

Renewal of the self through sublimation: a Psychoanalytic reading of Walker's *The Color Purple* and *The Third Life of Grange Copeland*

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Abstract

Critical discussions of Alice Walker's *The Color Purple* and *The Third Life of Grange Copeland* have particularly focused on the intention(s) of the authors and on the assumed meaning(s) of the texts. Little or no attention has been paid to the factors which necessitated the transformation/renewal of the lives experienced by the characters in the texts. However, these two texts construct an individual identity directed and supported by African-American communal values and expounded by the female voice. Therefore, this paper concerns itself with the task of investigating the issues evident in the texts which yielded the grand renewal of lives in its different forms as it is witnessed in the novels. It adopts Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory of personality development as its theoretical framework. From our analysis, it has been discovered that sublimation and its attendant productivity is central to the characters' transformation/renewal and also that there is a shift from the death instinct to life instinct in the psyche of the characters in both narratives.

Keywords: Renewal, restoration, sublimation, psychoanalytic, psyche, transformation

Introduction

Walker begins *The Color Purple*, her Pulitzer Prize winning novel, in medias res: Celie is poised on the edge of adolescence after a childhood of loss, deprivation, and abuse. With Celie's first anguished letter to God, Walker enables the reader to enter into the private thoughts and emotional state of her traumatized, guilt and shame-ridden life. The depressed fourteen-year-old protagonist, who has been repeatedly raped and impregnated by the man (Alphonso), her mother's husband, whom she believes, is her biological father, is revealed to us as a forlorn girl. She writes, "Dear God, I am fourteen years old. I have always been a good girl. Maybe you can give me a sign letting me know what is happening to me" (1). Celie draws a line through "I am" and writes "I have always been a good girl" she believes that this bad thing has happened to her because *she* is bad and therefore deserves it. Celie writes to God because she is ashamed of what is happening to her (122) and because of the threat from Alphonso that immediately precedes Celie's first letter: "you better not never tell nobody but God it'd kill your mammy" (11).

The style of this letter, and of those that immediately follow, is characterized by short, halting sentences. It is a style that mirrors Celie's traumatized cognitive processes and depressed emotional state. We learn that Celie's depression is partly caused by her repressed rage when later in the novel Sofia asks her what she does when she gets mad, and she answers, I think. I can't even remember the last time I felt mad, I say. I used to git mad at my mammy because she put a lot of work on me. Then I see how sick she is. Couldn't stay mad at her. Couldn't be mad at my daddy cause he my daddy. Bible say, Honor father and mother no matter what. Then after while every time I got mad, or start to feel mad, I got sick. Felt like throwing up. Terrible feeling. Then I start to feel nothing at all. (47).

However, in the novel *The Third Life of Grange Copeland*, Walker shows how the social and economic system of the 1920s offered a futile existence to southern black families. Grange Copeland, like most southern black men of his era, lived and worked on a farm owned and operated by a white man. This system, called sharecropping, did not allow for future planning or savings, for everything earned was returned to the white man's coffers for rent. Thus, sharecropping like slavery before it, contributed to the black man's feelings of powerlessness. In his desperation and helplessness, Grange turns to exert power in the one place he is dominant, his home. He releases his frustration by abusing his family in a weekly cycle of cruelty,

By Thursday, Grange's gloominess reached its peak and he grimaced respectfully, with veiled eyes, at the jokes told by the man who drove the truck [the white farm owner, Mr. Shipley]. On Thursday night, he stalked the house from room to room, pulled himself up and swung from the rafters. Late Saturday night Grange would come home lurching drunk, threatening to kill his wife and Brownfield [his son], stumbling and shooting his shotgun. He threatened Margaret and she ran and hid in the woods with Brownfield huddled at her feet (15).

At other times, Grange displays his frustration through neglect, a more psychologically disturbing device that later affects Brownfield's emotional stability. Grange's inability to rise above his own discontent with his life and express loving and caring feeling toward his son becomes his most abusive act. Eventually, he abandons his family completely for a new life in the North. Even when he says

goodbye, “even in private and in the dark and with his son, presumably asleep, Grange could not bear to touch his son with his hand” (125).

Margaret, Brownfield’s mother suffers terrible abuses from Grange, her husband. She is molested and treated as less than a human being. Brownfield on the other hand is never spoken to by his father. Even when Margaret suggests that their son should start school, Grange simply shrugged, signaling the end of that dream. After enduring infidelity and physical abuses from Grange, Margaret starts an affair with her white boss, gets pregnant and delivers a mullatto boy. She also takes to alcohol, and her personality suffers a terrible change. This illicit affair succeeds in driving Grange finally away from her. Walker writes,

His mother carried her shoes guiltily to her bosom, clutching them with both hands. Her beautiful rough hair was loose about her shoulders like a wayward thundercloud, with here and there crinkly and shiny silver thread. Her dress was mussed, and the golden cross that usually nestled inside her dress lay jutting up atop her collar. Her eyes were haggard and blinked foggily at her son. She gave off a stale smoky odor. With nervous fingers she sought to thrust rumpled stockings farther inside her shoes. (21).

Literature review

Alice walker’s *The Color Purple* and *The Third Life of Grange Copeland* have provoked a lot of studies and criticisms from scholars and critics since their publications. Catherine A. Colton reads *The Color Purple* as a rhetorical work, that is, as an illustration of language whose aim is the effect a change. She is of the view that the novel is grounded in the “African-American voodoo and Conjure traditions and their reliance on the power of language to invoke change” (32). In her analysis, she locates Celie’s transformation on her ability to reclaim her power of speech. Jessica Lewis in her essay “Gender, Race and Violence: A Critical Examination of Trauma in *The Color Purple* sets out to underscore the causes of the violence and trauma experienced by the characters in the texts. In her final submission, she argues that gender and race are the underlying causes of the violence and trauma experienced by Walker’s female characters; Celie, Sophia, and Squeak. Judy Elsley in her own reading of the text locates Celie’s triumph in her ability to make quilt. She contends that the power of the quilt is to transform lives from disparate fragments to a self-fashioned conjoining of pieces and that this process becomes a way of life for Celie.

Ross in his “Celie in the Looking Glass; the Desire for Selfhood in *The Color Purple*” concludes that finding the courage to speak is a major theme of the text and that Celie gains the power of speech through her growth and encounters. In a similar vein, by agreeing with Robert Butler, Charrumathi in his “Survival Through Redemption of Self in the selected novels of Alice Walker,” believes that Walker conceives human personality in a dynamic way: that is, she believes that a person is not simply the static product of the environment but has the possibility of converting to different ‘lives’ generated by transformation of self. To her, *The Third Life of Grange Copeland* offers a vivid illustration of a man who goes on to transform his life until he becomes a reborn man, one who has achieved a total triumph over life’s misfortunes.

However, Hasanthi on his own part, concludes that Walker through the novel has shown how black men have to really mould themselves in order to establish true black masculinity, proper family relationship and a better black community. Sharma in his “Locality Self in Alice Walker’s *The Third Life of Grange Copeland*” concludes that Walker sets out in *The Third Life of Grange Copeland* to convey the message that it lies within self to free oneself of the gruesome enslavement and oppression by recognizing self-worth and redeeming qualities. To him, *The Third Life of Grange Copeland* reiterates Walker’s philosophy of maintaining the individual self in the context of community by elucidating ways of surviving suffering.

Viktor Frankl in his *Man’s Search for Meaning* maintains that an individual’s has the “human capacity to creatively turn life’s negative aspects into something positive or constructive,” making life potentially meaningful under any condition (61). Shawn Rubin, echoing James F.T. Bugental (1978), Irvin D. Yalom (1980), Kirk Schneider and Rollo May (1995) defines the human capacity to positively reconstruct himself in the face of stifling condition as “the philosophy that human beings are endowed with the capacity to courageously confront and transform the depths of suffering into hope, creating meaning, and initiate responsible action” (1)

Nevertheless, while *The Color Purple* and *The Third Life of Grange Copeland* continue to gain attention in literary studies, it has been the case that the studies have often focused on the intention(s) of the author and on the assumed meaning(s) of the texts. Most of these critics while adopting feminist, womanist, marxist, historical, existentialist, sociological and post-colonial approaches among others in their studies of the novels, based their analyses of the novels on the purported intentions of the author thereby rarely picking up the factors which necessitated the characters’ renewal/emergence. This paper while adopting Sigmund Freud’s psychoanalytic theory of personality development, aims at examining the machineries (factors) evident in the texts which necessitated the grand renewal and restoration that is witnessed at the end of the novels.

Freud’s psychoanalytic theory of personality development

It is crucial to state from the outset that psychoanalytic theory of personality development is not a literary theory but a method of treating mental disorders which emphasizes unconscious mental processes which is, nevertheless, a useful approach towards understanding the working of minds of literary characters. The psychoanalytic movement originated in the clinical observations and formulations of Austrian psychiatrist Sigmund Freud, who coined the term psychoanalysis. During the 1890’s, Freud worked with Austrian Physician and physiologist Josef Breuer in studies of neurotic patients under hypnosis. Freud and Breuer observe that when the sources of patient’s ideas and impulses were brought into consciousness during the hypnotic state, the patients showed improvement.

Observing that most patients talked freely without being under hypnosis, Freud applied the techniques of free association of ideas. The patient was encouraged to say anything what comes to mind without regard to its assumed relevancy or propriety. Noting that patients sometimes had difficulty in making free association, Freud concluded that certain painful experiences were repressed or held back from conscious awareness. Freud noted that in the majority of the patients seen during his early practice, the even most frequently repressed were concerned with disturbing sexual experiences. Thus, he hypothesized that anxiety was a consequence of the

repressed energy attached to sexuality and that the repressed energy found expression in various symptoms that served as psychological defense mechanisms.

The relationship between psychoanalysis and literary criticism which spans much of the 20th Century is fundamentally concerned with the articulation of the workings of the mind, the instinct, and sexuality in language. It has moved through three main emphases in its pursuit of the literary “unconscious” – on the author (attention is paid to the working of the mind of the author), on the reader (the working of the mind of the reader is considered here), and on the text (attention is wholly paid to the text with disregards to workings of the mind of the author or the reader). It started with Freud’s analysis of the literary text as a “symptom of the artist” where the relationship between the author and the text is analogues to dreamers and their dreams. Our concern here is on the last, which disregards the author and the reader but pays complete attention to the text which is the object of reflection.

Freud divides the human psyche into three layers or regions: the Id, the Ego, and the Superego. The Id operates at an unconscious level and focuses solely on instinctual drives and desires. The Id being entirely in the unconscious is the most inaccessible and obscure part of human personality. It is the receptacle of our libido, the primary source of our psychic energy. Its function is to fulfill the primordial life principle, which is the pleasure principle. According to Freud, two biological instincts make up the Id “eros” or the instinct to survive (life instinct) which drives the individual to engage in life-sustaining activities and “thanatos” or the death instinct which drives destructive, aggressive, silent, and violent behaviours. The ego which is governed by the reality principle is defined as the “the rational governing force of the psyche”. It acts as both a conduit for and a check on the Id, working to meet the Id’s needs in a socially appropriate way. The superego is partly conscious and in moral parlance, can be called the conscience of the individual. It is governed by the “morality principle” and represses the incestual, sexual passions, and aggressiveness projected by the Id in the psyche of the individual. Being a repository of pride, self-esteem etc., it compels the individual to move toward perfection.

Freud believes that these three parts of the mind are in constant conflict because each part has a different goal. He points out that sometimes, when the conflicts is too much for the individual to handle, that his/her ego may engage in one or many defense mechanisms to protect the individual. He equally identifies these defense mechanisms to include the following: Repression; this has to do with suppressed feelings or behaviour which may find their way to the conscious and manifest themselves in form of Freudian slip “parapraxi” or slips of the tongue, pen or unintended actions. Denial as one of the defense mechanisms identified by Freud has to do with the blocking of upsetting or overwhelming experiences from awareness, causing the individual to refuse to acknowledge or believe what is happening. Projection as explained by Freud deals with the attempts to solve discomfort by attributing the individual’s unacceptable thoughts, feelings and motives to another person.

Furthermore, Freud identified displacement as one of the defense mechanisms and it has to do with the individual satisfying an impulse by acting on a substitutes object or person in a socially unacceptable way. This has to do with for instance, releasing anger directed towards your boss on your family members or friends. This is what is popularly called transfer of aggression. Regression on its part as a defense mechanism has to do with the individual moving backward in development in order to cope with stress and challenging situations. This manifests itself when an overwhelmed adult begins to act like a child - like Mem did in *The Third Life of Grange Copeland*. Sublimation as a defense mechanism involves satisfying an impulse by acting on a substitute but in a socially

acceptable way. For instance, channeling one's energy into work or constructive hobby as Celie and Grange Copeland did in our primary texts as would be revealed in our subsequent discussions. This paper will show how the characters adopt these defense mechanisms as explained above in their bid to save themselves from total destruction.

Reclaiming the self through productivity and resourcefulness

Alice Walker's *The Color Purple* and *The Third Life of Grange Copeland* present us with characters whose Id is dominated by the death instinct and who are consequently more dead than alive at the beginning of the novels but who in the course of their developments and encounters in the texts gained insights and understanding, thereby transforming themselves by shedding off their anti-life activities and taking on new selves that encourages and cherishes life. The level of domestic violence which both texts presents finds its root cause in the characters' frustrations: Mr. ____ in *The Color Purple* by his inability to marry whom he desires which led to the maltreatment of those that are forced on him as wives, and Grange and Brownfield are in *The Third Life of Grange Copeland* by their inability to establish themselves and take care of their families which have been their utmost desires. Their being unable to achieve their dreams in life turns the tide against themselves and their family members. Hence, it is these "inabilities" that form the basis of and laid the foundation for their cruel and devilish attitudes towards their own women. The two texts present three female figures: Celie in *The Color Purple* and Margaret and Mem in *The Third life of Grange Copeland* who are at the receiving end of the male figures suffocating activities.

In *The Color Purple*, the heroine's degeneration and helplessly sinking into oblivion opens up with her rape by her stepfather, her mother's pronouncement of curses on her, and her stepfather's stern warning: "You better not never tell nobody but God. It'd kill your mammy" (3). Similarly, in *The Third Life of Grange Copeland* Margaret and Mem's degenerated is initiated by the routine Saturday night beatings which is their husband's way of re-assuring themselves that they are still men since they are seen as being completely helpless before their white masters. The narrator informs us: "Brownfield beat his once lovely wife now, regularly, because it made him feel briefly, good. Every Saturday night he beat her, trying to pin the blame for his failure on her by imprinting it on her face..." (42). From a psychoanalytic perspective, what can be deduced from Brownfield's beating of his wife is that the act is just a mere defense mechanism adopted by the character's ego unknowingly to the character. The aim of this mechanism is to make Brownfield feel that he still has power over someone, hence saving him from complete crackdown. The same applies to Grange Copeland who informs Ruth after his restoration about his wife thus:

"she wasn't trashy, she was a pretty woman and wanted nice things like any pretty woman and when she couldn't get them, well, she wanted something exciting to keep happening to her to take her mind off them. I wanted them things too, so after a long spell of nothing getting no pretty things nor no excitement neither. We couldn't seem to get no thrills from nothing but fighting each other." (113)

So, the characters' actions are reflections of their inner frustration occasioned by their inability to realize their dreams. Mr. ____'s own maltreatment of Celie seems to emanate from his frustrations in marriage which is prompted by his inability to marry the woman he desires. As it is expected, Celie's union with Mr. ____

complicates her predicaments as Mr. ___ grows into a beast-man, who is worse than Pa. At this point, not even her sister's encouragement for her to stand up and fight for her life could be of any help, for Celie is more dead than alive at this point to put up any fight, for it takes one who is alive to fight. She made it very clear to Nettie that she does not know how to fight. She says: "But I don't know how to fight. All I know how to do is stay alive. I don't fight, I stay where I'm told" (17 and 21). Contrary to her words "all I know how to do is stay alive," she is more dead than alive as can be seen.

What controls Celie's psyche at this point is the death instinct which forms part of the Id and which of course, turns her attention away from her sister's encouragement for her to stand up and fight for her freedom. To prevent herself from a total breakdown, Celie is to adopt a defense mechanism which Freud calls projection, a situation where an individual attempts to solve discomfort by attributing the individual's unacceptable thoughts and feelings to another person or something else. Hence, Celie erased herself by seeing what is happening to her as happening to trees and not to her. She says: "He beat me like he beat the children. Cept he doesn't never hardly beat them. He says, Celie, got the belt. The children be outside the room peeking through the cracks. It all I can do not to cry. I make myself wood. I say to myself, Celie, you a tree". (22) To further show the level of her erosion, she made sure she feels nothing at all, not even the worst pain. For feeling of pain can only be attributed to the living, but this, as can be seen, is denied of the narrator. She tells Sofia:

I think I can't even remember the last time I felt mad. I used to git mad at my Mammy cause she put a lot of work on me. Then I see how sick she is. Couldn't stay mad at her. Couldn't stay mad at my daddy cause he my daddy. Bible say, Honor father and mother no matter what. Then after while every time I got mad, or start to feel mad, I got sick. Felt like throwing up. Terrible feeling. Then I start to feel nothing at all. (39)

The character here is one who has effaced herself and who has degenerated into a log of wood or better still, who has symbolically died and awaits her burial rites. Celie's situation as can be deciphered in the text seems destined to grow steadily worse as she is continually launched into one stifling situation after another. One of such suffocating situations is Mr. ___'s bringing of his sick mistress home to be nursed by the poor Celie. He brings in Shug Avery to spite Celie but fortunately for Celie and unfortunately for him, the table is turned against him as Shug's coming into their home and her subsequent identification with Celie prior to Celie's nursing attitudes towards her initiates her restoration and rebirth. Shug's contact with Celie is pivotal for her regeneration and triumph over Mr. ___ and all that he represents. Mr. ___ made his worries known to Celie after his own renewal: "I wanted to kill you, and I did slap you around a couple of times. I never understand how you and Shug got along so well together and it bothered the hell out of me. When she was mean and nasty to you, I understood. But when I looked around and the two of you was always doing each other hair, I start to worry" (229).

Shug is a puzzle or riddle too hard for Mr. ___ to crack as most of his efforts to understand her almost always proves abortive. This is perhaps because the quality of her character is parallel to none, for she is a divine-human. To help Celie conquer her oppressor and to create a new self with gravitas out of her old wretched existence is Shug Avery who stands as both a mythic and her rebirth mother. For Celie to forge a new self out of the near-extinction self, she has to engage herself on life-saving activities that would distract her from her already hatched intention of killing her oppressor. To ensure that Celie does not get herself into any problem, Shug encourages her to channel her anger and bitterness into productivity and resourcefulness. She removes the destructive razor from

Celie's hand and replaces it with the productive needle. The narrator captures the scenario thus: "And every day we going to read Nettie's letters and sew. A needle and not a razor in my hand" (125). This channeling of one's anger and frustration into resourcefulness and productivity is what is designated as sublimation in Freud's psychoanalysis. Shug who understands that Celie needs something that would distract her from her thoughts of killing Mr. – for making life so miserable for her immediately comes up with the right idea and informs Celie thus: "Times like this, lulls, us ought to do something different. Well, ... let's make you some pants" (124).

As can be seen from the text, Celie's last but important baptism would be her baptism into enormous productivity with Shug as usual standing as the officiating priestess. She made her intention known to Celie on their getting to Memphis thus: "you not my maid. I didn't bring you to Memphis to be that. I brought you here to love you and help you get on your feet" (179). With these; Shug's love and support, Celie expands her pant making which would later become her means of livelihood. Celie explains her pant making activities in this way:

I sit in the dining room making pants after pants. I got pants now in every color and size under the sun. since us started making pants down home, I ain't been able to stop. I change the cloth, I change the print, I change the waist, I change the pocket, I change the hem, I change the fullness of the leg. I make so many pants Shug tease me. I didn't know what I was starting, she say, laughing. Then finally one day I made the perfect pair of pants. For my sugar, naturally. They soft dark blue jersey with teeny patches of red. Miss Celie, she say. You is a wonder to behold. (180)

Shug has succeeded in nurturing and harnessing Celie's potential thereby making her economically viable. Indeed, Celie has emerged from her stifling existence into the centre of things with pure vitality and gravitas. The once helpless woman now employs others to work for her in her sewing business. The sewing of pants here is of course, very significant as Celie metaphorically stitches herself back to life and significance. Celie through one of her letters to her sister inform her: "I am so happy. I got love, I got work, I got money, friends and time. And you alive and be home soon. With our children" (183). The level of her transformation is so grand that she cannot help but notice it herself.

It is important to note that it is not only the heroine that undergoes restoration in the novel. Other characters, including the oppressing characters: Mr. ___ and Harpo undergo a radical transformation at the end of the novel. Their transformation and emergence from their former lives earn them a place in the new community which the novel yields at the end. Mr. ___'s restoration which is occasioned by the discarding of his suffocating attitudes started immediately Celie and Shug, including Mary Agnes left for Memphis. Before Mr. ___'s casting off of his winter traits, the instinct that controls his psyche was the death instinct which makes him to be mean and aggressive towards others. But consequent upon his restoration, there is a shift from death instinct to life instinct (thanatos – eros) which projects him towards the desire to live and to be happy, especially with Celie whom he has previously disdained with great passion when his life was controlled by death instinct. Mr. ___'s transformation and restoration attains its climax with his complete slaying of the winter in him in readiness to partake in the new community that is already in view. Celie captures his restoration thus:

After all the evil he done I know you wonder why I don't hate him. I don't hate him for two reasons. One, he loves Shug. And two, Shug use to love him. Plus, look like he trying to make something out himself. I don't mean just that he works and he cleans up after himself and he appreciate some of the things God was playful

enough to make. I mean when you talk to him now he really listens, and one time, out of nowhere in the conversation us was having, he said Celie, I'm satisfied this the first time I ever lived on earth as a natural man. It feels like a new experience. (221)

Indeed, a new self has reincarnated out of Mr. ___'s former life which is characterized with brutality. With this new self which is a direct opposite of the former self, and also with Celie's unrelenting readiness to forgive him of his brutalities against her paves way for his participation in the new community. Mr. ___'s sewing activities with Celie buttresses our stand that productivity is central to the characters' renewal and restoration.

Similarly, in *The Third Life of Grange Copeland*, Grange's renewal is also anchored on hard work and productivity. Prior to his gaining of insights, Grange's life was characterized with brutality and recklessness just like Mr. ___ in *The Color Purple*. As has been stated earlier, Grange's negative attitude towards his family is a sign that the death instinct dominates his Id and it is also a way of defending himself psychologically. Very significant in initiating his restoration process is his journey to North. It is this journey that offers him the opportunity for inner recollections and the gaining of understanding which culminates into his decisive measures to liberate himself. Grange's desire to live finds expression in the North after the killing of the white lady at the park. A killing which made him to feel all his pains and the wrongs done to him by the whites avenged. The narrator in an attempt to explain Grange's feeling of freedom and liberation says:

The death of the woman was simple murder, he thought, and soul condemning; but in a strange way, a bizarre way, it liberated him. He felt in some way repaid for his own unfortunate life. It was the taking of that white woman's life – and the denying of the life of her child – the taking of her life, not the taking of her money, that forced him to want to try to live again. He believed that, against his will, he had stumbled on the necessary act that black men must commit to regain, or to manufacture their manhood, their self-respect. They kill their oppression. He felt alive and liberated for the first time in his life. He wanted to see a thousand tomorrow! (121 – 122)

The feeling of being avenged which the killing of this pregnant white woman offers to Grange and his desire to live and conquer more life odds is first of all what initiates Grange's change of attitudes and his subsequent regeneration and restoration. The killing first of all offers him the opportunity to reclaim his devastated and battered self-worth which led to his seeking for solution to his predicaments. A solution he finds with the help of his granddaughter not to lie in his hatred for his oppressors but in his ability to reason and build his own world, a world that would not recognize the presence of the oppressors. To build this world, he is to abandon his preaching of hatred for the oppressors and must return to the South and with the help of Josie's money, build this all-important world. This recognition and movement toward life encouraging activities such as caring for Brownfield's family culminates to his complete healing from any form of bitterness and his total restoration which is witnessed before the end of the novel.

It is important to reiterate that their attitude towards their own is not intentional but a way of saving themselves from total breakdown that is imminent. This is in line with Freud's stand that in the midst of overwhelming situation that the individual engages in one defense mechanism or the other, and that is exactly what the characters are doing by displacing their bitterness on others who are weaker and more vulnerable than them. To save themselves from psychological wrack, they adopt Freud's defense mechanism of displacement. Hence,

Mr. ___ and Grange instead of directing their anger and bitterness to the right source; to his father, in the case of Mr. ___ for not allowing him marry Shug, the woman he loves, and to his white masters in that of Grange for enslaving him and forcing him into debt, they displace their anger by directing it to their family members respectively. With these steps taken by the characters, their restoration seem so far fetched since their psyche is evidently dominated by the death instinct. It is their ability to transcend this death instinct and to embrace a new philosophy of life that led to their renewal. Thus, it is when like Celie, both Mr. ___ and Grange replace displacement with yet another Freudian concept; sublimation that renewal process begins to present itself. And to be fully restored, they are to purge themselves of their winter identifications, they are to become productive. Therefore, Mr. ___'s sewing activities with Celie and Grange's activities in his farm is of course, a move in the right direction as it offers them the opportunity to re-evaluate themselves. It is their ability to re-evaluate themselves and turn away from their old, winter principles that eventually earns them redemption/renewal in the texts.

Just like Celie in *The Color Purple* who channels her anger and frustration into productivity by making pants, Grange in order to emerge from his suffocating life-existence channels his anger and bitterness towards productivity as well by engaging himself in farm work and the education of his granddaughter with the sole aim of preparing her to confront and conquer the demons of Georgian racist environment and to establish her independence from the whites, complete and unrestricted. As a rejuvenated man whose earlier life has been marked with tremendous recklessness, Grange tries to imprint it on the mind of Ruth the possibility of people to change over time. Using himself as a case in point, he educates Ruth thus:

What I know and reckon the most I know is that people change. That is the main reason not to give up on them. Why, if you had knowed me when I was a young blade, drinking and fighting and beating your grandma, you'd give up on me. Sure, you would. You ain't long on patience. But, now you didn't give up (mainly because you wa'nt born or thought of then) and here you see me tamed and fairly civilized, taking my drinks for stomach's sake, like a gentleman, toiling in the fields for just one gal, and bring home all my money. (150)

This is course, in a nutshell captures Grange as a reincarnated self with a direct opposite of what his former self has been. Grange as a man who has conquered his life failings and who has undergone the spiritual baptism of restoration now discards all the winter traits: coldness, rage, and bitterness which had characterized his previous existence. His caring for Ruth and his unflinching zeal and willingness to pay with his own life and that of his son in order to guarantee Ruth's complete survival or as the narrator puts it; "But to survive whole was what he wanted for Ruth" (163) evidently proves that Grange has undergone a process of transformation and has been transformed. It can be argued that Brownfield's inability to break the bond and attain transformation results from his failure to channel his hatred and bitterness against himself and others into self-love and productivity. As can be seen in the text, the two things that contributed to Grange's renewal are his ability to develop self-love and to channel to his anger into productivity which aids him in recovering his sanity. This act of course, echoes Sharma's argument that it lies within self to free oneself of the gruesome enslavement and oppression by recognizing self-worth and redeeming qualities.

Conclusion

Based on the foregoing, it is pertinent at this juncture to conclude that the characters in Alice Walker's *The Color Purple* and *The Third Life of Grange Copeland* overcome their supposedly overwhelming problems by substituting projection and displacement with sublimation respectively. Hence, it is sublimation and its attendant productivity that rescued the characters, especially Celie and Grange Copeland from their seeming extinction. Therefore, drawing in part on Sigmund Freud's defense mechanism in his psychoanalytic theory of personality development, Walker weaves and anchors Celie's and Grange Copeland's restoration around sublimation. Psychoanalytically speaking, there is a movement in the psyche of the characters from the Id dominating death instinct to life instinct.

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