation from white feminism. In *Black Women Manifesto; Double Jeopardy: To Be Black and Female* published in 1970 Frances M. Bill asserts:

The black women are demanding a new set of female definitions and recognition of herself as citizen, companions and confident, not a matriarchal villain or a step stool baby-maker. Role integration advocates the complementary recognition man and woman, not the competitive recognition of same. (1)

Black feminism or African-American feminism as a political social movement institutionalization in the decade of the 1970s searching new set of self-identity.

Black feminist criticism protests the massive silence of feminist criticism about women writes and calls for a black feminist aesthetic that would deal with both racial and sexual issues. Black feminists have been especially helpful in revealing the political and theoretical limitations inherent in white mainstream feminists' neglect of cultural experience

different from their own. For example, Black feminists have analyzed the ways in which gender oppressed patriarchy, Black feminist observe, not just because she is a woman but because she is a Black woman. The logic was circular and deadly, a woman whose racial economic situation forced her into hard labour and made her the victim of sexual predators was defined as womanly and therefore unworthy of protection from those who exploited her. This view was widely held by men, both black and white, and by white women as well. Black women, therefore, were in double bind. They could expect neither gender solidarity from white women nor racial solidarity from Black men, the two groups on whom they should have been able to count for help.

The present study will concentrate on the female resistance to patriarchy. Especially the female characters of the play *Flyin' West*, are physically and psychologically destroyed by the patriarchy. Different literary critics have viewed this play from different perspectives but none of the critics have explored the female's resistance against the evil of patriarchy along with racism, presented in the play. So, this research will attempt to show the female resistance to the patriarchal values and the concept of racism, which have victimized many women. They have suffering from the both sexism and racism. In Afro-American patriarchal society, the black female's status is not quite good. Though they suffer sexually, mentally and physically, the black female are aware of their present condition in the society. So, the black female in the play *Flyin' West*, develop the sense of resistance and violate all the traditional rules and regulations existing in the contemporary society regarding patriarchy. It will purely depend on the textual analysis of the *Flyin' West*, on the basis of the theoretical tools formed by drawing the insights from Black Feminist discourse.

II. Black Female's Consciousness and the Sense of Resistance in Pearl Cleage's Play Flyin' West

West

This thesis aims to explore the black female consciousness and the sense of resistance through female bonding in Pearl Cleage's play Flyin' West. In the play, Pearl Cleage has included the black female sufferings and their consciousness for their rights, identity and equality in the contemporary Afro-American society. The protagonist Sophie Washington and other female characters like Fannie, Minnie and Miss Leah are emotionally inter-connected, as the play starts Sophie, Fannie and Miss Leah are impatiently waiting for Minnie Dove Charles's arrival from London, with her husband Frank Charles. Gradually, they get united for the sake of Minnie, to revolt against Frank's domination. Frank represents patriarchy, racism along with sexism. Their bonding is the bonding of the transformation from the passive and humble women to more progressive, active and conscious for their right and identity in the society. Though they have been suffering from the slavery first and then male dominated patriarchal mindset, they raise their sense of resistance against the racism, sexism and patriarchal thought existing in the African-American society. The male dominated racial and patriarchal society creates different codes of conducts to suppress and dominate females but in the play, the female characters violate such male bias rules and regulations and raise their voice against male domination.

Self-knowledge can be taken as the initial embark on the journey of freedom and independence. Self-knowledge makes people identifying true self and individuality and leads the people towards power thereby emancipating them from any sort of hegemony. Most of black women identify themselves either from racist socialization of white culture or sexist socialization of own race. Different truths and discourse are created so as to frame the overall identity of black women. In this way, knowledge plays the vital role in the process of domination and resistance and also makes women conscious about the inherent underlying networks of domination, resistance and knowledge itself. Patricia Hill Collins, in her book,

Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness and the Politics of Empowerment, valorizes the role of self-knowledge:

Black Feminist thought demonstrates Black women's emerging power as agents of knowledge. By portraying African-American women as self-defined, self-reliant individuals confronting race, gender and class oppression, African-American feminist thought speaks to the importance that knowledge plays in empowering oppressed people...its insistence that both the change consciousness of individuals and social transformation of political and economic institutions constitute essential ingredients for social change. New knowledge is important for both dimensions of change. (1)

Therefore, self-knowledge is the preliminary source of resistance and social change. Black Feminism is a branch of feminism which arises with the emergence of black women's movements in the 1970s in the United States. It mainly states the multiple oppression of sexism, racism and class prejudices imposed on black women in the American society. And it also reveals the sufferings of black women caused by the multiple oppressions and provides methods to help black women. Black feminist critics analyze the work of black female writers from a feminist or political perspective. Thus, it is regarded as a practice, a way of reading, inscriptions of race, gender and class in modes of cultural expression.

Black feminism argues that sexism, class oppression and racism are inextricably interrelated. The black feminist movement was formed to address the ways sexism; racism and classism influence the life of black women whose needs were ignored by the black men of the black liberation movement and white women in the women's movement. The movement has spawned several important organizations which are committed to the struggle against all forms of oppression. They have created a unique model for cross-class organization in which the needs of the poor are not usurped by the need of the middle class and the wealthy.

Unlike the those female from the other society of the world, the females from the Afro-American society are victimized doubly-by their male relatives on the one hand and by the racist mentality of the American white people on the other. Sexually, the female of the Afro-American society are dominated by the both black and white male; and racially they are marginalized along with the black male in the society. When the Civil Rights movements began in the 1950s, black women and men equally joined together to struggle for racial equality yet black female activists did not receive the public acclaim as awarded black male leaders. That is, the black women in American society marginalized doubly. In this sense, in her book *Black women and feminism*, bell hooks argues:

Black women were dually victimized by racist and sexist oppression, white feminists tended to romanticize the black female experience rather than discuss the negative impact of that oppression. When feminists acknowledge in one breath that black women are victimized and in the same breath emphasize their strength, they imply that though black women are oppressed they manage to circumvent the damaging impact of oppression by being strong and that is simply not the case. (6)

Here, according to Bell Hooks, black females are faced two fold domination: by their husband or other male relatives and by the white community. For her, white females are not serious about the black women oppression. They fantasize the black women expression. The mainstream female activists have the opinion that suffering faced by the white women is the major problem in the women movement. These are blind about the pathetic condition of the black female in the society.

Centuries of exploitation and mistreatment left the blacks with an unavoidable inferiority complex and battered self-conception. As the play starts, the dialogue from the Act I and Scene I, of the play, shows how the black women were repressed and compelled to

hide their happiness as well as laughter too. In another word we can say that they did not get any happiness to laugh at the period of slavery. It shows the impact of century's long victimization of the black female from the whites. Black female had to live only for white people. Lois Tyson in her book *Critical Theory Today* writes:

Before "Black is beautiful!" and "say it loud: I'm black and I'm Proud!" sounded the call for a radical change in African American self-definition and self-perception in the late 1960's, many African Americans suffered from internalized racism. And despite the success of black-pride advocates, many people of color continue to suffer from it today. Internalized racism results from the psychological programming by which a racist society indoctrinates people of color to believe in white superiority. Victims of internalized racism generally felt inferior to whites, less assertive, less worthwhile, less capable, and often wish they were white or looked more-white. (362)

Here, Tyson shows the psychological and mental condition of blacks during the 1960s US, but this saying of Tyson suits on all slaves of all period. Black African-American had internalized themselves as the inferior to the whites. This internalization made them suffer from the whites, they always thought whites as superior and themselves as inferior one, they forget to laugh and enjoy their own happiness and used to live only for whites. Blacks had internalized the racist society in their mind:

Fannie: Sophie found her laugh here. I don't remember ever hearing her laugh the whole time we were in Memphis. But everything in Kansas was funny to her. Sometimes when we first got her, she'd laugh so hard she'd start crying, but she didn't care. One time, she was laughing so hard I was afraid she was going to have a stroke. She scared me to death. When she calmed down, I asked her, well, why didn't you ever laugh like that in Memphis? And she said her laugh was 100 free to come out in a place where

a colored woman's life wasn't worth two cents on the dollar. What kind of fool would find that funny, she asked me? She was right, too. Sophie's always right. (7-8)

Present conversation between Fannie and Wil shows how they were hegemonized by the discourse about them. Above conversation shows that how Sophie, one of the former slave forget how to laugh at the time of slavery. She had forgotten to laugh because there was no any reason to feel laughter; they were not happy and mentally tortured so that they didn't find any reason to laughter. According to Fannie, Sophie never got laughter due to slavery. Here, through Fannie and Wils conversation we can easily say that slavery made her dumb which compelled her to forget laughter.

As the consciousness start developing indide the black women they tried different ways to oppress and resist against the whites along with dominating sector. Patricia Hill Collin's in her book Black Feminist Thought, Knowledge, Consciousness and the Politics of Empowerment writes:

African-American women need wisdom to know how to deal with the "educated fools" who would "take a shotgun to a roach". As members of a sub-ordinate group, Black women cannot afford to be fools of any type, for our objectification as the other denies us the protections that white Skin, maleness and wealth confer. This distinction between knowledge and wisdom, and the use of experience as the cutting edge dividing them, has been key to Black women's survival. In the context of intersecting oppressions, the distinction is essential. Knowledge without wisdom is adequate for the powerful, but wisdom is essential to the survival of the subordinate. (257)

Historically oppressed black women started developing the consciousness within themselves. The black women who were oppressed from long time started to oppose

against the dominating factors. As the time passes on black women started getting knowledge about their hegemonized position and they started raising voice and thoughts against the white oppression along with patriarchal domination.

FAN. We're friends, aren't we?

WIL. Yes, Miss Fannie. I would say we are.

FAN. Then I wish you'd just call me Fannie. You don't have to call me Miss Fannie.

WIL. I didn't mean to offend you. Miss...I just sort of like to call you that because it reminds me that a colored woman is a precious Jewel deserving of my respect, my love and my protection.

FAN. Why, Wil! What a sweet thing to say!

WIL. My mother taught it to me. She used to make me say it at night like other folks said prayers. There were some other things she said, too, but i can't remember them anymore. When i first run off after they sold her, i tried to close my eyes and remember her voice sayin' 'em, but all them new Indian words was lookin' for a place in my head, too. So, I lost 'em all but that one I just told you. She used to say it a colored man could just remember that one thing; life would be a whole lot easier on the colored woman. (Act I, Scene I, 7-8)

Wil also confesses that how her mother used to teach him to respect block women, she taught him that a colored woman is a precious Jewel deserving man's respect, love and protection. Wil's mother taught it to him secretly at night, like other folks said prayers. When whites sold his mother, he tried to remember her voice and her sayings but whites language made him to forger all his mother's sayings and compelled him to learn new Indian words. About conversation between Fannie and will shows that how whites rule made them to forget their own happiness and made them whites' puppet. Wil's mother taught him to

respect black females, through which we can figure out some kind of pretext or hope inside her to go behind the conversation and male domination.

Simon de Beauvoir, an existentialist feminist critic strongly opposes the tendency of treating women as second sex born to assist their male guardians. She believes that existence always precedes essence. Beauvoir strongly objects to man's attitude of discriminating between sexes as 'self' and 'other' men being the former and women the latter. Men writers have described women as 'flesh' the one related to 'nature'. In the feminist world, a subtle and radical critical mode was launched by Simon de Beauvoir with her book entitled *The Second Sex* (1949). Through this book, Beauvoir established the principles of modern feminism. She focused upon pitiable condition of women in patriarchal society stating that where a woman tries to define herself, she starts by saying "I am a woman; no man would do so...man defines the human, not women" (Seldon 134). It reveals the fundamental asymmetry between the term masculine and feminine. She argues that "Man defines the human, not woman. Woman is riveted into a lopsided relation with man, he is the one, she is the other" (135). According to her, all the male writers assume the female as a negative.

In the book, the problem Beauvoir emphasizes is that women perceive man as self (as subject) and themselves as other. And she explicitly exposes the condition of women so that they could realize their existence. She says:

. . . Women have been essential as the one born. To be a wife or a mother. But she is stripped off motherly rights because motherly rights are also overpowered by fatherly rights. A wife's duty is to be in the bed to gratify the husband's lust but the husband is not aware whether he is gratifying the lust of his wife. (145)

Women, therefore is inessential in the eyes of men who want to accept her as 'other.'

Patriarchy has always been dominant and superior against the female.

Susan Gubar has analyzed stereotypes such as women as angels. Later on social scientists and social historians like Jessie Bernard has diagnosed that the patriarchal socialization was totally unfit and unhealthy for woman. Most feminist claim themselves of revisionist. Likewise, Gilbert has pointed out the aim of the feminist criticism: "The feminist criticism wants to decode and demystify all the disguised question and answers that have always shadowed of the connections between sexuality and sexuality, genre and gender, psychosexual identity and cultural authority" (334).

In the 1970s and 80s, the radical difference become a key focus for feminist criticism. Many Black feminists like Alice Walker, Maya Angelou and Tony Morrison. Established the literary and critical forum and started voicing out their agonies as marginalized and doubly oppressed (as black women) in their works. A black woman is oppressed by patriarchy, black feminists observe, not just because she's a woman but because she's a black woman, a category that has been defined historically in America as less valuable than the white woman. The Victorian ideals of the true woman as submissive, fragile, and sexually pure, which still influence patriarchal thinking today, excluded black women and poor women of all races, whose survival demanded hard physical labor and who were vulnerable to rape and to sexual exploitation in the workplace. They are victimized by black men as well as white society. Black male community too marginalize black women because of their gender, nevertheless encourages them to prioritize racial issues over gender issues, arguing that black women are oppressed more by racism than by sexism.

From the beginning black women were dominated and marginalized by male along with white female. Showing female biologically weak was also a weapon to make them inferior. Thinking of bringing equality in black and white, Jim Crow opined the law 'Equal but Separate'. The law 'Equal but separate' was made for blacks. The law was aimed to make black seems as if it reduced their inferiority. The law was just aimed to make black feel equal

to white, unfortunately it was just so called equalitarian because it could not reduce the inferiority of black and superiority of the whites upon them.

After an 1892 lynching and riot, crusading black Journalist Ida B. Wells's call to her readers to leave Memphis, Tennessee was heeded by over seven thousand black residents of the city who packed up as many of their belongings as they could carry and headed West in search of a life free from racist violence. Unfortunately, their dreams were shattered as many Western states enacted Jim Crow Laws as cruel as any in the old confederacy and effectively destroyed most of the black settlements by the early 1900s. Jim Crow Law was failed to bring equality among Black and white. We can see how whites followed Jim Crow laws to discriminate Black in the play:

Miss Leah. You had a lot of help your first copula winters, if I
remember it right.

Sophie. And I'm grateful for it.

Miss Leah. Some of us were here when you got here. Don't forget it!

Sophie. All I'm trying to say it the Bakers have been gone almost two
years and he hasn't even filled an extension. It's against the rules.

Miss Leah. Against whose rules? Doesn't nobody but colored folks
know they been gone that long way. Then white folks never
come here to even check and see it we're dead or alive. You
know that well as the next person. Sometimes, I suspect you
think you the only one love this land, sister, but you not. (Act I,
scene I, 5)

Through the above conversation, we can say that from the period of colored folk's arrival at the Kansas. Whites never came to see whether they are surviving nicely or not. They didn't come to check Black people were dead or alive, what they were doing in the new land.

Whites gave them permission to live in the land with their Black community but they never

came to see their condition at once which shows that whites don't have humanity as well. White gave equality by permitting Blacks to go to the West, but at the same time they alienated Blacks by neglecting them. In the above conversation Miss Leah says that Whites never come at their place to check and see if they are dead or alive.

Above discussions of the research is important from the point of view of resisting patriarchy through female bonding. Turning point comes in the play with the arrival of Sophie and Fannie's little sister Minnie and her husband Frank Charles, mulatto man, from London.

Bell hooks, a prominent feminist theorist, states about the condition of Black women in the Afro-American society. In her book, *Black Women and Feminism*, she writes: 'There is a great stir about colored men getting their rights, but not a word about the colored women' and if colored men get their rights, and not colored women theirs, you see the colored men will be masters over the women, and it will be just as bad as it was before" (4). That is, according to the bell hooks, black women are marginalized within their own community. They fight for their equal rights with the white people. But when in the case of getting rights, the black female are again dominated by their male relatives.

Above saying of bell hooks suits while Frank, who is supposed to get his share on his father's property, gets a telegram, "Paternity denied. Stop all claims to money, property, land and other assets of Mr. John Charles, late of New Orleans, Louisiana, denied. No legal resource available." Frank being shocked walks to his room and slams the door, his wife Minnie goes to him thinking that Frank needs her in difficulty:

Minnie. I'm so sorry!

Frank. Are you? Sorry for what? Marrying a bastard?

Minnie. Don't say that!

Frank. Do you know what this means? This means I've got nothing.

Not a dime. Nothing.

Minnie. You can sell your books.

Frank. Don't be so stupid. They think they can make me an

ordinary Negro. That's what they think. They think they're going to have a change to treat me colored and keep me here where every ignorant white man who walks the street can make me step off to let him pass. They think they can pretend I'm nothing and-presto-I'll be nothing.

Minnie. You won't let them do that.

Frank. Let them? They've done it! We don't even have passage back to London. We're stuck here being niggers. Common, ordinary, niggers! (Act II, scene II, 34)

Under white domination a black men finds that his male ego is wounded. When Frank's white brother's denied to give him paternal property, Frank thinks himself inferior, useless and ignorant, because he is not a rest white, he is a mulatto. In one sense, in the racist context, it is perfectly natural to be conscious of being black. But Cleage's focus, from this dramatic incident, is not just to highlight the domination of white upon Blacks, but she wants to expose Frank and his hatred toward his own Black community, and his own Black colour. Here, we can say that being black, Frank does not like Black, he feels a kind of same of being black. Being a black, he has a kind of hatred toward black, he always wanted to be a white.

Minnie. Frank says he doesn't see why he only has to be with Negroes

since he has as much white blood in him as colored. (Act I, Scene 3, 17)

Although most Black Women typically resist being objectified as the other, these controlling images remain powerful influences on Blacks relationships with whites, Black men, other

racial/ethnic groups, and one another. Dealing with prevailing standards of beauty particularly skin colour, facial features, and hair texture is one specific example of how controlling images derogate African-American women. A children's rhyme often sung in Black communities proclaims: Now if you're white you're all right, if you're brown, stick around, but, if you're black, Git back! Git back! Git back!

Prevailing standards of beauty claim that no matter how intelligent, educated or "beautiful" a black woman may be, these Black women whose features and skin color are most African must "git back". Within the binary thinking that underpins intersecting oppressions; blue eyed, blond, thin white women could not be considered beautiful without the other. Black women with African features of dark skin, broad noses, full lips, and kinky hair. Despite all this, being a black Cleage's character Frank does not like black people he even hates his own loving wife Minnie, he shows his masculinity to her by threatening and beating brutally. He is too clever that he used to treat her very nicely in front of everyone but his colour charges while no one is there to speak for her. Frank has a strong attraction toward whites; he thinks himself white and treats her rudely:

Frank. What have you done to your hair?

Minnie. Miss Leah braided it for me like she used to. Do you like it?

Frank. I've never seen you with your hair in plaits.

Minnie. Yes you have. I was wearing braids when you met me.

(Frank and Minnie exit to the yard)

Frank. (Angrily) I want you to put your hair back the way it was.

Minnie. I always wore my...

Frank. You look like a damn pick ninny! We haven't been here
twenty-four hours and look at you!

Minnie. I'm sorry...

Frank. You're always sorry, aren't you? Of course you are, but it you

weren't so busy being sorry, you'd know there are some interesting things going on in Nicodemus these days. (Act I, Scene IV, 26)

Black Women even don't have right on their own body, they have to ask their husband for every small thing in above conversation, Minnie makes her hair plaits and she is very happy for doing this but, her husband gets furious at her and asks her to put hair back the way it was. Black women even don't have right on their body and on their belonging took they don't have a single thing to say it's their own. Not only by whites Black Women are treated as an animal by Black male which is extremely shameful to say that they are not treated as human by their own people. After seeing her hair plaits, Frank complements "You look like a damn pickaninny!" he uses an offensive word rather supporting. He treats her as a doll not as a wife, he wants to take benefit of being male, and he tries to make her puppet. Real beauty lies in internal goodness not in external attraction. It is not justifiable to judge anyone by looking their physical structure.

In the patriarchal society males are considered as superior, more intelligent and powerful than the women. The females are assigned certain task to be performed without any complain. In such society, all the people internalize the already prescribed role for male and female. Not only white people, but, Black too discriminates Black and supports white which is very shameful to say a black hates his own tribe and loves another. In the play Frank considers Black people as an animal. In their journey from London to Nicodemus, Kansas Prank sits with some white people and becomes familiar, he introduces Minnie to them as a black whore, as a prostitute not as a wife., he treats her as an object. After reaching Nicodemus he gets to know that Minnie has some piece of Land which costs too much. An opportunist and selfish Frank showers fake love to Minnie and tries to convenience her to sell her land:

Frank. Your share of this land is worth \$50,000. Do you know what we can do with that kind of money in London? We'll have the best of everything and so will our baby.

Minnie. Sophie would never sell this land to speculators. Not for a million dollars (p. 35).

Minnie tries to reject Frank's proposal of selling her land but greedy Frank is not ready to listen her and says further:

Frank. It wouldn't be all of it. Just your fair share. The town is full of people looking to buy some of this land before your sister gets that damn rule passed. This is the chance we've been waiting for a chance for me to get back on my feet. To show my brothers I don't need their money.

Minnie. They've not your brothers. They don't even claim you!

Frank. They don't have to claim me. I look just like them! (Act II, scene II, 35)

Frank feels a kind of shame to say he is a black, he always to be a white, so he addresses white people as white gentleman and blacks as niggers. When his white brothers denies to give him paternal property, frank tries to manipulate Minnie to sell her land. When Minnie denies to sell her land frank shows his true color.

Minnie. No, Frank. I can't ask sister to split up this land.

Frank. I'm your husband. Don't you ever tell me no!

Minnie. Don't, Frank! (Moving quickly out of reach) I don't care what you do to me, but i won't let you hurt our baby!

Frank. (He grabs her arm and brings her up against him sharply.) don't you ever threaten me as long as you live, do you understand me? Do you? (She nods silently.) I'll kill you right now, Minnie. I'll break your damn neck before your precious sisters can hear your holler. D'll kill everybody in this

house, don't you understand that? You want to know who I told those white men you were, Min? You really want to know? (She struggles again, but he holds her.) I told them you were a black whore I won in a card game. (He laughs and presses his mouth to hers roughly.) (Act II, Scene II, 35-36)

Through this dramatic incident, Cleage tries to prove that patriarchal thought works more profoundly in the lives black male despite the fact that racism suppresses them in every possible way. According to Frank's conversation with Minnie, that I mentioned above, we can say that black men can tolerate public humiliation resulted through racist hierarchy in acceptable way. They can easily make fun of their wives in front of white men. But they cannot stand any sort of act that strikes their power of masculinity, that is, superiority complex of being male. This view also proves that black women not only become the victim of racial violence. Moreover, racial violence faced by those black men ultimately opens the door for patriarchal violence in the lives of black women. Being a black Frank, hates black. He introduces Minnie, as a black whore to his white friends. Despite of giving respect to her and feeling proud of being black, Frank himself makes fun of his wife as calling her a black whore; he won in a card game. A question arises in our mind that what kind of a black male is he? Therefore, Frank finds the husband's probable thrashing to wife as justifiable and correct act which must be done for lessening his disgraceful feeling of tortured masculinity.

Here, in this conversation, Frank tries to manipulate Minnie to sell her fortune. While denies to sell her land he becomes furious and threatens her don't ever tell him no because he is her husband. Wives should be submissive and humble for him. Black women are not safe even within their own house, among their own people. Above mentioned conversation of Minnie and Frank shows the patriarchal domination that black women face from the hand of their own husband when Frank becomes alienated from his white brothers he turns mad, instead of being friendly with his loving wife, he starts beating and

threatening her. Male never accepts female as their life partner but treats them as a commodity or as a sex object.

In the play *Frank* alone is the perfect example of patriarchy. In patriarchy women are considered as inferior and passive. They are not supposed to develop their own interest. They have to rather enjoy what their husbands enjoy. Women are oppressed and exploited by the males. They are always considered as different from men. They have often been the target of male sexual violence. They are forced to fulfill men's purpose and expected to serve men. The feminist scholars define the term "patriarchy" as "the rule of the father, including the rule of older men over younger men and of fathers over daughters, as well as husbands over wives" (284). It's a historical process formed by men and women with patriarchal family serving as a basic unit of organization. Kate Millet, in her *Sexual Politics*, argues that patriarchy subordinates the female to the male or treats the female as an inferior male increasing self-realization and gaining empowerment.

Cleage in the play tries to raise the issues of patriarchal exploitations on the lives of black women by black men which are generally over shadowed due to the fact of over valorizing and exaggerated emphasis on the impact of racism on black men. Not just white men, but black men have been involved in finding ways to profit from Black women's bodies, and when they feel tired they treat black women as an animal. bell hooks in, *Ain't I A Woman?* declares:

Black leaders, male and female, have been unwilling to acknowledge black male sexist operation of black women because they do not want to acknowledge that racism is not the only oppressive force in our lives. Nor do they wish to complicate efforts to resist racism by acknowledging that black men can be victimized by racism but at the same time act as sexist oppressors of black women. (88)

Cleage, through the dramatic incident and the thinking process of Frank Charles, is trying to highlight the inherent patriarchal attitude found excessively in black men's psyche. It is black women's community which falls prey to both sexism along with patriarchy. Minnie, in the play is the real victim of patriarchal thought of her husband Frank who behaves her as an animal. Her two sisters, Sophie and Fannie brought up her under the roof of love and care. But when she got married with Frank, everything become new to her, Cleage's focus from this dramatic incident is to reestablish black women's image as a protest of as the void so called black women's image as a protest of as the void so called black man's masculinity. In her classic ballad "God Bless the Child That Got His own," Billie Holiday sings, the strong gets more, while the weak ones fade, Empty pockets don't ever make the grade; Mama may have, Papa may have, But God bless the child that got his own! (Billie Holiday Anthology 12)

In this mournful song Billie Holiday offers an insightful analysis of the need for autonomy and self-reliance. "Money, you got lots of friends, crowdin' round the door", she proclaims. But when you're gone and spending' ends they don't come any more". In these lines Billie Holiday admonishes black women to become financially independent because having ones "own" allows women to choose their relationships

In the play, Minnie dares to say 'no' to her husband when he insists her to sell her fortune for million dollars to speculators. Her very own fortune is connected to her emotions which is the symbol of her freedom and the freedom of colored people. So, she denies selling her land. But Frank does not care for her emotion and insists her. Infuriated Frank threatens to kill her and her sisters too. After coming to Nicodemus, Minnie gets her share of land, which her husband forces her to sell but she denies Minnie has got the courage of saying no to her husband because she has something which is her "own". Having one's own allows women to live the lives as they want and choose their relationships.

When there is suppression, there must be resistance. Suppression and resistance go side by side. When resistance appears, the powerful authority always tries to suppress

others with the forces of power. But resistance often emerges from others when they are suppressed. Resistance for what? Resistance for injustice. Patriarchal thought and against the oppressor. While talking about female resistance, it is merely concerned with the issues of women's identity, autonomy, selfhood etc. female resistance to injustice of males in the sexist and racist society and to the domination of patriarchal society. The play, *Flyin' West*, depicts the protagonist's resistance to the patriarchy of Frank Charles, in Nicodemus, Kansas.

Women were treated as inferior creatures while men were considered as superior beings from the beginning of human civilization. Women were also blamed for lacking intelligence and responsibilities. Aristotle a renowned Greek philosopher said that the female is a female by the virtue of a certain lack of qualities. He asserts that women lack qualities that is why they are women not men. These gender roles have been used very successfully to justify such inequities which still occur today as excluding women from equal access to leadership and decision making positions.

Patriarchy imposes submissive role upon the imagination of young girls through literary works encouraging women to be innocent and submissive, to obey unargued will of man, to tolerate familial abuse, and wait patiently to be recused by a 'man' and view marriage as the only desirable reward for right conduct. If a woman does not accept her patriarchal gender roles then she is considered as a monster or bad girls. Both rules; of good girls and bad girls, are projection of patriarchal male desire to win submissive women so that men's sexuality cannot be threatened in any way and to dominate her in all, financial, political and societal matters.

As time passed, females became aware of their secondary position and began to question it. Females directly or indirectly started revolting against this kind of suppression and patriarchy. Thus feminism came into practice as an attack against female marginalization as our society and civilization is pervasively patriarchal i.e. it is male-

centered and controlled organized and conducted in such a way as to subordinated women to men in all cultural domains: familiar, religious, political. The most influential voice against patriarchy was raised by Mary Wollstonecraft in her book *A Vindication of the Rights of Women*. She was the first major feminist who mentioned that lack of sufficient training was one of the major disabilities of women for their repressed condition. For her women are turned into weak petty creature by neglected education, by manners, moral and by flattery and dependence. In her book *A Vindication of the Rights of Women*, she mentioned that men consider females rather as women than human creature and sink them still lower, merely to render them alluring objects.

Feminism came into existence to solve women's social problems. There are different kinds of attempts to classify the feminism, according to ideological streams such as liberal, radical, socialist and Marxist. Liberal feminism emphasizes social equality and opportunity for the development of Women Radical Feminists gives importance to femaleness and celebrates the feminine values and traits. Socialists are particularly concerned about women's social rights. Their aims are to unionize women workers on the matter of better wages, conditions and according to Marxism, all human beings are politically and socially at the same level, and they should also have the same economic power to maintain a dominant role in society.

Feminist literary criticism is a political attack upon the marginalization of all women with their being relegated to a secondary position. Most feminist believe that our culture is a patriarchal culture which is organized in favour of the interests of men. Feminist literary critics try to explain how power imbalances due to gender by literary text. Simone de Beauvoir, a French feminist, strongly protests the cultural identification of women as merely negative 'object' or 'other' to men. But man is the defining and dominating 'subject' who is assumed to represent humanity in general. In her essay, "*The Second Sex*", she writes 'existence' always precedes 'essence' she says one is not born, rather becomes women. She

strongly objects to man's attitude of discriminating between man and woman and the use of myth of women to justify all privileges and even justify their abuse. She writes:

Men need not bother themselves with alleviating the pains and the burdens that physiologically are women's lot since these are intended by nature' men use them as a pretext for creating the misery of the feminine lot still further for instance refusing to grant to woman any right to sexual pleasure, by making her work like a beast of burden. (1997)

Feminism completely ignored the existence of all the nonwhite women. The word 'feminism' always referred to the well-educated and privileged class of white women who have ample time and are bored with leisure, with homes and with men. White feminist scholars have moved rapidly forward in addressing theories of subjectivity, questions of difference, the conceptual implication of binary oppositions such as male versus female or equality versus difference. This new wave of white feminist theorists finds little to say about race. White feminist scholars pay hardly more than lip service to race as they continue to analyze their own experience in ever more sophisticated forms.

So, in the 1970s and 80s, several black women writers rose to the literary and critical forum and started voicing out their agonies as marginalized and doubly oppressed as black and as women in their works. The black female experience is characterized by the interlocking oppressors of race, class. These oppressors are interwoven into social structures and work together to define the history of the lives of black woman of color. Renowned black feminist writers like Patricia Hill Collins in her book. *Black Feminist Thought Knowledge, Consciousness and the Politics of Empowerment* writes:

Controlling Black women's bodies has been especially important for capitalist class relations in the United States. When it comes to US Black Women's experiences, two features of capitalism remain noteworthy. First, Black Women's bodies have been objectified and commodified under US capitalist

class relations-objectifying Black Women's bodies turns them into commodities that can be sold or exchanged on the open market. Commodified bodies of all sorts become markets of status within class hierarchies that rely on race and gender. A second feature of US capitalist class relations concerns how Black women's bodies have been exploited. Via mechanisms such as employment discrimination, maintaining images of Black women that construed them as mules or objects of pleasure, and encouraging or discouraging Black women's reproduction via state intervention, Black women's labor, sexuality, and fertility all have been exploited. Black women have been defined and categorized in dehumanizing term, term employed to attack the essence of black women's sense of personal integrity and self-worth. (132)

US Black women writers and film makers have explored many themes affecting Black women's relationships. One concerns the difficulties that African-American women can have in affirming one another in a society that derogates Black women as a group.

After listening Minnie, infuriated Frank beats Minnie to death. He does not care about her pregnancy. He just thinks of himself, at the same afternoon, not feeling a sense of guilt, Frank prepares himself well to go out, while going out he meets Sophie in the yard and boasts in high tone:

Frank. Well, suit yourself, as you always say, but I think I've got some news you might find interesting. (Reachers in his pocket: Sophie shifts the gun). Take it easy ! I'm unarmed . . . as always ! (He pulls out the deed). I just thought you'd like to know that we're officially neighbours now. For the moment, anyway.

Sophie. What are you talking about?

Frank. My wife wants me to share in her good fortune, so she's added

my name to her deed.

Sophie. I don't believe you.

Frank. I'd let you see it up close, but that probably isn't such a good idea. Hot-tempered woman like you . . .

Sophie. Get off my land. You make me sick.

Frank. I'll get so far off your land. I'll get so far off it the post office won't even be able to find me. Well, maybe you'll like your new neighbours better. Ask Min about them. She met them on the train. Well, she didn't really meet them. I didn't introduce her, of course, but she saw us talking. White gentleman. She'll remember them. She wants to tell you, but she's a little nervous about it. (Act II, Scene III, 36-37)

In this above mentioned conversation, between Frank and Sophie, Frank clearly accepts the fact that he wants to sell minnie's land to white people, whom he addresses as white gentleman, against Minnie and her sister's permission. After listening Frank we can say that Frank is too much self centered person who even does not care about his wife. He only wants money by selling her land and wants to go back to London and start his life among white people, that's why he hates Blacks being himself a black.

Female characters in the play strongly supports each other when needed. Frank alone is the enough example of patriarchy. Female characters are aware enough for their rights. They think that husband must support his wife in difficulties rather insulting her:

FAN. I believe he is sorry about what happened, don't you?

MISS LEAH. A man that hit a woman once will hit her again. (Act II, Scene III, 36)

About saying of Miss Heat shows her thinking, Miss Leah an old woman of 73, thinks man should love woman and support her. A man who hit his wife will hit her again. Frank has

studied and examined Minnie and her sisters as semi-human creatures who could not speak for themselves. He wants to direct them as his will, he becomes so cruel that he is unable to see Minnie's love to him:

Minnie. I think he just started hating colored people. We'd be walking down the street and he'd say: "Look at those niggers. No wonder nobody wants to be around them." When his father died and his brothers stopped sending money, it just got worse and worse. It was almost like he couldn't stand to look at me . . . Sometimes I used to think it must be a dream and that I'd wake up one day and Frank would be the way he used to be.

Miss Leah. Grown people don't change except to get more like what they already are. (Act II, Scene I, 31)

Minnie wants Frank the way he used to be, she is too much afraid of Frank. When one loses his/her happiness, one goes in nostalgia, so does Minnie. Miss Leah wants to convince Minnie that Frank can never be changed, he is not a child, grown people can't change except they get more like what they already are. She wants to say to Minnie that Frank can't be loving to her because being a negro man he hates negro people. As a reader we can find a sign of revolution through Miss Leah's saying. Through the character Sophie, Cleage says: "I think Frank hates being colored. I don't understand Negroes like that. They make me nervous" (Act I, Scene V, 29).

The philosophy of black consciousness makes the black man see himself as a being complete in himself. It makes him less dependent and freer to express his manhood. At the end of it all he cannot tolerate attempts by anybody to dwarf the significance of his manhood. Frank: "Sophie is just like all the other Negroes around her. She's content to live her life like a pack mule out in some backwater town . . . I never should have let you talk me into bringing you out here. We damn well could have waited in New Orleans like I wanted to. Taking that

damn train all the way across the damn prairie. You know what they call your precious town? "Niggerdemus" !Niggerdemus, Kansas. Don't you think that's funny, Min?" (Act I, Scene V, 29-30)

Because of the negative attitude of males towards females, females are forced to be conscious for their rights to fight against patriarchal domination. After being victimized sexually, physically and mentally by males, females are compelled to be conscious for their future. Although the male dominated patriarchal society has dominated the females. But while the females get aware of their condition no one can stop them from getting their rights, and for resisting patriarchy their unity is necessary. Without their bonding, it is impossible to achieve the goal. For their betterment, it's themselves who can bring changes resisting the patriarchal domination because without their own effort of bonding together nothing is going to itself. So they decide to kill Frank by giving him an apple pie and free Minnie. In this sense protagonist Sophie says: "A colored man who will beat a colored woman doesn't deserve to live" (Act II, Scene IV, 39).

All the black females including everyone become ready to make Minnie free, for her freedom in her own land, Frank's death is necessary. So they become united and make a plan of killing Frank. They decide to call Frank back and give him an apple pie:

Sophie.No ! Then we'll be doing what free people always have to do
if they are going to stay free.

Miss Leah. Where's the pie tin?

Fannie. It's in the cupboard. What are you doing?

Miss Leah. We're going to make an apple pie, this is still the state of
Kansas, a part of the United States of America. Men beat their
wives every day of the week includin' Sunday, and white folks
cheat colored folks every time they get a mind to.

Sophie. I know all that.

Miss Leah. Hand me the sugar. (Act II, Scene IV, 40-41)

Here in this conversation, we can clearly see the strong bond of female. All black females are ready to kill Frank for Minnie and her unborn child's sake. To make Minnie free, Frank's death is necessary. They become united to make an apple pie for Frank. Frank is the strong example of patriarchy. Their bonding against Frank symbolizes their resistance against patriarchal domination. bell hooks in her book *Feminism is for Everybody* Passionate writes:

Feminists are made, not born. One does not become an advocate of feminist politics simply by having the privilege of having been born female like all political position one becomes a believer in feminist politics through choices and action. When a first organized in groups to talk together about the issue of Sexism and male domination, they were clear that females were as socialized to believe sexist thinking and values as males, the difference being simply that makes benefited from Sexism more than females and were as a consequences less likely to want to surrender patriarchal privilege. (7)

The above saying of bell hooks clarities that feminist are not the one who born having some sort of qualities to be a feminist. One can never be a feminist only by their wish. The bitter experiences that a woman faces in her life span is the only reason how one turns into a feminist. Actions like sexist and patriarchal domination shows them way to be a feminist. When experienced woman get united against domination, no power can stop them from getting victory:

Fannie. In fact, when she saw me rolling out the crust for this pie, she
told me to make sure you got a piece of it.

Frank. Delicious! (Coughs harder) can you get me a glass of water,
please? I feel a little . . . strange.

Fannie. No, Frank I can't do that.

Frank. Please! I . . . Water . . . My throat's on fire! What have you

done? My God, help me! Please help me! (Act II, Scene V, 43)

After sometime Minnie moves slowly from her injuries from her reluctance to see the result of their collective action. They see that Frank is dead. She steels herself and reaches into Frank's pocket to withdraw the deed. She clutches it in her hand then looks to Sophie, who stands watching her. Minnie takes a step toward Sophie and extends the deed to her in anticipation of Sophie demanding the return of the deed. Instead, Sophie re-closes Minnie's hand around the deed and gently pushes Minnie's hand with the deed back to her. Minnie, grateful and relieved, and finally safe, clutches the deed to her chest with both hands.

After some months Minnie gives birth to a small daughter, she seems very happy and all female character seems very happily enjoying their freedom. Everyone feels peace:

Minnie. It's as bright as noon out there.

Miss Leah. That's a good luck moon. It's goanna be a good day tomorrow.

Minnie. Do you think so?

Miss Leah. It's goanna be a good day every day. (Act II, Scene VI, 43).

The play ends with the victory of Black women over patriarchy through their female bonding. They get everything at last through their support to each other. This research shows that female characters get victory only through their helpfulness and their strong desire. In other words their victory is the result of black consciousness. Miss Leah one of the black female characters in the play believes that their bad time will never come back in their lives, only a good time will come. They believe that their victory will bring a golden day for black women in the Afro. American Society. Female bonding helps them to get victory over patriarchal domination.

III Female Bonding: A Successful Means to Fight against Patriarchy

This research on Pearl Cleage's *Flyin' West* analyzes how the intensity of the patriarchal domination leads black women to raise their voice against their male relatives. Cleage very tactfully strengthens her female characters and makes them united to revolt against injustice and finally makes them win over evil of patriarchy. Her female characters are strong enough to fight for their rights. Minnie one of the characters of *Flyin' West*, is very innocent and loving wife of Mr. Frank Charles, finally becomes conscious for her rights and gets united with her sisters against Mr. Frank symbolically represents patriarchy. Frank tortures Minnie physically as well as mentally. Cleage slowly and gradually establishes Minnie as a free woman during the courses of play. Her very innocent character Minnie, no more live her life as per demanded by her husband. Cleage's other female characters like Sophie, Fannie and Miss Leah are very strong and conscious for their rights. Sophie teaches Minnie an importance of freedom and makes her ready to fight against Frank.

Cleage in the play tries to raise the issues of patriarchal exploitations on the lives of black women by black men. Through the dramatic incident and the thinking process of Frank, Cleage tries to highlight the inherent patriarchal attitude found excessively in black men's psyche. It is black women's community which falls prey to both sexism along with patriarchy. When there is suppression there must be resistance. Suppression and resistance go side by side. As time passed Female became aware of their secondary position and began to question it.

Cleage's focus is on African-American women, who grow to reside in a larger world and struggle to achieve independent identities beyond male domination. Her female characters are strong hearted, supportive and co-operative. Although her characters are strong, they get many upheavals in their lives. Women's strength are celebrated in her work. Cleage's female characters are strong enough to revolt patriarchal domination.

This is how Pearl Cleage's play *Flyin' West*, as a protest play, dramatizes the black females' resistance to dominating nature of males. The play strongly opposes patriarchy and establishes black women as determined and powerful women for their rights.

Black woman's each and every aspects of life, in one or other way, is completely shaped and determined by domineering patriarchal norms which always grants secondary role of woman. Minnie starts thinking freely and rethinking about her subjugated condition, and becomes united with her sisters Sophie, Fannie and Miss Leah and finally gets victory over Frank by killing him.

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