

Nobody's as Powerful as We Make Them Out to Be: A Psychopolitical Reading of *The Third Life of Grange Copeland*

Shahram R. Sistani¹

¹ Department of Foreign Languages, Bahonar University of Kerman, Kerman, Iran

Correspondence: Shahram R. Sistani, Department of Foreign Languages, Bahonar University of Kerman, 22 Bahman Blvd, Pazhoohesh Sq., Kerman, Iran. Tel: 98-913-148-0360. E-mail: shahramsistani@gmail.com

Received: January 29, 2016 Accepted: February 22, 2016 Online Published: April 28, 2016

doi:10.5539/ells.v6n2p36 URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.5539/ells.v6n2p36>

Abstract

Alice Walker's most prestigious novel *The Third Life of Grange Copeland* captures the critical aspects of colonial period. It depicts deconstruction of identity and interrogates the economic, political, and cultural basis of colonial period. The aim of this study is to use psychoanalytic concepts and ideas of Frantz Fanon to scrutinize the workings of power. How Walker investigates the pernicious workings of power, oppression, and class? To illustrate this, the paper relies upon Fanonian understanding of colonial racism. Fanon's investigation of the psychic life of the colonial power is a helpful vehicle for unraveling varied ways that characters use to form subjectivity and individuation. How does the society form Grange's struggle for individuation? The identity of Grange is under scrutiny in the light of key concepts of psychoanalytic criticism. He captures the strategies of resistance, negotiation, and return to the south to reach the individuation. The dialectic of the society and the citizens are an integral part of this study to see how Grange's consciousness is shaped within a racist structure of power. Arguably, confronting with a racist ideology can drive the slaves to madness by persistent inculcation of considering black psyche as inferior.

Keywords: desire, collective catharsis, consciousness, individuation, power

1. Introduction

Many theorist and novelists have depicted the psychological impacts of colonial power upon the masses. Among these Alice Walker is a prominent name. Walker in her novels is obsessed with the suffering of male and female people simultaneously. The dominant theme in *The Third Life of Grange Copeland* is the working of power. It portrays the fractured psyche of Grange in an inimical atmosphere. Characters in the novel are in search of acquiring insight into their own character. Their self-discovery works out their obligations towards society and family. Their white dominated world thwarts any yearn for cultural and self-assertions. The title of the novel informs the reader about Grange's process of individuation. In this process, Walker delineates the emotional relationship between parents and their children as well. Each character acquires his/her strategies for coming to terms with the power. The situations of women are the worst one because they are double colonized because of race and gender. They are subjugated by the whites and their own men at the same time. The lives of three significant women are depicted in conjunction with Grange's journey to the North, his return to the Georgia, and to the self-scrutiny. Margaret, Josie, & Mem intensify Grange's desire for self-definition. As a whole, Grange's life indicates other characters' strong predilection for freedom and deals with the power.

Nonetheless, there are lots of differences between Grange, the violent and abuser who is unable of extending his love to the family of the first life, and Grange of the third life who is a self-realized man and achieves redemption. His third life is a safe haven where he acquires peace and meaning of life. However, before the paper proceed with this line of question, that is, a Fanonian interpretation, it is needed to consider briefly at the reception the novel has received since its publication.

2. Literature Review

Critics have provided lots of reasons for Grange's ill treatment of the family. In his first life Grange is depicted as a hopeless and degraded person. Walker depicts a brilliant portrait of Grange's experiences from the beginning of the novel through the three lives of him. T. K. Santhi (2012) says,

The three lives of Grange Copeland represent the phases of growth that everyone experiences within their lifetimes. For Grange, the key to entrance into the next life is found by gaining knowledge and confide himself. Each life marks Grange as wiser, calmer, and more accepting of the world around him, a man able to face his fears, understand his prejudices, and admit his wrong doings. Each life marks a period of growth in Grange, as if each is working towards the goal of making the final result of him a man. (p. 19)

Santhi in his paper studies the relationship between struggle and change and gives a thematic analysis of the novel. From his point of view, “Walker effectively explains how individuals and the communities make meaning out of their lives. The possibility of reclaiming one’s agency, autonomy, and decision-making power is possible, when the victim is determined” (p. 19). Susan Norton (1991) looks attentively at the formation of the family in Walker & Morrison’s novels. From her view point, family has to be studied in relation to the history. “Family is historicised in Walker’s and Morrison’s work; it is shown to be very much the product of historical circumstance, and then judged in relative terms only” (p. 1). She believes that the constitution of the family as it is depicted in the novels of Walker & Morrison is the outcome of the current socio-historical condition as well as the historical power structures such as slavery. Some critics also studied the violence in this novel. Among them F. A. Primasita (2010) looks for cause of domestic violence in black relationships. In her opinion the main reason is male characters’ “powerlessness,” “ineffectiveness”. In the meantime, “Any challenge, any question from his partner can be interpreted as yet another attempt to break their already insecure and fragile sense of self” (p. 1). She concludes that Walker’s novel can be viewed as a lesson as it is learned by Grange in his third life that violence cannot solve the problem of racism.

Butler-Evans (1989) in “History and Genealogy in Alice Walker’s *The Third Life of Grange Copeland*” examines the issues of culture and racism. She finds a relation between female character’s point of view and discourse of the power in the novel. “What one encounters in Walker’s early works in particular is an inscription of that (male-centered) discourse, but one that is persistently challenged by a feminine counter discourse” (p. 107). From her view point such a kind of perspectives empowers women in a male structured society and enables them in their search for self-identity. The other critic Peter Erickson (1979) also pays attention to the matter of changing point of view in the novel. He asserts that “the point of view is evenly distributed among Brownfield, Ruth, and Grange” (p. 12). Some critics also turned their focus upon the role of female characters in the novel. For instance, Ruth D. Weston (1987) looks into the world of female characters as women who confronted with the issue of sexism. In Weston’s view point women are depicted as the sufferers of “black man’s search for self-worth” (p. 154).

3. Methodology

Frantz Fanon who was one of the prime investigators of the relationship between colonizers and colonized looks into the dormant desires of colonized strong predilections for freedom. He discusses that this desire is the result of power which subjugates the Negro. From Fanon’s view point this is because of black’s desire for assuming a white personality, “The black man wants to be white” (1967, p. 3). Derek Hook substantiates this point, “Fanon points out that such ‘pathologies of affect’, even once ‘wired through’ the sexual realms, through unconscious processes, are ultimately derived from inequalities present in wider social structures and cannot as such be reduced to the internal psychological workings of individual subjects” (2004, p. 116).

This predilection in the extreme is an emotional disorder. Grange’s personality manifests it’s emotions in a condition that he is not able to satisfy its needs or curbs them. Such neuroses cause different unreasonable behaviors. A Neurosis is generally a disorder in personality of an individual based on the person is not able to balance between his wish and the reality principle. Fanon in his *Black Skin White Masks* expresses that black and white relation has caused the neurosis of blackness and an inferiority complex which is, “the outcome of a double process: primarily, economic; subsequently, the internalization-or better, the epidermalization-of this inferiority” (1976, p. 4). Fanon then psychoanalyze different attitudes a Negro generally adopts towards the power structure. Each society has different channels through which citizens are able to come to term with psychological complexes and neuroses and finally get rid of them even though for a short time. Such a kind of channel is called Collective Catharsis. The neuroses are rooted in childhood and have sometimes cultural reasons. “The collective unconscious is not dependent on cerebral heredity; it is the result of what I shall call the unreflected imposition of a culture” (1976, p. 147).

Fanon in both of his seminal works, *The Wretched of the Earth* and *Black Skin White Masks* investigates the impacts of colonialism on both colonized and colonizer. The promulgation of blackness as an evil and not human ideology has devastated the very psyche of the colonized. In Pramood K. Nayar (2013) term,

Fanon argues that for the native the term *man* itself begins to mean *white man* because he does not see

himself as a man at all. In terms of culture, the native extends this accepted notion to believe that the only values that matter are those of the white man.

For the white man, the native is always the negative, primitive other: the very opposite of what he and his culture stand for. Fanon here develops a psychoanalytic theory of colonialism where he suggests that the European self develops in its relation and encounter with the Other (the native). Thus, colonialism engages the white and the native in an encounter/relation where one develops only in its contrast with the Other. (p. 157)

The confrontation of a subject with the reality of his own society engulfs ambivalent reactions such as hate and love. Hook (2004) utters,

Powerful emotional reactions typically *contain*-even if at a predominantly unconscious level-what would seem to be their *emotional opposites*. Thus, powerful currents of love, for psychoanalysis, also contain elements of hate, just as responses of fear contain also within them elements of attraction (p. 121).

This paper tries to investigate the how and why's of Grange's ambivalent relationship specifically with the family and generally with the society. The sense of subjective insecurity of the characters will be studied to unravel their paranoid anxieties that cause their irrational reactions. Fanon is a major critic of race studies. His understanding of racism provides a way of explaining Grange's embracing of whiteness and transposing it onto his own psyche. It will be argued that why Grange does not feel guilty for and responsible for his ill treatment of the family? Fanon's critical psychology will pave the way for understanding sociopolitical dimension of Grange's resurgence against the force of sharecropping system. It is the objective of this study to scrutinize discourse of the power, to understand them better.

4. Discussion

Walker in her novel *The Third Life of Grange Copland* is concerned with black individual's dream for an identity. The significance of these dreams is for the reason that they are situated in a world dominated by whites and their cultural values. Therefore, these dreams and desires should be investigated in their concerned context. They can be cultural, sexual, and political. Attempting these dreams will pave the way for understanding the working of power in its related context.

In *The Third Life* the reader is introduced to a traumatized family. Not only are the parents affected but also the entire of the family. These suffering hamper their progress for self-definition. Anyway, some characters may resolve this problem in a way or another. Here the question is not with reaching to the destination but the way to destination matters for investigation. This way to destination is a painful way for the reason that it is augmented by lack of an encouraging relationship between the people either in their society or even in the family.

Walker in the light of Grange's characterization explores how a fractured psyche functions under the white supremacy. Such a kind of devastating effects can be traced in the life of not only the protagonist but also in the lives of all characters. Their damaged psyches can be investigated by the help of Fanon's ideas in the context of colonial encounter. Fanon in *Black Skin White Masks* investigates the encounter between white and black people to psychoanalyze the racial injustice relationship. Understanding the context is crucial because in the novel both white and black considers themselves as white. Characters' psyches manifest themselves in various ways such as psychosis, destructiveness, and sanity. Grange is under the thrust of prejudiced sharecropping systems in search of self-definition while considers himself as a white. His desires and dreams motivate his personality as a colonized. To justify this it should be found that what actually Grange and some other black characters want? Grange's desire reminds Fanon's question, "What does the black want?" (1967, p. 1). The answer to this question will be simple if we consider Grange's situation in his community. In his community whites have everything while based on sharecropping system people like Grange and his family has nothing. Grange's life is spoiled by the system which is an outcome of slavery. He and his family are dominated by the whites that's why their lives become debilitating. His suffering is augmented by their residence conditions, "Brownfield turned from watching the road and looked with hateful scrutiny at the house they lived in. It was a cabin of two rooms with a brick chimney at the end. The roof was of rotting gray wood shingles, the sides of the house were gray vertical slabs; the whole aspect of the house was gray" (1970, p. 17).

The conflict between Grange and his son Brownfield is a direct outcome of Grange's assimilation of whiteness. Brownfield is the most affected by Grange's betrayal. He is also frightened to death by the white man who had a petrifying impact upon his father. He is not able to understand the reason behind his father's silence that was itself a sort of protest against the sharecropping system. In point of fact, Grange in his confrontation with his boss has been turned into something, "that might as well have been a pebble or a post or a piece of dirt, except

for the sharp bitter odor of something whose source forcibly contained in flesh” (1970, p. 9).

Grange’s condition in his first life is quite like a trapped person. He is torn by persistently painful feeling of guilt. He is neither able to save his wife from the harassment of his owner nor to provide a better life for his son. Being under a severe degrading condition he turns into an introvert kind of personality. He even becomes alienated from himself as well and undergoes through three lives. The first one he experiences in the South mostly characterized by his illiteracy. This period is characterized by ignorance and poverty. He is an outcome of sharecropping and biased system. He undergoes great mental and physical anguish through worrying over the miserable life of his family. As a matter of fact, he suffers from his own inability to provide whatever he is expected. From the outset of the novel the reader can see the extent of racism he and his community are subjected. In such a kind of situation there is no even a gleam of hope for a better future.

In the novel white citizen has everything and in contrast subjects like Grange & Brownfield have nothing even their blackness is not theirs. Thus, Grange’s desire to be white is an outcome of the implementation of sharecropping system and, “configuration of power, of real material, economic, cultural and sociopolitical conditions that continually celebrate and empower the white subject and continually denigrate and dispossess the black man or woman” (Hook, 2004, p. 116). From Fanon’s view point, in every angle of black subject’s psyche this dream of being white can be traced. Grange and his family’s life are dominated by whites and sharecropping system makes their life very weak and infirm. Their house is depicted as a place of great suffering instead of a loving home. Grange’s psychological and physical suffrage has been increased by his residence condition. Grange was, “thirty-five but seemed much older. His face and eyes had a dispassionate vacancy and sadness, as if a great fire had been extinguished within him and was just recently missed. He seemed devoid of any emotion, while Brownfield watched him” (1970, p. 17). His situation clearly depicts the position of him in a white dominated society. His slavery is the scene in which Grange confronts with his owner Mr. Shipley. This confrontation highlights his situation even more. The humiliation he received in the hands of people like Mr. Shipley with regard to his wife Margaret exacerbates his mental anguish. As a matter of fact, Grange’s condition is a result of real sharecropping configuration of power. His appalling life condition constantly empowers his owner and dispossesses the people like him.

It is in such condition that he dreams of North and seek refuge in the arms of other ladies to satisfy his desire for a white sexual partner. He abandons his family for finding a refuge in New York. From this moment onwards his second life starts that in the real sense is beginning of different types of brutality. Even Margaret’s act of sleeping with her owner can be justified in the light of this dream of to be white. Their works obviously alludes to the title of fanon’s work *Black Skin and White Masks*. In point of fact, owners of the land and those in charge dehumanized blacks. The white owner represented himself as desired object. So for a subject like Grange the term man mean white man. In his first life he does not know himself as a man at all. The only value that matters belongs to whites. He takes on his white desires by implementing them on the family. Hook explains Fanon’s understanding of this wish, “Fanon points out that such ‘pathologies of affect’, even once ‘wired through’ the sexual realms, through unconscious processes, are *ultimately derived from inequalities present in wider social structures* and cannot as such be reduced to the internal psychological workings of individual subjects” (2004, p. 116). Grange faces a life of sharecropping. Absence of hope in this life drives him to drinking and beating his wife. He vented his fury and disappointment to the family. Such strong predilection has turned into neuroses. His personality is torn because of instinctual wish for attaining white quality of life and the need to repress it. He goes to the north for satisfying this dream of attaining level of humanity. A look to childhood history of Grange shows that his wishes have a close connection with some psychic trauma. He has experienced all these traumas in his day to day life and in the humiliation he received in the hands of white subjects. In his trip to New York he has fantasized the world of white. Many cultural forms in the society are responsible for this impression. His society is characterized by sharecropping system, violence, and dehumanizing blacks. These elements in reality act as a cause of trauma. From the early childhood Grange has been in contact with the racist values of a sharecropping system.

It is possible to find social inequalities at the bottom of Grange’s neurotic behavior. Social discriminations which are promulgated by, “a series of propositions that slowly ... with the help of books, newspapers, schools and their texts, advertisements, films, radio-work their way into one’s mind” (*Black Skin*, p. 152). Trudier Harris (1975) substantiate the point in this way, “because [Grange] is powerless against his oppressors he turn to exert his power in the one place he is presumably dominant, that is, his home” (p. 239). Grange isolates himself from the family step by step due to the severe effects of biased system and its brutality. In the real sense of the term, his suffering originates from his incapability in performing the role which is expected a man like him to do in the power system. He is unable to provide prosperity for the family, that’s why he vents his disappointment on his

wife and the rest of the family. Venessa C. White (1983) explains this, "Since the etiquette of southern race relations would prevent him from venting his pent-up hostilities on whites, he brutalizes instead those close to him: Margaret & Brownfield, his wife and son, and Fat Josie, his long-time lover" (p. 95). Grange's weekly visits to prostitutes Josie & Loraine can be considered as a form of collective catharsis. These are channels through which he vents his aggression outward. His ill treatment of Margaret is so far that drives her into sleeping with other men specifically with Shipley.

Implementing violence never reduces a crime but increases it. Fanon believes that racism always breeds racism and racial violence. Grange's violence toward the people around him in psychoanalytic terms are sorts of a symptom that, "is an irrational action which is a compromise between the need to express a repressed wish and need to keep this wish repressed" (Hook, 2004, p. 120). In his imagination, a journey to the North can satisfy some of dormant symptoms. Nevertheless, he confronted with new types of racism in the North. People in the North are also indifferent towards his hardships. His severe impoverishment in New York drives him again to violence this time to rubbing people. This journey gives him an insight into the depth of racism. "He had found that wherever he went whites were in control; they ruled New York as they did Georgia; Harlem as they did Poontang Street" (1970, p. 141). His confrontation with this day to day reality faces him the corrupt colonial power that makes more clear his social inferiority. Fanon believes that it leads to an ambivalent relationship between individual's psyche and the society. In psychoanalytic terms, it causes internalization of the reality and incurs felling of fear and turns into a subjective insecurity.

Grange's hesitation in helping a drowning white woman in a pond in Central Park of New York is a good reason for irrational reaction in him. He refuses his hand for the reason of being called a nigger. He is humiliated by being called a nigger even by a lady who is in dire needs of assistance. It clarifies that Grange's reaction is influenced by fear, hatred, as well as paranoid anxiety. His uncovered reactions exemplify some aspects of sexuality in the form of phobia. As a matter of fact, he withdraws his hand from a drowning lady as he did the same with his own son. Calling Grange as a Negro by a white woman, emphasizes this idea of Fanon that in a colonial system of power a black symbolizes a terrible figure. "In America, Negroes are segregated. In South America, Negroes are whipped in the streets, and Negro strikers are cut down by machine-guns. In West Africa, the Negro is an animal" (1970, p. 85).

The third life of Grange starts the moment, which he recognizes he is looked not like a human. Accordingly, he considers whites responsible for all the problems they face. He talks to Brownfield.

By George, I *know* the danger of putting all the blame on somebody else for the mess you make it out of your life. I fell into the trap myself! And I am bound to believe that that's the way the white folks can corrupt you even when you done held up before ... Then you begins to think up evil and begins to destroy everybody around you, and you blames it on the crackers. *Shit!* Nobody's as powerful as we make them out to be" (p. 202).

South turns him into a slave and violent subject but North alienate him. So, from his view point there is no difference between these two poles. The novel provides a clear account of his psychologically damaged being during his stay in North. Anyway, his trip to the North deteriorates his situation. On the whole, his act of travelling to the North is a failure when it is considered as a way to find a refuge from racism. But it can be considered as significant step in his transformation. For the reason that, his character has changed this time and he plays a constructive role in Ruth's life. James R. Butler (1988) comments on this transformation. "This journey produces a dramatic change in his character as he becomes a loving surrogate father for Ruth after she has lost her parents when Brownfield murders Mem and is subsequently sent to the prison" (p. 72).

In his return to the South a reader can trace his transformation into self-realization. Some events are influential in his fulfillment of own potential such as Mem's unfortunate death and remembering his broken life with Margaret. These acts are constructive in his retrieval. It is in the light of this regeneration that he reaches peace and takes responsibility for the loss of Margaret. In view of W. Lawrence Hogue (1991-1992), "His 'third' life concerns his return to South, his attempt to exorcise past inequities, to break the desolate social structure, to interpret a set of relations in which he and his son have fallen victims. It shows Grange's uncompromising attempt to create a new set of relations, where his granddaughter Ruth can have more options and opportunities" (p. 47). As Fanon believes there are some people who do not come by any recompense regarding to their inferiorisation. It may be for the reason that the subject considers himself as white. In the case of Grange, the way he builds a farm and encloses it empowers him. This situation has been analyzed by Theodore O. Mason (1989) as such, "The farm is clearly a physical space, but even more importantly an analogue for imaginative space, a way of "reading" and constructing the world. This construction of reality depends upon recognition of

class and a human open-endedness” (p. 305). Grange’s life in his own farm provides him a way of explaining how he can be black and still divorce himself from blackness. As Fanon explain this, “As I begin to recognize that the Negro is the symbol of sin, I catch myself hating the Negro. But then I recognize that I am a Negro ... this [is a] neurotic situation in which I am compelled to choose an unhealthy, conflictual situation fed on fantasies [that are] hostile and inhuman” (1986, p. 197).

Grange takes the responsibility of Ruth for compensating his own past. He expends all his energies for her, the way he had never did for his own family. He is too much obsessed about her future and helps her in the best way to form her identity. Robert James Butler (1988) says, “his journey produces a dramatic change in his character as he becomes a loving surrogate father for Ruth after she has lost her parents when Brownfield murders Mem and is subsequently sent to the prison” (p. 72). It is in this way that Grange undergoes a recognizable transformation. Mem’s suffering and her unfortunate death awakens his memories of his wife. These remembrances provoke his consciousness and bring to him a self-realization. It also causes him to visit his past in order to rectify his wrong doings towards the family. This step is the first act of courage from his side for redemption and regeneration. He understands that he is responsible for her tragedy and suicide at the end. His third life is a sort of asylum where he finds peace. In his process of individuation he has to confront his cruel past to transform his present. As such W. L. Hogue (1991) remarks, “His ‘third’ life concerns his return to South, his attempt to exorcise past inequities, to break the desolate social structure, to interpret a set of relations in which he and his son have fallen victims. It shows Grange’s uncompromising attempt to create a new set of relations, where his granddaughter Ruth can have more options and opportunities” (p. 47).

Grange’s new house in the South is actually a sort of refuge, affirmation, and empowering. It is in this stage that he is able to get rid of the pain of being exploited by whites. He feels free for the first time in life; a sensation that he never acquired in the north as well. His strong predilection for making up his past provokes him to assist Ruth in her attempt for forming an identity of herself in a restraining society. Theodor O Mason (1989) has analyzed Grange’s obsessive attempt to build an independent future for Ruth, “The farm is clearly a physical space, but even more importantly an analogue for imaginative space, a way of reading and constructing the world. This construction of reality depends upon recognition of others and a human open-endedness” (p. 305). His relationship with Ruth gives him a sense of identity. He teaches her that there is also another way to look at things in the society not through the lens of slavery and racism. He informs her about the life of oppressed people who had trounced the severe circumstances through their determined stamina and unflinching will. Grange wants to provoke her desire to fight the racist and sexist policies. This is only because of his efforts that Ruth is able to reject the sexist policies and acquire new possibilities to improve her status. Robert J. Butler (1988) believes, “Grange’s nurturing has provided her with emotional and spiritual base she needs to develop resilient self capable of undertaking the open journey so often celebrated in American and Afro-American Literature” (p. 72). The way that Ruth & Grange have chosen for their life is not a perfect way to reach a prosperous world. Because, if they are going to confront the racism properly, they need to have a thorough perception of how it works. From Fanon’s view point, a black person’s image of himself can gradually enter the unconscious mind and stimulate his dreams, neuroses and phobias. Hook substantiates this idea of Fanon,

So, racism, like denigrating images of blackness, are in no way natural, ahistorical, predisposed ‘qualities of cerebral matter,’ although they do, in racist or colonial environments, feature powerfully in the unconscious minds of individuals and of the society, just as they do circulate within its psychological phenomena” (2004, p. 135).

Their secluded farm has been constructed to give them freedom and peace. But it is an enclosed place that makes them strange from a constructive life. It has alienated them from the rest of society. In reply to Ruth when she asked, “What I am going to do when I get grown,” Grange said, “We got this farm” (p. 193). It shows that she is not satisfied with her condition. In one point she expresses her dissatisfaction as such, “I want to get away from here someday” (p. 193). She feels suffocated in that mortifying environment. By examining major characters in the novel, one can easily discern that Walker wants to give a sense of hope to erase the painful memories of blacks. Walker wants to make it clear that familial bond and economical condition have a direct impact in eradicating the painful memories of people in a racist society. The parent children relationship can have a constructive role in the process of individuation and transformation. In the novel, Grange-Ruth relationship is the only constructive one that has helped Ruth in her process of self-affirmation. Grange plays a major role in establishing her identity. Trudier Harris (1997) substantiates this. “Folk Material becomes significant in defining the relationship between Grange & Ruth, his granddaughter. It is a way to seal the bond between them and to identify their unity against a hostile and un-understanding world” (p. 7). Walker also elaborates how the nature of relations within the families is inseparable from the structure of power in the society. Copelands’ suffering

brings to the mind Fanon's condition of white mask psychology, when they often consider themselves as white but none the less, revolt against white supremacy that impoverishes and humiliates them.

5. Conclusion

In *The Third Life of Grange Copeland* Walker's characters undergo incapacitating involvements with a racist society. The novel delineates a brilliant picture of their suffering. They firmly decided to search for an identity with the purpose of finding a place for themselves in an unjust society. Most of them have an interest to partake in the process of gaining individuality although only few are succeeded. The reason from the view point of Hook is, "Racism no doubt exists at levels of social structure, of social meaning and discourse, as well as at the level of individual psychology. All such dimensions of racism need to be confronted" (p. 135). Walker in the novel depicts both the implementation of racism and the psychological outcomes of colonial confrontation. Each character's misery is augmented by the relationship with the other characters and even with his or her family members. It brilliantly depicts the marginal life of each of them. It shows how the nature of relations within the familial set up is inextricable from the oppressive system in the society.

All in all, Walker considers the distortion of individuality to emotional disruption between the family members which has been provoked by racism. She criticizes the black people as well for the reason of internalizing the racist stereotypes that perpetuate the traditional definition of blackness. In the novel, black characters are subject of criticism because they contribute to the thwarting each other's dreams of finding a pattern of existence.

References

- Elliott, B. E. (1989). *Race, Gender and Desire: Narrative Strategies in the Fiction of Toni Cade Bambara, Toni Morrison and Alice Walker*. Philadelphia: Temple UP.
- Erickson, P. (1979). Cast and Alone/To Heal/And Recreate/Ourselves: Family-Based Identity in the Work of Alice Walker. *CLA Journal* 23(1), 71-94.
- Fanon, F. (1967). *Black Skin White Masks* (Translated by ChaleslamMarkmann). Sidmouth, England: Pluto.
- Harris, T. (1977). Folklore in the Fiction of Alice Walker: A Perpetuation of Historical and Literary Tradition. *Black American Forum*, II(1), 3-8. <http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/3041531>
- Hogue, W. L. (1991). History, the Feminist Discourse and Alice Walker's *The Third Life of Grange Copeland*. *MELUS*, 17(14), 45-62.
- Hook, D. (2004). *Critical Psychology*. Lansdowne, South Africa: Juta.
- James, B. R. (1988). Making Way Out of No Way: The Open Journey in Alice Walker's *Third Life of Grange Copeland*. *Black American Literature Forum*, 22(1), 419-427.
- Mason, T. O. (1989). Alice Walker's *The Third Life of Grange Copeland*: The Dynamics of Enclosure. *Callaloo* 12(2), 297-309. <http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/2931565>
- Nayar, P. K. (2013). *Contemporary Literary and Cultural Theory: From Structuralism to Ecocriticism*. New Delhi: Pearson.
- Norton, S. (1999). What Goes Around Comes Around: Family and the Past in the Work of Toni Morrison and Alice Walker. *UCD's Journal of Postgraduate Research*.
- Primasita, F. A. (2010). Alice Walker's View on Domestic Violence in Black Heterosexual Love Relationships as Reflected in Her Novel *The Third Life of Grange Copeland*. SastraInggris. SMUSblog (blog).
- Santhi, T. K. (2012). From Fragmentation to Wholeness, an Exploration in the Selected Works of Alice Walker. Lecture given at the National Conference on Developing Scenario in Applied Sciences. Coimbatore: India.
- Walker, A. (1970). *The Third Life of Grange Copeland*. New York: Harcourt Jovanovich.
- Weston, R. D. (1987). Inversion of Patriarchal Image in Alice Walker's *Meridian*. *Southern Quarterly*, XX(2) 102-107.
- White, V. C. (1983). *Afro-American and East German Fiction: A Comparative Study of Alienation, Identity and the Development of Self*. New York: Peter Lang.

Copyrights

Copyright for this article is retained by the author(s), with first publication rights granted to the journal.

This is an open-access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/>).