

Tribhuvan University

Search for Women's Sense of Self : A Feminist Reading of Walker's
"The Lover", "Fame" and "Abortion"

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Abstract

The female protagonists are in oppressed and troubled condition from their male partners and social patriarchal norms. Thus, these three stories show the female troubled relationship, their emptiness, their dissatisfaction and passionless life and career during 1970s American society. Alice Walker's these three stories, *The Lover*, *Fame and Abortion* shows the bitter condition, troubled relationship and emptiness in female protagonists' life. It analyses that how female protagonists feel an ache, sad and un-full-fill in the stories at the time of 1970s.

This research argues the women and the black women who were oppressed and dominated socially, physically and sexually and it tries to get freedom from the dominance. Most of the female protagonists' look like slave in the story, but they want to redefine their womanhood. So the main argument of this paper is to overcome the sufferings of women and redefine the sense of self. Taking this point in case, the researcher explores the similarities between Alice Walker's three stories that the female protagonists are struggling for the fulfillment of dissatisfaction from their male partners. It will be substantiated in women's studies frame, under the concepts from Mary Wollstonecraft's *Feminism*, Judith Butler's *Gender Trouble and Behavior* and Bell Hook's *Feminist Theory; From Margin To Center*, supports the woman's studies under the feminism.

Thus, the researcher explores in this paper that the Alice Walker's three female protagonists' real situation, sufferings. Struggling and research of self-hood and how they resist against patriarchal society. Further, it unfolds individual's consciousness, prosperity and advancement of life-style.

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**Search for Women's Sense of Self : A Feminist Reading of Walker's
"The Lover", "Fame" and "Abortion"**

Alice Walker in *The Lover, Abortion and Fame* collected in *"You Can't Keep a Good Woman Down"* (1971) analysis not only the impact of passionless relationship of woman during 1970s American society but also raises the questions about the female protagonists and their sufferings during the time of great dissatisfaction. Walker shows that there is the struggle of female protagonists in the stories; *The Lover, Fame and Abortion*. The present research work is focused on the character and relation between female protagonists and their male partners. This paper focuses on the troubled relationship between protagonists and their male partners, during their life and career. In *The Lover, Fame and Abortion*, Walker makes a critique of traditional image of womanhood by presenting the troubled relationship between the protagonists and their male partners. Thus, these three stories: *The Lover, Fame and Abortion*, show the female troubled relationship, their emptiness, their dissatisfaction and passionless life and career. This research paper analyses that how female protagonists feel an ache, sad and un-full-fill in the stories at the time of 1970s American society. How do the female protagonists can feel and experience their marital life, their career and relationship as a woman? Do the Alice Walker's protagonists are similar in their treatment with their relationship with male partners and conjugal life? So the current research work primarily aims at the American modernist female protagonists are struggle for the self-realization from their relationship.

Women have always been a part of literature throughout the ages. Unfortunately, they have often been depicted as a weaker, inferior sex, according to men and could not survive on their own, and could not do their work by themselves. For men, women are beautiful and obedient, could not think on their own. As per Alice Walker fiction's

fiction, numerous females are on the whole insensible of affection, never having been permitted to share their sentiments. Moreover, they don't know how to celebrate the value of self which has been violated. The black women as well as women are suppressed in my aspects; women of the black community are misrepresented even in their community. Women and black women, who were oppressed and dominated socially, physically, and sexually, try to get freedom from the dominance. Most of the women and black women are treated as a slave. They want to redefine their womanhood. The principle parts of the black women bestowed as slaves. They need to emancipate their adulthood. This paper is an attempt at subjugation and concealment of black women and females' suppression, enslavement, gender discrimination and how they differentiate themselves. It explores the story of women and black women subjugation, self-realization, awakening and self-emancipation. Alice Walker, an Afro-American writer encounters for the black women's freedom. She urges black women to recognize their connectedness to women who historically have built bridges for them with their indomitable and independent spirit. The main argument of this paper is to overcome the sufferings and trouble of female as well as black female and redefine the sense of self.

This research paper is about women equality which focuses that women should have an equal share in society. They should have equal access to political, economic and in the property as men have. Women's rights advanced the battle for the privileges of ladies which began in the late eighteen century. This paper put forth the concept that the women should have equal rights as men do. Women should power, control and command as men have in the society. Feminist asserts that all women have oppressions for their individual experience of race, gender, religion, caste, and sexual

impulse. This research paper argues that the essential humanness and selfhood of women are not objects but persons. It also states that the right of a woman to know herself not as a shadow of man but as an autonomous and authentic individual. Various movements like the civil right movement focuses the social, political, artistic, and sexual equality. It acts as a shield for the legal, political, gender equality for women and prevents women from the patriarchy.

Women have considered as an image of brutality and they have regarded as the property of men from the perspective of men. They even depicted as a weaker sex and inferior; passive objects who could not think on their own and they always depend on men for their needs. According to the assumptions of men; women could not survive by themselves. They always said to be weaker sex or second sex because of the social force. They have represented falsely. Feminism has charged that male patriarchy cannot have held responsibility for oppression. Feminism movement has concentrated on supporting gender, discrimination and how tradition, social status has affected them regarding gender discrimination. During the 1970s the concept of feminism in literature was hampered the female writer initiation and delineation give with the help of female characters. The female writers try to sort out the condition, faced by women in society, through their fictitious women protagonists and characters in their works.

Women have been protagonists of literary work since the very beginning of literature, and focuses on the more difficult and problematic aspects of a woman's life. African American literature in particular has brought to surface the discrimination black women were forced to endure, both in the past today, as well as their fight for equality and justice. Such are the many of Alice Walker, one of the most appreciated and famous African American authors of today, many of her novels, essays and short

stories deal with oppressed female protagonists and their life of struggle in a patriarchal society. Discrimination is evident on many levels and it is present in nearly all aspects of everyday life. First and foremost, walker's female protagonists are faced with racism because of their skin color they are not able to choose or change. Although this applies to both men and women, racial discrimination is much more difficult to endure and fight against for women because they additionally have to cope with sexism and traditionally gender roles that were imposed on them because they are female of the society and should follow the rules which are conducted from male dominant patriarchal society.

Alice walker was born to a share cropping family in Eaton, Georgia, on February 9, 1944. From a very early age, she was showing signs of extreme brightness and intellect, noticed by both her family members and her teachers. Since, her parents had to work hard to support their family, walker started school one year before she was supposed to, at four year old, and continued to amaze everyone with the knowledge. She accumulated by reading book after book. In 1952, an eye injury caused by a BB gun accident while she was playing with her siblings left her with a permanent scar and damaged sight. The injury affected her even more on a mental level, evoking insecurity and shame about the way she looked, as well as anger because of her brothers not being punished for what they did. Her scar was later repaired and scar tissue removed, but the effects of the injury remained on the inside. Nevertheless, Alice walker continued her success in school and in 1961 graduated from butler-baker high school and enrolled at Spellman collage. It was about that time that she started to notice the injustice with which her race was being treated and expressed interest for the civil rights movement, which will later be seen in her writing (*A Life 14*).

The purpose of the work is to try to show in which ways Alice Walker has included the theme of women and their oppression in her work. The author's general views towards women and her representation of them in literature, different forms of discrimination will be analyzed, such as traditional, gender, racial and sexual, together with the portrayal of traditional gender roles in a patriarchal society and the effect it has on women.

Alice Walker in *The Lover, Abortion and Fame* collected in *"You Can't Keep A Good Woman Down"* analyses not only the impact of passionless relationships of women during 1970s American society but also raises the questions about the female protagonists and their sufferings during the time of great dissatisfaction. Walker shows that there is the struggle of female protagonists in the stories; *The Lover, Fame and Abortion*. The present research work is focused on the character and relation between female protagonist and their male partners.

This paper focuses on the troubled relationship between protagonists and their male partners during their life and career. In the story of *The Lover, Fame, And Abortion*, Walker makes a critique of traditional image of womanhood by presenting the troubled relationship between the protagonists and their male partners, where the female protagonist of *The Lover*, 'She is just fed off from her marital relationship and she wants to be in an extra relationship and in favor of multiple love affairs by standing opposite with patriarchy(*The Lover*.32).

In the story, Walker portrays the bitter and oppressed relationship between female protagonists and their life partners, while crossing and making life and career during

the great dissatisfaction of America in 1970s. She focuses on the great challenges and issues of women of that time of America. Walker raises the female sufferings, suppressing, dominance and discrimination in her stories collected in *You Can't Keep a Good Woman Down*. In the story of *Lover, Fame, And Abortion*; an un-named 'she', Andrea and Imani are the female protagonists, they all are suffering a lot in whole story, from their life, love and marriage, here, an unnamed She, Andrea and Imani, are in same phase of life where they all are struggling more to get self-satisfaction (*You Can't Keep A Good Women Down* .64). American female protagonists feel the lack of satisfaction and happiness from their and career from their marital life and career but their wishes always remains unfulfilled.

The present research, deals with the female protagonist's life, their struggles, many ups and downs and searching for the satisfaction of self. Gender becomes determinant in the writer's career as a writer, during the 1970s America, however, her female protagonists unfold differential relationship in their treatment with new hope and satisfaction. The female protagonists' treatment with their male partners, in these stories, shows the United States' females condition of 1970s, a period of marking the American rise in women's movement.

Further it casts light on relationship between literature and woman's study under feminism that is often overlooked in humanities and social sciences research. In Alice walker's story *The Lover*; the female protagonist of the story, a nameless 'She' suffer a lot during whole story, because she is a victim of great dissatisfaction. Her husband had wanted a child and so she gave him one as a gift, because she liked her husband and admired him greatly. Still, it had taken a lot out of her, especially in the area of sexual response. "She had never been particularly passionate with him, not even

during the early years of their marriage; it was more a matter of being sexually comfortable (*The Lover.31*).” she is a married poet who sets her poetry to jazz music; her husband is a professor but she does not feel much passion for him, and she has a child only because he wanted one. However, she kind of digs her husband because he respect her work, and he is also a genuinely nice guy.

The female protagonists feel a kind of emptiness of their life. They feel more trouble because of being a black and a woman. The story shows the woman struggling, dissatisfaction and emptiness. The narrator does not much penetrate into the psyche of male as she explores the woman's mind and the under-currents of the pathos and sadness.

These stories, *The Lover*, *Abortion and Fame* present the bitter experiences of loss and awful tone to the social and gender constructor that arose because modernity can be openly discussed. Alice Walker presents the female protagonists, who represent a set of the modern woman; she struggles for love, sex, marriage, settlement, satisfaction and individuality. Tillie Olsen also emphasizes the women’ struggles, dissatisfaction and uneasiness with their marital life, career and settlement because of being a woman (*I stand here Ironing.76*).

Female protagonists get victory over the traditional society but there is always a kind of lack and ache in their life. Alice walker is an experimenter and wants to make it as transparent and seamless as possible.

Alice Walker and her characters are not big on marriage because marital love or lust is stunned by things like a partner's love of porn, the birth of children, (which is never seen as a positive thing) or as in this case a sense of confinement or suffocation (*Abortion.37*).

An excellent presentation by Alice Walker, presenting human desires and the urge to lead a self-designed life very often creates irrevocable line of pain which even time mar. Walker depicts the deep sense of dissatisfaction (*Fame.48*).

In line with woman's studies the female protagonists are struggling for the satisfaction in every area of life. When the female protagonists fell and experience the trouble in their relationship that is the tendency of that time.

An un-named female protagonist "She was away for two months at an artists' colony in New England and that is where she met Elis, whom she immediately dubbed, once she had got over thinking he resembled (with his top lip slightly raised over his right eyetooth when he smile) a wolf, "The Lover" (*The Lover 32*). 'She' meets a dude, Elis, during her study her stay at a writer's colony in New Hampshire. She decides that Elis will be her lover. She is not happy and satisfied with her married life. She especially likes the idea of having lots of lovers, really. Elis himself does not really enter into the equation but she wants.

When the narrator and Elis actually meet, it's clear that this will not be an equal match. Alice Walker shows the great issue of charming relationship between the female protagonist and her male partners by presenting the dissatisfactory relation between 'she' and her husband. Here the protagonist is bored with her male partner because she is a renowned prize winner female but her husband never appreciates, the reason of that she is not so interested and not emotionally attached with her husband and she searches the pure love from other. That is why she is into the idea of having a

lover and wants to go against the patriarchy for her satisfaction:

The female protagonist of *Fame* an un-named: she is very much in confusion that she is eligible or not for her success because of the pressure of male traditional patriarchy.

‘She’ is a prize-winning poet, while he is an unknown, who likes to complain about his lack of success. Elis is a total bore in conversation, and the female protagonist ‘she’ persists because she is in to the idea of having a lover and she has never had one before. It is very much important to the protagonist to have an affair since it will make her a truly modern woman. At least in her mind it will (*Fame.32*).

Tillie Olsen, argues that why the male are always being the criticizer rather supporter? They always want to make their female follower. They want to make them compel to stay under their control but female should not do so they have to cope and struggle for their dignified life (*I stand here ironing.26*).

In the story of *The Lover*, the female protagonist Andrea is in much tension that she is married woman but she is not attached from the inner heart with her husband.

“even the distraction caused by the birth of her child was a price she was, ultimately, prepared to pay, she did not intend to have a seemed one , after all that would be too stupid and this one would , before she knew it be grown up enough for boarding school. Relishing her short freedom during the summer as much as she contemplated enjoyment of her longer future one, she threw herself heading into interim relationship with Elis, a professional lover of mainly older women artists who come to the colony every year to work and play (*The lover.36*).”

Alice walker shows the female protagonists' views of motherhood: talking time to have a child is not big for her because the kid can be shipped off to boarding school

soon enough. And she is not "stupid enough" to have another child and she wants to make much more time in future for herself. That means it is important to quest for her.

Elis the lover has a gross view of 'she' a lady:

“He calls her "the dark woman" and lover her willingness to listened and unlike the ambitious white lady because they are the key to "good society" getting him into the right clubs and social events. Elis and she make love but she is again disappointed. But it does not matter , it only matter to her that she has a lover, she likes the excitement of being infatuated .after the female protagonist begins sending him passionate love letter, Elis back off but 'she' does not worry about that stuff. Work comes easily and she wins awards without much effort. Elis has got it wrong. She does not want his extra involvement in a relationship. She just wants him around as a channel for her passion: she loves being in love only (*The Lover.37*)”.

The female protagonist of *The Lover*, an un-named ‘she’ is now feeling relief for herself that "When he saw her again she had spent the weekend, which had been coming up in nearby Boston. She looked cheerful, happy and relaxed. From her letters to him, which he had thought embarrassingly self-revealing and erotic, thoughts flattering, of course, to him? He had assumed she was on two points of declaring her undying love and of wanting to run away with him. Instead, she had gone, so she said, by herself (*The lover.38*)". Alice walker makes and shows the female protagonists' self-dependency and she is now strong and self-esteemed females and can make her own decision. Elis wants to make her weak rather she becomes more vital and bold. Marry Wollstonecraft stresses that women should have the conscious of private life and must have the awareness of self to be a human (*The Vindication of Woman Right.89*).

The female protagonist of *'The Lover'* has had to endure all kinds of being conversations with self-absorbed poets. "Her husband had been rambling on about himself for over an hour and she had at first respectfully listened because she was the kind of person who adult behavior, in a situation like this reflected her childhood instruction: and she was instructed as a child, to be polite (*The Lover.32*). "Once again, she finds herself cornered by a pampas windbag at the writer's colony where she has gone to have some personal time away from family. She is willing to throw aside her hatred of windbags when she meets Elis, who also drones on about himself because he is going to help her fulfill her dream to taking a lover.

Where the walker's another story, *Fame*, depicts the miserable condition of protagonist. The story opens with the famed author and protagonist Andrea giving a television interview. She says that to be truly creative, you can't be famous (*Fame. 33*). The interviewer laughs it off: Andrea clement is famous. She is also an amazing writer. She made trillions of dollars. Her work has been translated into a dozen of languages. Clements's ego may be stroked here, but she is also hugely bored. She thinks that an interviewer has not asked her an interesting question in years. Andrea clement also wonders why, despite the interviewer's compliments. She does not really feel very famous (*Fame.54*). If she was famous, she wondered fretfully behind the alert face, she rose for television, why did not she feel famous? She had made money, as the young woman-lamentably informed in other respect had said. She had money thousands upon thousands dollars. She had seen her work accepted around the world, welcome even, which was more than she had ever dreamed possible for it. And yet there remained emptiness an ache, which told her she had not achieved what she had set out to achieve. Despite all the money and awards, Andrea clement feels empty, like she did not achieve the thing she really meant to achieve when she started out.

Andrea clement has a terrible time gauging her achievements based on the work of other famous writers. She just does not know about what league she belong in. "She would come across as a fatuous, smug know – everything, or as an irritable, spay old fool. Her chronic dissatisfaction was always captured by television, no matter how cleverly she tried to disguise it as, oh fatigue, too much to think about, doddering old age or whatever. Walker's female protagonist, an un-named 'she' is completely dissatisfied with the interview and with her life because she feels much suppression. She thought of Cooke, the dean, now retired of course , but unthinkable that he would not show up: how he had always been the first to kiss her whenever she returned from even the slightest triumph and how she had detected that kiss-his lips rough, cluttered and gluey and how he had told him, explicitly her feeling. "But ladies are meant to be kissed " he replied. The female protagonist, She had thrown up her hands and endured, or had voided him. Which because they had shared an office was not easy. Andrea clement remembers how much she hated being kissed by dean and how she feel today is very unpleasant.

Andrea is very much suppressed for being a woman, where the dean of the university is very negative towards female, being a sexist, dean is not liked. Andrea clement, know the interviewer would be awful, and the interviewer kind of was. While, she expects liberal interviewers to be ignorant of black history and writing. But no she had higher hopes here. She thought that perhaps the young black women would be better able to put clement work into context but no channel (*Fame.57*).

Because of the misconception of male dominant society, Andrea clement has the thought that she could be hideously ugly and they would still be fawning all over her. She would still be famous and a huge hit because the pressure of patriarchy make her stressful but she tackled with it. She still questions whether or not she is success.

There is something about her work and the life she has lived that makes her uneasy. Andrea is annoyed and disgusted with everyone in the room. She feels they are only fussing over her because of her fame. That makes her stab especially hard (*Fame.57*). Despite her husband's irritation, Andrea Clement doesn't skip a beat in her internal monologue. She thinks about her husband and about how he loved her to be an artist but not if it interfered with her duties as a wife and mother.

Alice Walker focuses the problem of female protagonist Andrea Clement just solves the problem "after her husband lost his money gambling and ran off with a woman who supplied him with ore she had supported herself. It shows the Clement life is troubled but she never gives up and tackled on Freedom had come and everyone had had about what it was for, even Ben. He had simply died. I was burying, of course. It was in fact, who dug the grave, along with. Then she wondered if she would have had to be a boy to help dig the grave. She saw herself as one. Handsome, was he? She thought probably yes (*Fame.59*). All of these, including any mean-spirited comments that she makes about the people around her, is excusable since Clement is so famous and she knows it. White people who, really don't care about Black people and who, have some awful racial beliefs. "Success was the best bone structure or the best cosmetic. But was she a success? She asked herself and herself answered, in a chorus, exasperated of course you are only a small voice near the black faltered. She stifled it (*Fame 60*). Alice Walker emphasizes that the woman with black color, is the example of a curse for the white patriarchy. However the black woman has getting victory on white American society which is remarkable (*The Color Purple.232*).

Here, the female protagonist of Walker, Andrea Clement know that she is famous in spite of these person not because they helped and supported her. "Bohemian Belle, he had called her. She had wanted to be bohemian: to write on the kitchen table perhaps: but not among her children's unwanted cereal bowls. Patchouli was as close as she got. Andrea clement has a deep sense of dissatisfaction about her life and work. Sure, she is famous, but feels like something is missing like; she did not do the thing she set out to do with her work. And this is key to her feelings, that she was forced into a role that she really did not dig like becoming a mother when she really wanted to pour energy into her art. "She was batting with her eyes. DON'T YOU DARE KISS ME! But he closed his frog like eyes, descended his head, his pendulous lips, and kissed the most prominent of her liver spots. Yuck so many yuck (*Fame*62).The female protagonist Andrea is imagining what will happen when she has to approach the president of her old college to receive her award. And all, if you are a woman, you probably know exactly what she is mentally preparing herself for: a hardly defense of her personal space. And it does not help that president Nasty kisser never did anything to encourage her work while she was part of the University. No wonder she wants to come out swinging. "She had seen her work accepted around the world, welcomed ever, which was more than she would over dream possible for it. And yet there remained and emptiness, no an ache, which told her she had not achieved what she had set out to achieve (*Fame*.57).

The female protagonist, Andrea clement may be accepting her 111th major awards, but she still feels like a fraud. On the outside, she is successful, but there are some personal goals she has not achieved. She also has to suffer fools in her role as a famous author, including fawning interviews and hypocritical former colleagues who

never wanted her to succeed but are willing to bask in her glow. "Her chronic dissatisfaction was always, captured by television, no matter how cleverly she tried to disguise it as, oh, fatigue, too much to think about, doddering old age or whatever (*Fame 56*)". Judith Butler focuses that females are controlled and limited by the patriarchy and the males are always dominant from the beginning of human history because of gender discrimination. Despite of their un-supportiveness even female struggle hard and beat their position in 1970s society (*Gender Trouble and Behavior.257*).

Alice walker's concerned on abortion. But, more so the failure of the protagonists' husband to participate essential discussion to their marriage. Imani, a well-educated black woman, and her husband Clarence have a two-year old child and a seemingly good life. Imani is felling a kind of suppression from her life and career, and also not satisfy with her marital life. She is just opponent with her husband's views towards the pregnancy. Imani, the protagonist of the story, feel an insecure from her marital life because of her husband's perspectives of life (*Abortion.59*).

The Walker female protagonists always suffered and stay struggling during the whole story. They feel a kind of suffocation but they never give up. "What am I taking about, "she said, as if she' she had been talking about it."Another child would kill me. I can't imagine life with two children. Having a child is good experience to have had, like graduate school .But if you have had one, you have had the experience and that's enough."(*The Abortion.65*)."Walker shows the very pathetic conditions off female protagonist here by presenting the troubled marital life and she makes the female protagonists strong and vital. Here Imani is very much concern about her body and

her health. She is in favor of her privacy and self. "Imani feel her body had been assaulted by these events and was, in fact, considerably weakened, and was also, in any case, Chronically anemic and run down. Still, if she had wanted the baby more than she did not want it, she would not have planned to abort it (*Abortion. 66*)." Here is a kind of violence is a rounding. Imani is in a bad place, physically and mentally in her life. At this point, she feels that it is either the baby life or her own and this is why she chooses the abortion. But aside from the shocks that her body has had to deal with in the last few years, there is the issue of desire. Does Imani want this child? Her answer is clear at this point, though her consideration of the violence done to her unborn child weighs more on her after the procedure is done.

In the story of *Abortion* there is the highly impact of the patriarchy of the 1970s American society. So the American writers have tried to evolve their own stream of feminism grounded in reality. They have their own concern, priorities as well as their own ways of dealing with the predicament of their women protagonists. "In fact, as she walked up the block, with its modern office building side by side with older, more elegant brown stones, she felt how close she was still to that earlier self. Still, not in control of her sensuality, and only through violence and with money for the flight, for the operation itself in control of her body (*Abortion.69*)."

As Imani goes for her second abortion she is disappointed in herself. She feels powerless because she is in this situation again, despite her experience and knowledge, Just like a teenager who does not really know how babies are made. She sees abortion as hard core violence, but something that can't be avoided in her situation. Her pregnancy threatens her stability in that moment which makes her feels even more out of control.

Here, Alice Walker shows the critical condition of female protagonist, Imani because she is treated as an object but the writer presents her as a victim in the story but she endures over the problems which is remarkable and appreciable. "But assembly lines don't stop because the product on them has a complaint. Her doctor whistled, and assumed her she was all right. And carried the procedure through to the horrific end. Imani fainted, some seconds before that (*Abortion* .69).

"Although abortion a legal procedure by the time Imani has her second one- and despite the fact that the facility is clean and welcoming. There is a kind of numbness to human suffering in the office. The lack of anesthesia is another assault on Imani's tired body, and it will be something that colors her response to the procedure in the weeks and years to come. And to her, every black girl of a certain vulnerable age was Holly Monroe was herself. Herself shot down aborted on the eve of becoming herself (*Abortion* .73)".

Bell Hooks insists that female are always in back side and stay panic because of male possessiveness upon female body which is very core line for the female protagonist of stories. But she also focuses that female body is completely the property of herself and the self-esteem of woman which is closely related to the Imani the protagonist of abortion (*Feminism Is for Everybody*.135). Imani finds that her connection to Holly Monroe has deepened after her second abortion, which takes place immediately before the annual memorial ceremony for the murdered girl. She is truly internalizing the loss of Holly's potential, seeing parallels in her own life. In part, Imani finds herself living a life that is fraudulent: She is not thriving as married person, as a mother. Stuffing herself into a conventional role has caused her heavy grief and given her a sense that she is lost herself.

"The white lawgivers attempted to get around assassination, which Imani considered extreme abortion, by saying the victim provoked it (there had been some difficulty saying this about Holly Monroe, but they had tried) but were anti-abortionist to man. Imani is thinking about the death of a young girl on the day she had graduated from high school. The response of the white community is victim, blaming at its most ludicrous. But, if you pay any attention to the news today you will see that this response is alive and well when violence is done to the black community.

The marriage however, is on uneasy ground because Clarence's focus has shifted from family to job. Busy as a key advisor to the mayor, he has not thought about this but Imani, now pregnant, has had time to reach this disturbing conclusion. She decides that unless Clarence will fight to save this child. She will abort the pregnancy when he fulfills her expectation, quickly acquiescing to her termination plans. Imani recognizes that the partnership is over. Abortion is always known to be an issue when procured out of marriage but this family carries its struggles to their home as Imani is tired of having more children since she needs to focus on her career. Imani is not willing to bear another child because he is not supporting her in handling family chorus. The story shows that despite her weakness due to hemorrhages, she goes out of her comfort zones and struggles to bathe her child. Alice walker is an award winning author, known for telling stories of human experiences in addressing issue of gender equality and social injustices. Thesis statement having an unwanted pregnancy is a fulfill experience, and the woman bears the greatest responsibility in making decisions on termination or giving birth. In defending this thesis statement according to the story, the writer gives is lot of pointers to show how the man is a passive

participant in this process. Clarence was dedicated to the mayor, and believes his success would mean security and advancement for all of them (*Fame.56*). This statement shows the egocentric nature of these men in Imani life. Clarence is preoccupied with his career advancement concerns to such an extent that he misses office duties with private life. Despite the writer, exposing him and responsible man, who work hard to fend for the family. This is not enough to keep a female satisfied and unite home. Their matrimonial bed "is king sized with a forbidding ridging in the middle (*The Lover.67*)." The mayor is just a depiction of the mean nature of men; he does not notice Imani's presence when they are in the dining table. He gives full concentration to Clarence not even having a quick glance at his wife when she makes a point. Gender defined roles is very brought to the fore since the mayor. On her abortion trip to New York, the mayor had scheduled a working with her husband. This is so insensitive since the man is supposed to provide emotional support to the partner during such dedicate times. Imani is very much suffered from her partner during their life but she never give up the situation.

In the United States, feminism has never emerged from the women who are most victimized by exist oppression, women who are daily beaten down. Mentally, physically and spiritually women, who are powerless to change their condition in life. They are the silent majority. A mark of the female protagonists' victimization is that they accept their lot in life without visible question, without organized protest, without collective anger or rage (*The Feminine Mystique.1*). Friedan concludes this first chapter by stating". We female can no longer ignore that voice within women that says: I want something more than my husband and my children and my house." that she defined as careers. She did not discuss who would be called in to take care of

the children and maintain the home if more women like herself were pried from their house labor and given equal access with white men to the professions.

It is urgent to understand how the very condition of being indentation female and hose wife only can create a sense of emptiness nonexistence, nothingness in women. There are aspects of the housewife role that make it almost impossible for a woman of adult intelligence to retain a sense of human identity, the firm care of self as "I" without which a human being, man or woman, is not truly alive. For women of ability, in America it is convincing that there is something about the house wife state itself that is dangerous (*Feminist Theory*.2). Women are lower class and poor groups. Particularly those who are non-white or black would not have defined women's liberation as women gaining social equality with men since they are not continually reminded in their everyday lives that all women do not share & common social status (*Feminist Theory*.18).

Bell Hooks evaluates that all men are the enemies of all black women and proposed as solution to this problem a utopian woman nation, separatist communities and even the subjugation or extermination of all men. Their anger may have been a catalyst it for individual laboratory resist stance and change. It may have encouraged bonding with other women to raise consciousness (*FeministTheory*.33).

The female protagonists, an un-named she, Andrea and Imani of story: *The Lover*, *Fame and Abortion*, of Alice Walker is worked face revision from a very young age, and it affect them profoundly. It is often the source of their in securities and fears, stopping them from becoming strong and in depended, keeping them in the chains of race, market forever by an element of their lives they are unable to change. She

portrays the effect of racial discrimination has on young African American women, and how it follows them into their old years, cooping them to feel insecure about their look and heritage. That is clearly why so many of them strive to get away from it, to run from their part and their addition. Hoping that, they will be able to blend in with the predominantly white society which still now, in the age of program, tends to look down on those that are different.

Just like Walker herself, many of her female characters come from the south. And grow up surrounded with struggles, prejudices and oppression. The issue that frequently starts in their childhood. In their school, and span over the period of their whole life. It hinders their whole life, love, career and settlement. Marginalized and unaccepted by the white people around them, black women have to learn how to struggle and stick together, not letting life bring them to their knees. In most cases it is difficult, since Walker often depicted characters that have been severely damaged by the racism and sexism they are forced to face. But the Walker's female protagonists never lose the eventually learn to survive, how to fight and stand up for themselves. Their route to liberation is a long and bumpy one, but they survive it and they go on because, in the end. They come out to be strong, Fearless and straight women.

Walker's works deal with misery of woman, a great concern on female tensions, toughness and tackle for the upgrading female life who often are protagonists of the literary work. This paper depicts, problematic characters 1st but they are struggle a lot for their achievements. But in the real life all three female protagonists faced the same two issues. They are black and they are women Because of these two facts purely. Fact that, they cannot in any way influence or change. Walker's female protagonists are severely oppressed and discriminated against patriarchy but they never give up.

Subsequently the main idea of their story lines is frequently the female protagonists' journey to emancipation and freedom. Alice Walker's famous story collection *You Can't Keep Up Good Women Down*, the female protagonists She, Imani and Andrea at the beginning of the stories oppressed, unappreciated and not taken importance through the story all the female protagonists come to terms with their own identity as an independent women and manages to fight all the obstacles that stand in the way of their freedom similarly. The characters in Walker's short story collection in *You Can't Keep a Good Women Down* undergo different difficulties and often face thought life changing decision of their race and gender. They are frequently depicted in contact with white women and men. Either their friend or enemies with additionally emphasizes the difficulty of their situation. Although faced with discrimination. Expect harassment and traumatic experiences such as rape and abortions Walker's female character rarely surrenders give up under the burden of their problems but rather fight and are ready to go as far as it takes in order to succeed and achieve their goals in life. This collection *You Can't Keep a Good Women Down* bring to light a range of black female character tormented by the issue of race gender and identity striving.

In Alice Walker's great variety of female characters where every one of them is carefully outlined and depicted in their environment the core problem story the same discriminations and mistreatment of women just because they are women and additionally because they carry the burden of the skin color they were born with. Of course discrimination comes in package with many other elements and traditions plays a huge role in black women's lives but that is exactly why Walker chooses to depict as much as she could in many different ways through or character she tells

stories of millions of African American women who are unable to speak for themselves or to do something about the troubles they are forced to go through because they are who they are.

The journey of Walker's characters through discrimination, abuse, and maltreatment is never an easy one. But when they are finally able to surpass all the obstacles that stand in their way, they get a chance to come to terms with their own identity. The women of Walker's stories often start off as confused, without a sense of belonging, somewhere or divided between two cultures, desperately wanting to escape from their tradition, which is marked by slavery and segregation. They seek new beginnings and fresh starts in the midst of modern culture and society, and that is rarely easy. [Walker does not choose southern black women to be her major protagonists only because she is one, but also I believe because she has discovered in the tradition and history they collectively experience and understand of oppression, which has elicited from them a willingness to reject convention and to hold to what is difficult (*The Race for Theory*, 132-133).] What is important is for them to understand that they are not obligated to leave go of their heritage in order to become emancipated free women. But should instead learn to accept it as a vital part of themselves and their identity. Many of them take this path towards self-discovery and self-understanding, but every time it is a completely unique personal experience. While some of them are living an identity that has been forced upon them by their families and culture, others are caught in the middle, torn between wanting to appreciate tradition and wanting to break free from it.

In the story of *Abortion*, the female protagonist, a beautiful young black girl, but those descriptors for her are not sufficient: she wants to be a part of the times,

Liberated in her sensuality. There is nothing particular wrong with her marriage or her life and she is not fighting back against any specific oppression. She just wants her life to be an adventure with lots of possibilities unfolding before her. Here "she is seeking her identity importance of being individual women and concern about herself that is very much vital part of the story (*Abortion.73*)".

Alice Walker shows the tough condition during 1970s American society from these three stories with the vital role of the female protagonists. She insists that the women should be equally conscious about their life, love career and all. She focuses that their color, race and gender are their significance and identity. "I and to her, every black girl of a certain vulnerable age was Holly Monroe. And an even deeper truth was that Holly Monroe was herself. Herself shot down aborted on the eve of becoming herself (*Abortion p 73*)."

In another story, *Abortion*, the female protagonist Imani is very much concerned about her identity stories. Imani finds that her connection to Holly Monroe has deepened after her second abortion. Which takes place, immediately before the annual memorial ceremony for the murdered girl. She's truly internalizing the loss of Holly's potential, seeing parallels in her own life. In part, Imani finds herself living a life that is fraudulent: she is not thriving as a married person, as a mother. Stifling herself into a conventional role has caused her heavy grief and given her a sense that she is lost herself. In another story, 'Fame' the female protagonist is struggling for her passionate life and career. Here, Andrea, has a deep sense of dissatisfaction about her life and work, sure, she is famous. But she feels like something is missing. Like she did not do the thing she set out to do with her work. And perhaps this is key to her feeling. That she was forced into a role that she really did not dig like becoming a mother when she really wanted to pour all her energy into her art (*Fame .55*)".

Identity plays a huge role in Walker's works, in the depiction of her female characters. Women who are oppressed and abused often feel lost and alone. Like they do not belong anywhere, and it's difficult for them to fight when they are not even sure of whom they really are. The concept of identity is it racial, ethnic, sexual or any other. Is a crucial part of its human being? It helps people from their goals, expresses their desires and needs, fit into their community, family or groups. Violence and submission stripe a person of their identity and leave them feeling worthless. But walker's characters learn to respect themselves and accept their past and their heritage, building their identity from there. More often than not, they are discouraged from their self-discovery by the people around them, all because of the idea that a women are usually identified through their husband or father. Growing up in these conditions, they come to believe that they are less worthy than the male figures in their lives and consequently are not able to go through life on their own.

Although they come a long way in their search for self, confidence and identity, Walker's characters also face obstacles throughout that process. Usually they have to cope with discouragement coming from their family members, Husbands and also other women. Humiliation and violence only become worse once the oppressor becomes aware of a woman's ability to rebel and, in an attempt to stop it. They will turn to all possible, ways of remaining in control. In Walker's *you can't keep a Good Women Down: The Lover, Fame and Abortion*, the female protagonists, finally gains the courage to stand up to their male partners.

The image of a black woman is here associated with someone valueless insignificant, incompetent, as is the case in many similar situations in Walker's other works. Just like black men are perceived as worthless by white people, women are in the same

way being dragged by their own race, even their own families. In spite of that these three female characters 'she' Imani and Andrea change this perception and turn it to their advantage. Oppressed and dehumanized female characters eventually accept who they are and more importantly who they can be. In this way, Alice walker shifts the identity of black woman into something that should be admired and appreciated. Her women become image of strength and self-respect, people worthy of admiration, more so because they have gone a long and painful way to achieve it.

Patriarchal society and severe oppression of women have led to the creation of ideas and misconceptions about what women should and should not do. As they were repressed and unappreciated-which all traces back to the times when women were denied education and basic human rights. The concept of women serving only for what nature enabled them of doing was created. They were thought of as useless for anything else except bearing children and taking care of their families and although that idea had started to slowly die when then finally became able to be educated and emancipated, it continued to live in areas like the American south were, and sometimes still are, unwillingly defined by what is thought to be theirs. Alice walker explored this topic profoundly, creating women who were marked by this misconception and were therefore stopped from succeeding or at least leading a normal life. Alice walker's female characters are often influenced by the society's ideas since their early childhood, and grow up thinking that they really are not in a position to become self-sufficient, independent women (*The Vindication of the Woman Rights*.583).

Through their whole childhood, it is sort of implied that one day they are to get married, have children and take good care of their families- no word about freedom, educational, self-realization. The belief that a women's fulfillment comes with

marriage and children as wrong as it is, is also considered normal, even logical and it leaves the women of these stories wanting more, yearning for freedom and different life. This reality is exactly what the protagonists of *The Lover Fame and Abortion* is trying to escape. Upon becoming a mother at a young age .she felt like she was unwilling living up to the standards of the African, American society and to idea that women were created only to be mothers and wives. She feels the wrongness of this idea on her own skin, as her marriage soon crumbles and she long to achieve more, to fight for some higher goals.

Patriarchal society is often the main source of oppression and unfairness in black women's lives. In a world where men have the last word and women are treated as inferior, it is only natural for their fear and insecurities to develop. The examples of the African American black woman, the one walker has used so many times in her literary work, shows all the consequences that patriarchy leaves in young black women as they grow and go on with their lives. From the very beginning, they are taught that men are the authority and that not subduing to their will cannot end well. As little girls, they have to obey and respect their fathers and are never equal to their brothers, and it only continues as they become older. The treatment they received as children is simply copied in to a new family, a new male authority, and the girl becomes an obedient, quiet wife controlled by her husband. In an environment like that, women can never have access to freedom because the whole society is working against them. And they also have no courage to fight because they essentially live in fear, because they know what could happen to those who dare to rebel.

In opposition to the stereotypes that society has created, walker shows how traditional gender roles can be disrupted once a women gathers the strength to rebel and fight for

herself. It comes as a conclusion to the whole process of liberation and understanding that gender roles are a mere creation of the patriarchal society and that the women are perfectly capable of doing all the things men are able to do. When they finally taste the freedom from the shackles of discrimination and repression, their whole view on life shifts and they can experience, what it mean to truly live, on your own, without depending on a man or anyone else. With that, stereotypical gender roles become flexible and variable, shifting drastically as a confirmation of equality.

The best example of role-reversal in walker's literary opus is you can't keep a good woman down, where the three stories: *The Lover*, *Fame* and *Abortion* the female protagonists of the story: An 'unnamed' she, Imani and Andrea roles have been reversed since the very beginning that refers to 'she'. Imani and Andrea neither of these characters bears the features of traditional woman. The female protagonists of these three stories, She, Imani and Andrea are the characters of the fighter are strong, straight forward women who are more likely to beat her husband and their male partners. They show an attitude which is a consequence of constant oppression, which they faced from the beginning of their lives.

All these three characters: of the story: *The Lover*, *Fame* and *Abortion*, they all are struggled for their life, love, career and selfhood. They all are very much tackled for their womanhood and want to gain proper settled life. They all are beating their male partners. That kind of reversal is, of course, frowned upon by other members of society who firmly believe that a man showed control and command his wife or he is not a real man. For that reason, But the male characters of the stories are very much dull and not female oriented. But that problem is eventually discarded as completely

unimportant. Furthermore, the character of 'she' is very strong through the whole story presented as a woman who is completely out of the ordinary. Serving as a role made for Andrea, a source of immense admiration, she is depicted as comporting more like a man than a woman. Freedom and independence with which female protagonists live her life gradually drive to understanding that in order to be liberated; they do not have to be weak women, but simply have to take their life, career and body into her own two hands. Looking up to these female protagonists 'she' Imani and Andrea as achieve their goal. They are as independent and content a woman should be.

Essentially, every woman who takes control of her life in an oppressive society such as the one of southern African Americans is perceived as having mainly male characteristics. According to the stereotypes, a woman's place is under a man, under his control, and as soon as one individual fight these "rules" the female protagonists of walker is no longer a woman at least not in the traditional sense. Equality, however arise from his reverse, from the complete annulment of the stereotypical roles, and equality is what these woman strive for. This kind of disrespect towards tradition, in a way is inevitably judged and criticized by the society, but walker's characters rise above it and do not let anything stop them on their way to happier, quality life.

From repressed, damaged women clutched under the burden of discrimination and society's rules, to emancipated, Fully-formed individuals, Alice walker presents the journeys of her characters towards a life in which nothing stops them from achieving their goals.

Although not all her characters live to reach it but the female protagonists of walker's stories: *The Lover*, *Fame* and *Abortion*, Stumble under the pressure of violence and sexism, and lose their lives but most of them grow into strong, independent women. It

indeed takes a lot of strength to endure everything they have to go through, all the humiliation and harassment, but their true strength comes to light once they are able to fight and struggles for their own satisfaction and happiness. Standing up to the world in the conditions these women is not easy, and walker patiently takes us through the psychological path of their liberation.

Racism, sexism and violence they leave deep scars, nearly impossible to heal, so the way to liberty is even harder and harder. In order to be freed, they have to learn how to accept themselves as damaged and as pained as they are, and only then will others accepts them too.

Female protagonists such as: 'she', Imani and Andrea, and all the different women from her short stories, undoubtedly show that achieving freedom from the oppression or is difficult. But not impossible. The process taken a lot of strength and sacrifice, but in the end it is all worth it, and the ones who succeed are certainly rewarded for their troubles. No human being should ever, be forced to go through that kind of struggle, however, discrimination of women is the cruel reality that was present in the past, and is still present today. Walker's portrayal of strong female characters confirms that, even in the most desperate times it is possible to find strength within oneself and use that strength to fight for one's rights.

The African American female protagonists are in oppressed condition from their love, life, and career and from their male partners and social patriarchal norms. In Alice, Walker's stories, *The Lover, Fame and Abortion* collected in *You Can't Keep a Good Woman Down*, the female protagonists of the story: 'she', Imani and Andrea suffers a lot in whole story. An unnamed female protagonist of the story 'she' suffers a lot because she is a victim of great dissatisfaction. 'She' searches the lover even then she is married and has child too. Despite of being married women she

shouldn't of to go to on favor of extra love affair but she challenges the patriarchal norms and society. And she unfolds this bad situation to modern one. Where the walker's another story, 'Fame' depicts the miserable condition of female protagonists. Here Andrea gets 111th major award for her fame but she never can feel a kind of wholeness and happiness. Here, Andrea is a married and prestigious female but the patriarchal society make her feel not to be so but she break this stereotypes and move on and never give up and finally peak to her success and aims. In another story 'Abortion' walker shows the troubled relationship between Imani and Clarence because Andrea feels a kind of slavery and burden in her life. She is also struggling for her selfhood, self-respect, self-esteem and self-realization. She is pressurized to be a mother again and for the abortion again which made her very much negative towards to male and patriarchy. Here in the story the female protagonists is very much concern about her body and her privacy. She beat the trouble and get success for herself and self-existence.

Thus, in these three stories; the Walker shows female troubled relationship, their emptiness, their dissatisfaction and passionless life and career during 1970's American society. How do the female protagonists can feel and experiences their married life, their career and their relationship as a woman. Do the Alice Walker's female protagonists are similar in their treatment with their relationship, career, marital life and with their male partners, Alice walker's these three stories, *The Lover, Fame and Abortion*, she was in the bitter condition, Troubled relationship and emptiness in female protagonists during 1970. Thus this research paper shows the women and the black women who were oppressed and dominated socially, physically and sexually and it tries to get freedom from the dominance. Most of the female protagonists look like slave in the story from beginning. But they want to redefine

their women hood. The main argument of the thesis paper is to overcome the sufferings of women and redefine the sense of self and self-realization.

So the female protagonists of Alice Walker are struggling to redefine their sense of self by questioning the traditional, gender and racial stereotypes. In these three stories; the female protagonists, one struggling for the passionate love. There is a relationship disrupted by pornography or one that complicated by dissatisfaction and misunderstanding, Alice walker's women have to fight hard for authentic love. Genuine friendships are also hard to come by in these stories. Manipulation also takes place in these three female protagonists' life. "Alice walker's discourse the stereotypes and racial injustices that fuel oppression, are taking about manipulation and grand socio-political scale, and it keep progress toward equality and harmony at a stands till. A super famous author can't accept her success because she is dissatisfied with herself. All the three female protagonists feel and suffer from violence.

In you can't keep & good woman down, Alice Walker shows how violence underpins pretty much everything in American society. Marriage is shattered by abortion. 'She', Imani and Andrea, feels a kind of great identity crisis during whole story and their life time for the female protagonists, the battle for their own identities takes many form, fighting against the porn and popular media: pushing back on the fears encouraged by racial violence and unrevealing stereotypes and reaching a higher level of self-awareness. Self-definition comes at a high price for some. But the struggle is worth it in the end. For Alice walker, living life as something other than who you genuinely are makes you a fraud. She does not want that fate for her female protagonists, even means that they act in challenging or unconventional ways. And that is the truth that walker's beautiful and talented protagonists like to think of taking lover as having "adventures" because they really want to be adventure adultery.

Whatever their situations were, the situation is not same; how do these female character faced reality and move on. All female protagonists feel the great injustice in the starting of the story but they tackled enough to resist against rude patriarchy. Poverty, racism, sexism, violence, ignorance; name the injustice, and Alice walker has covered it in you can't keep a good woman down but all these three female protagonists re-define and overcome on it, which is very remarkable. They break the legacy of slavery, violation, social isolation, and stereotypes.

In Alice walker's three stories that *The Lover, Fame and Abortion*, all these female protagonists; suffered and struggled a lot but gradually they know the significance of woman and their identity for the society. In you can't keep a good woman down, walker's characters feel and recognize about their ability to get people to listen, to get partner, to give up awful habits, to make themselves understand how powerful and talented they really are. In her stories, walker gives a glimpse of the real women of color face in the United States as they try to live their lives and find fulfillment.

Alice walker undoubtedly made a great contribution to African American literature, as well renowned feminist, who focuses on women and their lives. By depicting the pains and strengths of woman and black women. Alice walker managed to penetrate every aspects of their oppressions and various ways in which they are able to overcome it. The discrimination she wrote about can be found in all aspects of woman's life.

Black women face racial oppression already in their childhood, and it extends into the adult life, becoming even more intense and causing them to be insecure and unable to fulfill their potential. This is paired with sexism, which is a huge obstacle for women of all races, but is much more unbearable for African American women. Women,

since they also have to endure racism. Sexual discrimination often begins at home, at a very young age as seen in walker's work and is taken for granted. Women are viewed as objects who serve exclusively for the purpose of male pleasure while being taught that their own sexuality is something they should be ashamed of subsequent to that, they often have to suffer through domestic violence, sometimes even endure rape. There is a consequence of living in a male dominated patriarchal world where women are taught that their only purpose in life is to be a mother and a wife. It is a widely accepted fact, so much that women themselves believe it.

Just like 'she', Imani and Andrea in walker's stories: *The lover, Fame and Abortion*, bend to the will of their male partners. As a result, they are not happy and full-filled, and they are living in constant oppression. However, walker's female protagonists know how to fight for themselves, and she often portrays them as strong dependent women, or women who are at first victims of racism and sexism, but through the story evolve into fully formed characters who stand on their own two feet. Gender role and stereotypes are proved to be unimportant and the women of these stories find their own identity and learn to be strong and free despite the discrimination they are surrounded with.

Walker realistically portrayed the oppression and difficulties black women must cope with throughout their lives, and surely made those problems more understandable to the readers of her stories. Sometime brutally realistic and graphic in her depiction of women's struggles, she lays it all out for the reader, showing that a black women's life is indeed a tough one. But the main idea is that there is no space for giving up. Though sometimes stumbling under the difficulty of their situations, the women of her works mostly come out as emancipated and strong personalities setting an example for all those who find themselves in similar situations today.

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