

Hooks' Reading of Marginality in Alice Walker's Novels: *The Third Life of Grange Copland* and *Meridian*

Walker's Radical Notion of Black Women's Centralization by the Light of hooks' Reading

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Abstract

The paper is focused on bell hooks' (1952-) alternative reading of marginality as a liberal and challenging tool, in Walker(1942-) selected novels, to nurture the awareness of being in the margin within the body provides a typical position on these social and political entities. The study adopts a mix mode approach of analytical and qualitative discourse aiming to form speculations or facts that are derived from secondary sources. It tries to understand Walker's liberal treatment of marginality, in the selected novels, through the radical black feminism, and the feminist liberal lens of bell hooks. The study considered other related critics and scholars to help further illuminate the emancipative notion of marginality. The study is a library-based drawn on literary and critical books and articles. It clarifies the emancipative notion of hooks on Walker's feminist attitude of marginality as a privilege to enhance black women's growth and to strengthen the social bond to achieve revolutionary and transformative impact on society. Simultaneously, the study criticizes the Western oppressive authority as well as the traditional one-sided thinking of mainstream feminism which seldom comprise understanding of the lives of people who live in the margin. Marginality enlightens the Afro-American women's resistance against being outside the body and places them in a challenge to thrust to the center as a pivotal component of the whole. Therefore, this research is utilized by the light of hooks' emancipative notion of marginality utilizes a new reading of Walker's selected novels.

Keywords: *Black Feminism, Alice Walker, Bell Hooks, marginality, Meridian, The Color Purple*

1.1.Introduction

Marginality is the process of excluded or eliminated individuals or groups from the mainstream of society or political norms. Marginalized people often find themselves stuck between two different cultures. Robert Park defined this phenomenon as "cultural hybrid... the marginal man that the conflicting culture meet and fuse" (881). 'Marginality', for hooks, is the place that the oppressed people need to hold on as an agent of resistance. "Being different is not faulty, but rather it makes you more distinctive and unique. To be in the margin is to be part of the whole but outside the main body... There were laws to ensure our return. To not return was to risk being punished. Living as we did-on the edge-we developed a particular way of seeing reality. We looked both from the outside in and from the inside out. We focused our attention on the center as well as on the margin. We understood both" (*hooks Feminist ix*). Our survival depends on an ongoing public awareness of the distinction between margin and the center and an ongoing private acknowledgment that we are a necessary, vital part of that whole.

Gloria Jean Watkins is famous with her great-grandmother, bell Blair hooks (bell hooks), an Afro-American professor, a prolific writer of over thirty effective books about social activity, feminist, and intersectionality, Racism, sexuality, and patriarchy. Her main goal in writing is to put things together and make them meaningful to describe the perpetuation system of oppression, class domination and women struggle to disclose their free impression. one distinguished thing about bell hooks that is unlike most of the other writers, she does not like to capitalize her name's initial letter as much she wants to find herself in her works, ideas and

notions. In her book *Feminist Theory: from Margin to Center*, she reveals confinement of segregation system in black people's social life, the town where they live, railroad, roads and education institutions evoking of marginality, "Across those tracks were paved streets, stores we could not enter, restaurants we could not eat in, and people we could not look directly in the face. Across those tracks was a world we could work in as maids, as janitors, as prostitutes, as long as it was in a service capacity" (xi). In most of her books, she underlies the marginalized jeopardy that people face everywhere in the process of searching for an identity. However, black feminism establishes a fair debate to include all women to improve their conditions and to illuminate the hurdles that subjugate and marginalize them, it lacks the comprehensive vision and intention to address the issue of all women, besides it has little concerns about the effect of sexism on Afro-American women comparing with racism impact. According, discriminated women seem less enthusiastic to join or support this movement. The shallow treatment of mainstream feminist leads to birth black feminist as "a movement to end sexism, sexist exploitation, and oppression"(hooks *Feminism for Every* viii). It is initiated from convection to move beyond sexism and racism because gender oppression is commonly intertwined, to separate it will deny the identity of black women. Therefore, black feminism enthusiastically encourages everyone, whether female or male, to be free from the yokes imposed by sexism, subjugation, and violence.

hooks illustrates that Afro-Americans as being marginalized by domineering white culture, along with the most devastated "black male political leaders upheld patriarchal values...they encouraged black women to assume a more subservient role" (*AIN'T I* 4). Her notions encourage black women to repel against the endeavors of social power to coerce them in playing an inferior role that they should thrust to the center as a vigorous minority of a whole, and they have to be

proud of their unique identity. On the other hand, “Walker’s work exemplifies these fundamental influences within Black women’s intellectual traditions. Walker describes how her outsider-within location influenced her thinking: ‘I believe ... that it was from this period—from my solitary, lonely position, the position of an outcast that I began really to see people and things, really to notice relationships’”(Collins 12). Besides hooks further argues that being marginalized enables us to conceptualize things as “both from the outside in and from the inside out” (*Feminist* ix). Black feminism promotes its ongoing awareness to resist oppression and segregation. Central to living in the minority means refusing the intended position that the patriarchy wants you to be. She illustrates that Marginality should not be viewed as a token of depression, but fairly as spectacles of confrontation which is necessary for the oppressive authority. "We had always to return to the margin, to cross the tracks, to shacks to shacks and abandoned houses on the edge of town" (hooks *Feminist* xi). Preventing being totally insiders in any of these venues of discourse, Afro-Americans have a better angle to visualize the social, political and academic entities (Collins 12).

One of the issues, Walker’s *The Third Life of Grange Copland* and *Meridian* meant to disclose is the dilemma of Afro-American women's marginalization that habitually devaluates them as black and women. Patriarchal and imperialistic authority oppresses and terrorizes black women extra more compares with black men under a fake assumption that black women are superwomen. Lafontant Beauboeuf asserts that false stereotype is attached to black women, of being 'Superwomen', Jezebel' and Mammy (7), these claims are functioning in the mind of Western women and permitting them to ignore black women plights and in same time perpetuating black women’s victimization. Greene, Deric and Felicia Stewart further state "racism's embedded nature in social structures, as well as attitudes and beliefs, continues to put African-Americans back in

place" (118). Due to the intentional ignorance, hatred and mistreated black women cope with racist and sexist oppression, they grow helpless to change their life circumstances. However, the intended novels visualize the role of the marginality of black women as a probable venue of protesting and struggle. Black women employ many strategies of struggles, "the marginality that accompanies outsider-within status can be the source of both frustration and creativity"(Collins 268). Afro-American women subvert the enforced segregation strategy to coexist with the context of 'outside-within' as sources of awareness inquiry. Marginality enhances and strengthens the relationships among black women within their families and their society. By dealing with the idea of marginality, they must contend with the fact and rhetoric that identifies their racial and sexist separation within the abounding of progressively protesting connection.

Both Walker and hooks believe that the impression of women is neither a simple or naïve thing, nor all women face the same discrimination, besides it is not right to gather them in one category. hooks underlies the critical regionalism and its theories and politics of spatial culture as a way of thinking through issues of race and gender oppression in the United States and the globalized world. "the attempt to expose the commonalities between gender oppression and environmental destruction that is mainly a product of patriarchal dominance; and the praxis of combining feminism and ecological thought to work toward egalitarian, nonhierarchical structures" (Houten 3). Common oppression is a slogan, mainstream feminism calls for it and patriarchy promotes it for extra social and political oppression which is alienated many discriminated, working-class and non-white women. Utilitarian thinking assumes all women suffer from the same oppression that Western women cope and idealizes it as an exemplary case for discriminated and exploited women from different countries, authenticity, region, class. Such generalization is not only kept women separated

but also creates rage and hate among women from different background. Hooks asserts, “internalized racism, which may lead us to feel self-hate, to vent anger and rage at injustice at one another rather than at oppressive forces, to hurt and abuse one another, or to lead one ethnic group to make no effort to communicate with another”(Feminist 55). However, embracing our differences is the best solution for women to feel a sense of women’s solidarity, by understanding our cultures, exchanging our knowledge and skills, and gaining strength from our diversity. Besides, it will lead to exchange more experiences, offer a way of expanding political strategies through political, economic, social, and cultural lines.

Likewise, by drawing on walker’s technique in confronting the oppressive authority based on her protagonists' personal skills and potentiality and the surrounding environmental conditions. Therefore, her heroines is not only different from one another, but they are also different through the life stages of the same heroine. One may notice, in *The Third Life of Grange Copland*, even though Ruth has a safe and secure environment provided by her grandpa Grange Copland, sustaining her individuality and free perspective about her position in the center of her society. She decide to moves to the larger world, away from South, “Ruth's story offers considerable hope because she can leave the South, rejecting the racist world which destroys Brownfield and, in so doing, move toward a larger, freer world which offers her fresh possibilities”(Bulter 196). In *Meridian*, The case is different. Meridian’s, who the novel carries her name, however, her rebellious spirit is inspired by the essences of the new generation, attending with full protesting power to raise her collective voice against the imperialistic institution of racism and sexism, her deep conscious rooted in South cherishing her to be more appealing among her people. She returns to her hometown to join the “voice of millions who

could no longer speak” (Walker *Meridian*199). She stays in her small town encouraging black citizens to participate in elections and tries to educate them about the importance of voting.

1.2. Defending Marginality from Black Feminism Point of View

The capitalist patriarchy can gather the greatest worth by vitally constructed and commodified black people, "the development of the capitalist state is integrally related to the underdevelopment and oppression of Black America" (Njee 4). The landowners make black people work on the farm for little money and treat them as slaves. They suffer a lot and earn nothing, but endless debt and subjugation. The consequences of the evilness of sharecropping increase the plight and sadness of black people which puts extra pressure on the weakest circle of family, women, and children. It cripples any attempt of warmth and successful domestic bond among black families. White supremacy uses the extreme exploitation and consumption to exhaust the other for satisfying their fantasy and arrogance which ultimately perpetuates the pattern of domination. (hooks *Race and Representation* 18).

The intended novels are a product of feminist representation of black American history which can give a depiction and validity to contemporary female activists about black women circumstances from 1930 to 1980 in the last century. They are a genuine attempt to disclose black women's impression, oppression, insanities, faithfulness, and victory. Walker's *The Third Life of Grange Copland* is a story of two generations explores the relationship between the fathers and children, and how it happens the mistreated child recycles the violence towards his family. It explores that female characters are doom for doing what male characters do as an outlet of their masculinity. The consenting with the notion of masculinity attribution superiority makes women be judged and criticized for things men feel proud of them so that Women are easily condemned as 'tramps' and 'traitors' when they do what men used to do whereas men remain the virtuous heroes (John 197).

The limitation of womanhood vision “condition us to devalue our femaleness and to regard race as the only relevant label of identification”(hooks *AIN'T I 1*). Black women are structured to deny their rights in the perspective of the brutal and harsh reality of racism. However, the political awaking movements which flourished in the '70s, appeal for true freedom from all entailed violence that deprived them of their basic rights. The black activists introduce a liberal debate on social equity and economic enhancement. If any development takes place for women, they, in return, will benefit all people. Women with good historical background and social experience have the opportunity, like black women activists during the Civil War, they can place the emancipative notion and feminist awareness. Walker foreshadows this fact, in *The Third Life of Grange Copland*, through her main heroine Ruth “was amazed to see real blacks and whites marching together in her home town! ...Their signs were strange and striking, IAM AN AMERICAN TOO! said one. THIS IS MY COUNTRY TOO! said another. I WANT FREEDOM TOO! ” (254).

Both novels exhibit conventional heroines with a revolutionary plan and attitude, they gradually announce that sexism imposed rules do not suit them and they have to look for a better life. The female protagonists are depicted as courageous, independent and opinionated women who struggle racism and sexism oppressions to liberate themselves from cultural bias, misery, fear and underestimation by the patriarchal community. Black women's growing consciousness of wrong inflicted on them necessitates to find a definition of their needs and strategies for transformation and adopt a new vision for the future. Gerda Lerner in her book, *The creation of patriarchy*, rightly asserts:

In order to remedy this collective wrong, women organize in political, economic, and social life. This process also leads to new forms of woman's culture, forced upon women by the resistance they encounter, such as sex-segregated or separatist institutions

or modes of living. Based on such experiences, women begin to define their own demands and to develop theory. At a certain level, women make the shift from androcentricity, in which they have been schooled, to 'woman-centeredness'. (243)

Besides, relying on the richness of black history, women can initiate a fresh clarification within their fighting endeavor, guiding them to survival. It is very essential for protesting women to connect back with their roots, particularly when they live in manipulated degraded life meant to deflect them from their fair demands. They believe that they just like their fellow man have the right to live decently and decide whatever the best for them.

Walker's early two novels, *The Third Life of Grange Copland* (1970) and *Meridian* (1976), have written in time Walker, as one of the black American activists, is not fully satisfied in how feminism deals with Afro-American and working women. However, Walker comes with new term "Womanism" that calls for "survival and wholeness of entire people, male and female" (*Garden* xi), while hooks exclusively calls for radical feminism which is "a movement to end sexism, sexist exploitation, and oppression"(hooks *Feminism* viii). Their endeavors are eventually to enhance Afro-American women's conditions, by encouraging women to love and support each other in sorrow and happiness. Besides, they appreciate women's history, culture and accepting the other for what the other is without demands. hooks underlies certain pillars, such as genuine women's solidarity and centralization which the researcher finds, as a common notion used in Walker's writings too, as social context to allow black women reclaiming their freedom and identity.

1.3. The Impact of Racism and Sexism on Black Women's Life

The imperialistic patriarchy tries in any way possible to keep its vintage by destroying humanity, and especially the life of black people. Port, Hamilton, Henley & Pincus define racism

and sexism as an institution, “comparisons have been made in terms of the processes involved in racism and sexism themselves: processes of individual stereotyping and prejudice as well as of institutional discrimination” (Smith et al 1). The consequences of such a definition result in both black men and women being precluded from social, educational and economic institutions. The response to the discrimination and social segregation relates to the oppressed people’s physical and mental nature, such as black women grow more submissive and dependent, while black men become brutal and aggressive because they claim the position of over protection. Frances M. Beal asserts:

Black women somehow escaped this persecution and even contributed to this emasculation... black women in America justly be described as a ‘slave of a slave.’ By reducing the black man in America to such object oppression, the black woman had no protector and was used, and is still being used in some cases, as a scapegoat for the evils that this horrendous system has perpetrated on black men. Her physical image has been maliciously maligned; she has been sexually molested and abused by the white colonizer. (168)

The identification with the worthlessness role of black women allows for further domination. The secondary prototype entailed to them become acceptant fact, even from the majority of oppressed women, and any objective group tries to questioning the degraded position of black women seems to deny as offending the presumable norm and decorum. However, at the beginning of the last century, black women activists challenge their conceiving low position entails to them by educating other women about the effect of sexism on social status. “It attempts to further the dialogue about the nature of the black woman’s experience that began in 19th century America so as to move beyond racist and sexist assumptions about the nature of black

womanhood to arrive at the truth of our experience". (hooks *AINT I* 13). Hook advocates for embracing black feminism not as a lifestyle or a habit but rather as a social and political solidarity to "an examination of the impact of sexism on the black woman during slavery, the devaluation of black womanhood, black male sexism, racism within the recent feminist movement, and the black woman's involvement with feminism" (*AINT I* 13). Black women have moved against the systematic domination and exploitation that shape their oppressed identity. Therefore, women have to shape a collective mass struggle than the isolated appeal.

Walker brightly explores the sharecropping system in which Grange's family is completely destroyed by the social power of sexism and racism. Grange flees to North, leaving his wife, Margaret, alone and prey for internal doubt and external weakness and submission until she commits suicide. Brownfield's expanding plight traps him in moral emptiness and turns him to be a paragon of failure father in the future. Mem is agonized by racial exploitation of her society and domestic violence of her husband and negligence of her mother's figure; she falls in constant depression and eventually she is murdered with cold blood. "Black men are marginalized in society and are supposed to obey their white masters, they, in turn, impose these pressures on their family members" (Sedehi et al 968). However, away from the obscenity of the South, Grange is touched by the spiritual power of redemption that becomes the seed of narrative shifting toward nurturing the protesting struggle. Once the farm was a representative of oppression zoon, now it becomes the protection place for Ruth to live peacefully, under her Grandpa's custody, and to thrust to a larger world of freedom.

Meridian represents several negative prototypes of racial exploitations and absolute male domination. Meridian's story begins with a racial act when the imperialistic authority confiscates their family land, which belongs to her grandmother, Feather Mae, the Serpent Park. "When her

father went to the county courthouse with his deed, the officials said they could offer only token payment; that, and the warning to stay away from Sacred Serpent Park which, now that it belonged to the public, was of course not open to Colored"(54). Later when her marriage to Eddie is broken down, and he withdraws his responsibility and leaves a single mother, Meridian, and the baby facing their hardship alone, their house is bombed down by domineering authority. The accident becomes a shifting point in her life, motives her to join the civil rights movement as a volunteer. Due to her civil activity, she gets a scholarship from Saxon college. During her work, she meets a scholar and civil rights activist, Truman who turns to be a hypocrite and what he used to advocates in civil rights is only a slogan, in the nearest chance he left her alone with pregnancy and marries a white girl with better potential. Even those who reflect themselves as black race guardians and defendants of their virtues like the college professor Mr. Raymond. He is " Head of the Colored YMCA from 1919–1925; 2. An Elder in the Episcopalian Church; 3.The Masonic Temple's Man of the Year 1935–36" (*Meridian*112). He secretly abuses Meridian as much as the rigid authority does. Though the new venue reduces her comfort, it widens her awareness to serve her larger causes, through joining the civil rights movement; she determines to work for her society as a devoted feminist to survival and wholeness of complete oppressed people.

1.4. Intersectionality

Black feminism underlines the common identities of multifaceted violence black women cope as intersect deleterious framework in which authority power works to marginalize those who are labeled as minority or different. Intersectionality is a concept that attempts to identify how interconnecting systems of violence affects those who are most marginalized in society. The social system is affected by various pivots of social stratification, such as racism, sexism, sexuality classism and the interplay of these social identities. Although intersectionality as social and

political combination concepts of violence has significantly impacted black women since slave time, Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw, a black activist, and feminist, puts in a systematical context, she further argues that women have different identities and experiences to coexist with that fact has been in tension with dominant conceptions of social justice (1242). In other words, intersectionality illuminates the fact that oppressed women come from different authenticity and social background deal with multi- progressive discrimination so that it needs a new definition and understanding of such aggression which cannot be grasped separately.

Hooks draws her experience of intersection from her own life experience and the scope of her actual knowledge. She debates about the interlocking of the various concepts of class, race, and sex and asserts about the connection among them and how often simultaneously contributing to institutional social inequality. She firmly believes these concepts cannot be treated separately, but they should rather be realized as one-system effects and obliterates its victims, especially the Afro-American women, that reflect various types of violence and discrimination. Hooks advocates that eliminating patriarchy, which hooks calls "white supremacist capitalist patriarchy" (*Margin to Center* 59) for ending its social and domestic inequity against Afro-American women, only through understanding truly the intersection approach which improves women opportunity towards emancipation. Resisting one aspect of systematic oppression alone is nearly incompetent. When Western feminists declare that race is the major threat of all women's life, while in fact the colored and worker women beside the race they suffer other types of oppression which make them more exposed to the risk of discrimination. Splitting identities of oppression, and indeed the experiences that arise as a consequence of those identities is highly inapplicable. As Audre Lorde said, "there is nothing as a single-issue struggle because we do not live single-issue lives" (2).

Walker, as a black womanist and social activist, probes many aspects concerning black women's predicaments. The intended novels reveal explicitly that female characters have undergone through the intersectionality of race, gender, and class discrimination that have a crucial impact on their personal and social centralization. The plight of 'closest circle' of being black and women chases them in every bit of their life involvement. In her effort to make an outlet of such plight, her criticism is highly esteemed the regional identity along with gender one. The portrayal of the essential need to revive the values of the South dream, as a way of redefining the elimination practice that results in a restricted vision of South vision. Bulter further "Walker's sense of herself as both a black and a Southern writer, then, enables her to participate in a literary tradition containing a richness of vision which she finds missing in the mainstream of American literature" (194). Extolling the significance of region as fact can help people to regain their identity is a thematic treatment in many of Walker's literary works. However, Grange learns a very important lesson in the North that love and family is the real essence of happiness, returning to the South enable him to regain his identity by doing what it is right according to the logic of the story. Walker says "could for a more advantageous heritage than that bequeathed to the black writer in the South ... we must give voice to centuries not only of silent bitterness and hate but also of neighborly kindness and sustaining love" (The Black Writer 21).

Meridian during her civil rights serving, could not fit her benevolent personality with a highly materialistic and hypercritical world. It reveals through conversation with her friend Ann Merion while she asserts, "Her senior thesis was based on the notion that no one should be allowed to own more land than could be worked in"(119). The latter is unconsciously immersed in imperialistic thinking to the extent she acts just like her abuser, but with self-love [she] wanted blacks to have the same opportunity to make as much money as the richest white people" (120). On the other

hand, Meridian discovers the man, Truman, who used to love, is a fake. He is so obsessed with the idea of power and money, he breaks up with Meridian and marries the white Jewish girl, Lynne. Though he hates money and calls it cancer but he does not mind if he has some (Walker *Meridian*190). In time, Meridian attempts to enhance oppressed people's role, Truman and Ann Merion seek their self- empowerment. Accordingly, Meridian feels alienation which affects her mentally and physically. The logic scope of the novel explicitly reveals hooks' perspective that "if we remain unable to imagine a world where love can be recognized as unifying principle that can lead us to seek and use power wisely then we will remain wedded to culture of domination"(*Communion* 74). Meridian decides to dedicate her life to the downtrodden people of her race, she eventually finds peace and comfort after she returns to her town, in the South, by propping her town people to vote.

1.5. Sisterhood Enhancing Black Women Centralization

Black women from the viewpoint of hooks are "the group most victimized by sexist oppression. As with other forms of group oppression, sexism is perpetuated by institutions and social structures; by the individuals who dominate, exploit, or oppress"(*Feminist* 43). Collins draws on the difficult circumstances that black women experience make them marginalized and exploited by not only men, black and white, but also by fellow women (Medín Doce 9). Sisterhood is the passion and allegiance, women pledge for other women who have matured in common, "Unity or agreement of feeling or action, especially among individuals with a common interest; mutual support within a group" (Oxford Dictionary). Nura Yuval-Davis, in her article "Intersectionality and Feminist Politics" argues that "women's divisions come from different ethnic, political and ideological backgrounds, and such diversity can bring them together to be firm and self-articulated" (195). Many liberal movements try hard to present the concept of

sisterhood as a means to improve all women's conditions. It is one of the best ways to enhance the harmony of women. Afro American feminists use this term to explain the mutual burdens that the Afro-American women cope as being oppressed by the slave regime. Besides, it enhances the resistance strategies they can share as long as they are together, hooks positions sisterhood as a task of enduring and sharing of the responsibility, she states, "feminist sisterhood is rooted in the shared commitment to struggle against patriarchal injustice, Political solidarity between women always undermines sexism and sets the stage for the overthrow of patriarchy. Sisterhood could never have been possible across the boundaries of race and class if individual women had not been willing to divest of their power to dominate and exploit subordinated groups of women". (*Feminism for Everybody* 15). She shares a deep meditation about the roots of the power relationship between whites and blacks which emphasizes her understanding that color results in marginalization.

The radical and authentic sisterhood can be an effective solution for many oppressed women particularly when they "disengage themselves from the hostility, jealousy, and competition with one another that has kept [them] vulnerable, weak, and unable to envision new realities" (hooks *AIN'T I* 157). In other words, sisterhood is the tool that helps women maturing and strengthening up with the help, guide, and support of others. Women and men have to strife to get rid of the " myths, stereotypes, and false assumptions that deny the shared commonness of her human experience; that deny her capacity to experience the unity of all life; that deny her capacity to bridge gaps created by racism, sexism, or classism" (hooks *AIN'T I* 157). Change can occur when women bonding on bases of refusing all types of racist, classist, and sexist domination when women know how to look and accept each other and be in solidarity to escape off the zoon of undesirable socialization. On the contrary, agitating the lack of sisterhood in *The Third Life of*

Grange Copeland and *Meridian* allows Walker to highlight the critical role that sisterhood can play to maintain Afro-American women's identity. The deficient of sisterhood leads the main heroines, Margret, Mem, Josie and Miss Hill, Meridian's mother, to their ultimate annihilation. The excessive masculinity reduces women's existence as alternatives satisfying demands, "he [Grange] had assured her,[Margaret] because I trust you to bear and raise my sons; I love Josie because she can have no sons"(196). When he feels his vanity is transgressed, "his choice was either kill her or leave her. In the end, he had done both"(196). On the other hand, the novel shows the brightness of the black community when someone is blessed with a spiritual touch that makes him/ her able to evaluate what life can give them. "Grange stood, looking toward the bed. Lawd knows the *whole* business is somethin' of a miraculous event. Out of all kind of shit comes something clean, soft and sweet smellin"(85). Ruth is gifted enough to be reared between a good mother and a welfare grandfather who safeguards her purity and virtuousness, Ruth has a courageous and positive perspective about her life. Ruth is enthusiastic to everything can transform her community and give black people their right and freedom. "It seems to me that if women are going to change the world, they first have to change themselves and rise above that competitiveness, which we have been taught, and learn to be truly sisterly to each other" (*hooks Communion* 128).

Meridian initially finds herself constructed by culture bias and masculine customs. Her mother recommends her to hold of responsibility and breed her baby and accepts her social rules, later she feels alienated by civil rights' reckless rules which are stipulated someone has to be killed for the survival of others. Yet Meridian's nonviolent vision seems a central idea in Walker's writing. Paul Tewkesbury states, "integrationist philosophy may seem too idealistic a lens through which to view *Meridian*, for the novel focuses on the deterioration of interracial cooperation and

nonviolent protest during the late '1960s and early '1970s" (609). Her romantic relation is another hurdle giving her the feeling of self-dependent that she too much longs for. Then, she starts another task of self-affirmation. She realizes the new merits of her character rejecting every related traditional and religious aspect intended to place the woman in a cocoon and restricts her from doing her mission.

Otherwise, sisterhood is about the true solidarity of women to learn and be able to look after one another, and that consolidation should be constant in peace and hardship. Sisterhood has a genuine role in developing women's potential revolving about the awareness of self-acceptance and promoting their own attributes by building their self-respect, self-responsibility and self-assertiveness. Women have to regain their strength and override anything reduce their worth"(Branden 91). Feminism eventually comes, as a social and political movement, to criticize and adjust women's ugly sexist conduct toward each other. The notion of sisterhood is not initiated for false consolidation, verbal show off or unhealthy competition about men, but rather claims for the survival of the whole women and men.

1.5. Old Generation Pave the Road of Liberation's Journey

The history of nations is a very important aspect in creating people's profound perspective since a fruitful struggle cannot initiate improvised or counting on a short period of protesting. It needs an extensive process of agonizing the progressive of successive generations. Relying on the historical awareness of black women struggle, like Mary Church Terrell, Sojourner Truth, Anna Cooper, and Amanda Berry Smith who had gone through a long time of silent resistance and denial mindfulness of their status quo. In specific, their assertion goes to differentiate between female identity from that male's one, truth is made obvious, the authority gives the right of vote

to men and prevented women from such right (hook *AIN'T I 2*). Their awareness prompts to bilateral struggle for racial bias and sexual exploitation. Although black women have endured a gloomy and painful life through the passing generations, the undocumented history is rich with daring struggle and subversion against fearful and devastating difficulties. Holding the demands of the basic rights may cause alienation or death, yet they give women a sense of satisfaction and set them and ideal for the following generation.

Walker, as a civil liberalist, deepens our thought of the confinement and the possibility of black women's life. Despite Walker's old generation protagonists, like Grange Copland, Mem and Miss Hill, always suffer from violence, oppression, pain and rape, they professionally, and with simple tools, subvert and acknowledge abusing attitude is wrong and does not suit them. Anna Cooper states, "The majority of our women are not heroines—but I do not know that a majority of any race of women are heroines. It is enough for me to know that while in the eyes of the highest tribunal in America she was deemed no more than chattel, an irresponsible thing, a dull block, to be drawn hither or thither at the volition of an owner, the Afro-American woman maintained ideals of womanhood unashamed by any ever conceived" (202). Their subverted resistance, with exploited authority, consciously and unconsciously inspires the successive generations to confront and reclaim their rights. Though Mem's resistance towards her husband causes her tragic death, she illuminates Ruth's awareness of nonviolent resistance to be free and independent. "I think I believe like the students," Ruth declared, "Ain't nothing wrong with *trying* to change crackers [the oppressive authority]" (253). On the other hand, Miss Hill, in *Meridian*, silent resistance that, "creativity was in her, but it was refused expression. It was all deliberate. A war against those to whom she could not express her anger or shout, "It's not fair!"(49). *Meridian* learns the lesson of submission and decides not only to repeat her mother's fault but to revolt against it. The old years

of women struggle for their right paved the path to the next women to be proud of their identity, legacy and resistant tradition.

Meridian's profound connection with her segregated people allows her to reconcile her identity and starts her journey of self-realization. She joins between her rebirth rebellion, revolutionary personality and the rejuvenated principle of civil rights which promotes her to move forth. The novel illuminates the role of the cooperative and liberal society is maturing and supporting the heroines. Moving away from limited space of the conventional constrain of family and religion, to another one with chances of cultivation the essence of power and knowledge is a way that Meridian purses to shape her new image the way she wants, not as a preconceived by patriarchal norms. She boldly defies, the traditional confinement term of 'woman's place'. The novel is a black feminist endeavor used critically and analytically to shake the entail beliefs of black women's limitations by reflecting their sophisticated identity. After a long journey of self-maturation, Meridian discovers a new image of herself. She is no longer feels guilty of being black women, but rather it becomes a source of motivation and inspiration through claiming the positive position of the black women's history and tradition. She decides to returns back to her town and starts educating the people there about their rights, at the same time being with her people is to strengthen her spirit to go forth in juiciest demands.

1.6. Marginality as Venue of Distraction and Awareness

Walker's novels are an explicit attack on patriarchal domination within the black community. Despite, the diversity of her female protagonists, they share a common feature, "Usually referring to outrageous, audacious, courageous or willful behavior. Wanting to know more and in greater depth than is considered 'good for one.' Interested in grown-up doings. Acting grew up. Being

grown up. Interchangeable with another black folk expression: You trying to be grown." Responsible. In charge, serious". (Walker *Garden II*). They act in high responsibility and oppose the given norms with radical accountability as far as their function concerns. They reject the cultural and religious intuition, which subjugates and inferior black women. In *The Third Life of Grange Copland*, Margaret does not see any progression that can take place in her life, as Walker describes her, "she had grown restless about her own life, a life that was as predictably unexciting as last year's cotton field" (29). That is why Margaret suggests traveling up north or any place else where they can enjoy a decent share of surviving, "no incentives to improve their lot of life; the harder and longer they worked and the greater their output, the less their reward" (Quarles 246). She does not want anyone to go through her misery as she wishes that the orphan children "when they does grow up I hope they has sense enough to git away from round here" (39), since living in a hostel, masculine and patriarchy environment can not in any way sustains identity or self-worth. Mem, as an educated woman, learns for sure that there is no life in this place and delivers it clearly to her husband, "I just done got sick and tired of being dragged around from dump to dump, traded off by white folks like I'm a piece of machinery... We might be poor and black, but we ain't dumb. There was a pause, 'At least I ain't," (101). Though the family moves away from the exploited focus, the negative and passive role of Brownfield, whose personality is established within the masculine domineering norm, reinforces the fact that when black men perpetuate uncooperative conduct, it will be so difficult for women to reclaim their identity.

The case is different from Ruth's. She represents the advanced aspect of walker dramatic maturation and the mirror by which Grange interprets his moderate and liberal behavior after a self- assertive journey. Walker through Ruth's character puts forth the fact that familial and communal mobility is an essential part of creating black women's identity and self- worth. Walker

has revealed that a woman's self-realization and awareness come with the right social notion given to the individual by his/her family and society. Hasanthi argues that individual becomes more appalling in the right social circle, "social mobility is a treasured commodity for blacks in a hostile white-run world, where mobility within the black community itself is made a rarity by a white-run world"(107). Ruth's struggle against the perpetuated ideologies would not exist without Grange's fatherly solidarity, guardian and support," Survival was not everything. He had survived. But to survive whole was what he wanted for Ruth" (Third 235). Both, Ruth and her grandpa, grow more confined in social and political mobility since they have changed from inside. However, Grange still does not believe in political confrontation, not because it is not worth it, but because it is difficult or impossible to accomplish, from the old generation's point of view, yet "he felt a deep tenderness for the young couple. He felt about them as he felt about Dr. King; that if they'd just stay with him on his farm he'd shoot the first cracker [oppressive authority's member] that tried to bother them"(262). Walker advocates that the liberal struggle makes new generations realizing their valuable existence in this country with full citizenship rights.

Conclusion

The research utilizes a new reading to the role of Marginality in supporting and growing the revolutionary process of the novels' chosen heroines that being banned from the full inside gives them a distinctive opportunity to be outside within the main body of social and political concern given the better position of enlightenment feminist identity (Collins 12). The paper draws on the ideal use of certain emancipative notions found by black feminists and prompted by bell hooks to flip the coin and found a radical reading helps oppressed women to be free. Black feminism promotes black women's awareness to resist oppression and segregation, central to living in the minority means refusing the intended position that the patriarchy wants you to be. The new

reading of marginality does not rely on the shallow or reckless solidarity, but instead on a genuine sisterhood, sharing commitment and the awareness to resist oppression and segregation. Through mothers and grandmothers suffers and challenges, they prepare the ground for a new generation of women to come forth and show their benevolence. Their belief in the transformation can come from a strong connection of their root in the past and their awareness of seeking love and self-reconciliation as effective tools for survival. Discussing the term of intersectionality that 'sexism is not less harmful than racism' and their interlocking system creates a difficult mode of discrimination. The first place of change depends on a mature discussion of gender equality across ethnicity, gender, race and social position which is free from patriarchal imposed thoughts and customs as the best endeavor for male and female's personal and social growth.

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