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Arife Ülkü LİMONCU ORHAN

THE CONSTRUCTION OF LOVE AND WOMAN AS BODY IN BELL HOOKS' *ALL ABOUT LOVE: NEW VISIONS* AND *COMMUNION: THE FEMALE SEARCH FOR LOVE*

Department of English Language and Literature

Master's Thesis

Antalya, 2022

AKDENIZ UNIVERSITY
THE INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

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İ Ç İ N D E K İ L E R

SUMMARY

Gloria Jean Watkins, known as bell hooks (1952-2021), was an African-American feminist theorist, activist, writer, and critic whose work provided feminist theory with fresh insight. Hence, this study examines the liberating relationship between women's love and body as expressed in bell hooks' two books, *All About Love: New Visions* and *Communion: The Female Search For Love*. In addition to adhering to these two primary sources, her related works are also included in the analysis to support the arguments set more profoundly. When hooks' selected works are examined, it is seen that hooks gave great importance to women's love, emancipation/liberation, and body. This triangulation, as this study argues, is the core of hooks' conceptualization of women's problems. In this study, the reader can read a thorough discussion of feminist ideals as reflected in hooks' works, memoirs, and quotes and comments taken from her texts in a direct and friendly manner, just like how hooks did with her open style.
Keywords: Feminism, bell hooks, hooksian feminism, liberation, emancipation, love, body

ÖZET

BELL HOOKS'UN *AŞKA DAİR: YENİ VİZYONLAR* VE *DUYGU YOLDAŞLIĞI: KADINLARIN SEVGİ ARAYIŞI* BAŞLIKLI ESERLERİNDE SEVGİ VE BEDEN OLARAK KADININ YAPILANDIRILMASI

1952-2021 yılları arasında Amerika Birleşik Devletleri'nde yaşamış olan bell hooks, asıl adı Gloria Jean Watkins olan Afrikalı-Amerikalı bir feminist kuramcı, eylemci, edebiyatçı ve eleştirmendir. Bu çalışmanın amacı da, hooks'un *Aşka Dair: Yeni Vizyonlar* ve *Duygu Yoldaşlığı: Kadınların Sevgi Arayışı* başlıklı iki eserinden yola çıkarak kadınların sevgi ve bedenleri arasındaki özgürleştirici ilişkilerini incelemektir. Bu iki ana kaynağa bağlı kalınmasının yanı sıra savunumuzu daha sağlam bir şekilde desteklemek için kuramcının diğer eserleri de gerektiğinde incelemeye dahil edilmiştir. hooks ve seçilmiş eserleri incelendiğinde kadınların sevgisi, özgürleşmesi/kurtuluşu ve bedeni üzerine bazı çalışmalar olduğu görülmesine rağmen, hooks'un kadın ve beden ilişkisini kavramlaştırması üzerine yapılan araştırmaların henüz az sayıda olduğu görülmüştür. Okuyucu, bu tez çalışmasında, genel olarak feminizm hakkında bilgilere, hooks'un özyaşamsal anlatılarıyla desteklediği savlarına ve elbette ki onun "hooksçu" feminist bakış açısına, onun çalışmalarına yapılan samimi ve dolaysız bir anlatımla ulaşabilecektir.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Feminizm, bell hooks, hooksçu feminizm, özgürleşme, kurtuluş, sevgi, beden

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We, my supervisor Prof. Dr. Arda Arikan, and I, Arife Ülkü Limoncu Orhan, would like to dedicate this small attempt of ours to the loving memory of a true fighter, bell hooks, who passed away during the writing of this thesis.

INTRODUCTION

This study examines the liberating relationship between women's love and their bodies as expressed in two texts written by bell books, namely *All About Love: New Visions* and *Communion: The Female Search For Love*. In addition to adhering to these two primary sources, some other works by hooks are also included in the analysis to articulate the relationship between women's bodies and their love.

Women have been fighting for equal rights in society to eliminate misogyny, male dominance, and racial and gender discrimination. In the nineteenth century, this struggle became a political movement known as the "feminist movement." Women have sometimes obtained achievements such as the right to vote, earning equal pay and education with males, and getting an abortion. However, it cannot be claimed that women and men have become equal in all societies where oppression and domination continue. There has been a problem with patriarchy; it is incredibly forceful, and feminism fell short in solving this problem to open up spaces for women to realize their full potential.

Nonetheless, feminists have continuously been fighting against all sorts of social evils ranging from male dominance to domestic violence. However, it is hard to say that there remains thorough justice in societies because numerous realities such as marriage and religious beliefs do not allow women to see to what extent they are oppressed. hooks (1994) refers to these institutionalized realities as "blind spots," for they hinder women's progress toward equality. We keep fighting against all odds while only a few genuinely internalize how others are damaged and threatened by various racial, discriminatory, or sexist oppressions (290). Hence, feminism has indisputable benefits for women. Yet, somewhere within feminism, there is another problem, as exemplified by hooks (2002) in her *Communion: Female Search for Love*: "There is a problem" (xvi). As she explains and exemplifies through autobiographical anecdotes, this problem flourishes within the feminist movement. As hooks powerfully shows, contemporary feminists critique all patriarchal devaluation of women from birth but remain powerless to reverse it mainly because they cannot fully comprehend the realities that make women powerless in their daily lives.

Domination has no color, and feminism has no color, either. That is why, as a woman, I can empathize with hooks' internalization of patriarchy which leaves little space for women to actualize their inner motives. According to hooks, the only way to free all women from domination is to return to a new understanding of love ethic: we should love one another and work together. Godden (2017) worked on love ethics as proposed by hooks and stated that

internationally speaking, “Love is marginalized in professional social work codes of ethics” (1). Wherever and whenever we are, we must address all forms of oppression from which we suffer, and because we as humans are carnal beings, we must first begin by accepting and loving our bodies so that we can love others.

For hooks, the feminist movement started to lose sight of its initial goal. When the phrases “feminism” or “feminist” are mentioned, images of male anger, clothing and acting like men, and lesbianism come to our minds mainly because of purposeful media images. hooks reminds us that such images blur our vision, and we forget the power of love. If we do not theorize love on our way to liberation, other attempts are fruitless. Among many forms of love, women must learn to love their own bodies first. Unfortunately, there are numerous reasons behind women’s hesitation in meditating on love, such as the media’s imposition of an ideal bodily image onto women, constant abuse and domestic violence, and sexual attacks, among others, all of which cause women to detest their bodies. Nevertheless, hooks’ perspective is clear: if liberation is attainable through love, women should start the cause by loving their bodies.

Love is freedom, and freedom is love. Both concepts, love, and freedom, are not static but codependent. They can only grow together. Only when we love and serve the beloved one without enslavement do we nourish our love. The beloved should not expect us to be a different person than we already are because, from a hooksian perspective, it is fundamental for love to grow along with complete freedom. Yet, if a woman must love another being on the condition that it brings emancipation, she must first love her body. Women must first love their bodies if they want to liberate themselves. Otherwise, they will not be able to love others. Hence, the woman’s body and the practice of love for liberation and emancipation have a symbiotic relationship, although such theorizations are not many in number.

To support the existence of this symbiotic relationship, this study firstly discusses the central tenants of the feminist movement: “Woman was the first human being that tasted bondage, the woman was a slave before the slave existed” (as cited in Singh, 2006: 5). Hence, the domination of women predates the known history of slavery which, first and foremost, started with their bodies. In the nineteenth century, feminism was transformed into a movement, and this period was known as first-wave feminism. Before that, women in England had no rights over their lives, and their lives were always centered around men, either as their fathers or husbands. They could not find work because they lacked proper access to schooling. While peasant women could work alongside men on farms, gentry ladies could only do needlework or function as governesses (Osborne, 2001: 10).

The first feminist wave swept the U.K. and the U.S. throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The movement for women's right to vote was the first wave's focus. It was established to encourage equal contracts and property ownership for women, as well as opposing chattel marriage and the possession of married women and their children by their husbands; by the late 1800s, activism had turned to a focus on gaining political power, notably for women's suffrage. In addition, first-wave feminists exploited the concept of feminine housekeeping to signify civic materialism, evoking the conventional view that women are morally and spiritually superior to men in the political realm.

In the 1960s, "second-wave feminism" was established to represent an era of feminist activism that lasted until the late 1980s. When comparing first and second-wave feminism, Freedman (2002) claims that the first wave was more involved in rights like suffrage, but the second wave mainly was related to eliminating discrimination (32). According to Freedman (2002), second-wave feminism was more concerned with addressing social and cultural disparities than political injustices. Furthermore, it widened the discussion to include topics like sexuality, family, the workplace, and reproductive rights (60-66). In 1968 Hanish popularised the phrase "The Personal is Political," which became connected with second-wave feminism (as cited in Lee, 2007: 163). Women's cultural and political differences, according to second-wave feminists, are intrinsically intertwined. They encourage women to regard portions of their personal life as entirely politicized, mirroring discriminatory power systems (Sullivan, 2006: 5).

The third-wave feminist movement emerged in the 1990s. There are various interpretations of this polyphonic movement. It could be said that it is impossible to fix the meaning and goals of post-feminism. Brooks (1997) defines it as "Post Feminism is a contradictory pluralistic discourse that is mainly located in the academic context of television and cultural studies in the media context of popular culture and within consumer culture" (5). Considering the feminist engagement with difference, post-feminism is a political perspective. This movement aims to break down gender norms and prejudices that lead to injustice by encouraging women to define femininity for themselves. Post Feminism should be evaluated as a critique of second-wave feminism. According to Gamble (2001), the term "post-feminism" refers to a "backlash" against second-wave feminism (306). Post Feminism encompasses challenges to the second wave's concepts and critical approaches to former feminist discourses.

While second-wave feminism is the continuation of the first, third-wave feminism is distinct from its predecessors in several ways. Third-wave feminists are not interested in the challenges with which their female predecessors struggled. Individual preferences were

prioritized over the efforts that aimed at achieving gender equality. Hence, second-wave feminists' motto "personal is political" was soon replaced by "political is personal" in the third wave. The significant characteristics of the third wave might be viewed as a critique of the two previous feminist waves, which aimed to emancipate women so that they have equal rights. To achieve this goal, all women were grouped into a single category: women. However, distinctions were driven to the fore by those who provided various postmodernist critiques of the matter (Coleman, 2009: 4-10). As a result, they included, in their analyses, racial and sexual orientations, as well as class inequalities to create a worldview that emphasized the plurality and diversity of the category of women, which was previously considered a homogenous group.

According to hooks, the problem began when women's emancipation journey went from the political to the personal. hooks' *All About Love: New Visions* (2000a) highlights that people have difficulty talking with one another and that society requires alternate, equitable methods of communication. According to hooks, love has "transformative power" in this setting. In most communities, however, love is mainly characterized by the principles of individual, heterosexual, romantic, and passive (hooks, 2000a: 94). This limited view of love stops individuals from comprehending all aspects of love and happiness. If love is redefined, it can be utilized to fight "dominance and oppression" in society (hooks, 2000a: 76). This definition, according to the author, should incorporate elements like "care," "respect," "knowledge," and "trust" (hooks, 2000a: 94). She adds some other ingredients such as "affection," "recognition," "commitment," "as well as "honesty" and "open communication" (hooks, 2000a: 5).

hooks claims in *Communion: Female Search for Love* (2002) that feminists have put forward profound achievements that must be celebrated. Still, unfortunately, they could not reverse the system to ensure that the systematic devaluation of women is ended. Girls continue encountering sexual discrimination and violent attacks, just as they endured before the feminist movement. The fear of not being loved is the primary cause of this impasse (xvi). hooks (2002) emphasizes that we do not need feminism to teach us that we are more interested in "relationships," "connections," and "communities" than men are. Instead, we need a feminist movement reminding us that love and domination cannot coexist and that we will never find the love we seek unless we are truly liberated (xix).

In conclusion, a symbiotic relationship exists between women's love and their bodies when liberation and emancipation are considered. For hooks, in any society, love is regarded as emotion, but a hooksian understanding of the term encompasses the practice of freedom. Hence, women should practice rather than feel love if they want to attain liberty. In this process, as hooks argues, women yearning for liberation and emancipation should start by loving their

bodies first. Although scientific and medical approaches to a woman's body focus on the psychical, hooks argues that a woman's body is the nest where love grows without which emancipation cannot be possible. Hence, hooks' fresh conceptualization of love and body relationship is key to formulating a new form of women's liberation with which women can identify.

"To seek love as a guest for the true self liberates" (hooks, 2002: xx). This quotation summarizes the symbiotic relationship between women's bodies and their love, without which liberation is impossible. In Chapter I, this new theorization is concretized from a historical perspective to ensure that the importance of women's bodies and their love is easily internalized.

CHAPTER I
HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF FEMINISM

Feminism is a historical social and political movement establishing women's equality and legal protection. This movement is a set of political and social theories and philosophies that deal with gender differences, and it spawned a movement to advocate gender equality for women. To this aim, women have organized campaigns for their rights and interests. On December 10, 1948, the United Nations General Assembly approved the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The three essential values of the French Revolution (1789-1794) are strongly identified with the Universal Declaration: liberty (Fr. Liberté), equality (Fr. égalité), and fraternity (Fr. fraternité). Donnely (2013) states that "Human rights are universal, inalienable, and indivisible" (2). Why do women suffer from inequalities all around the world? Aren't we human beings? Theoretically, at least, "[d]iscrimination against sexual minorities… has international dimensions" (Donnely, 2013: 232), and it is feminism and what follows it, such as the queer theory, that picks up the fight against such sociopolitical evils as discrimination othering, the two forces that marginalized women all around the world.

Feminism is the most politically sensitive of all the critical terms in this collection, and it is also the one whose apparent meaning shifts the most depending on who uses it. The application of feminist theory to art history may be viewed as a difficult, even contentious, corrective to mainstream established concepts of political activity, aesthetic representation, and reception; similarly, calling someone a feminist can be a positive or very negative phrase. Alternatively, depending on one's viewpoint, it may be viewed as an attempt to combine the personal and political into a more conventional discourse, with the consequences being either incredibly profound or subversively marginalizing.

Singh (2006) defines feminism by mentioning its etymology: "The term 'feminism' has its origin from the Latin word 'femina' meaning 'woman' and thereby 'feminism' refers to the advocacy of women's rights, status, and power at par with men on the grounds of 'equality of sexes" (1). A universal definition for the notion of feminism does not exist, so several definitions of feminism exist in the related literature. Feminism, according to Michel (1993), is the struggle that women have begun against the male-dominated world's conventions, values, and discriminatory legislation by establishing a bond among themselves (6-7). According to this definition, feminism, which emerged in the eighteenth century, focused on women's issues; it can be defined as a social movement that addresses women's exclusion and oppression within the patriarchal structure and seeks to correct this situation by fighting patriarchal norms and

values (Doltaş, 1991: 83). Similarly, Moses (2016) questions why "a particular form of women's collective action" is named feminism (758) which shows the complexity of the term in social practice.

The struggle to eradicate associated difficulties that accompanied women's transition from the private to the public realm might be regarded as the initial struggle of the feminist movement. Although there are various interpretations of feminism, specific similar characteristics may be grouped under the roof of the women's movement. The following are the common characteristics of feminism, as described by Ramazanoğlu (1989):

• Feminists of all stripes believe that any connection that makes women dependent on males should be altered.

• Feminism calls into question many of the "natural" and "normal" conditions constructed for women in diverse communities.

• Feminism is about more than only the ideals of a diverse group of females.

It strives to change the world by improving men's and women's relationships so that people can have equal opportunities. As a result, feminism is both a collection of concepts and a set of reasonable practices.

• Feminism's goals and solutions for balancing men's and women's relationships have an aggressive and critical edge.

• Feminism does not originate with an objective and unbiased understanding of the nature of male-female relationships. Feminism, in this view, seeks to challenge reason, science, and social theory by raising significant concerns regarding women's knowledge and living experiences (8–29).

First-wave feminism, second-wave feminism, and finally, post-feminism are the three divided eras of the history of feminism. Women in England had no rights over their lives in the eighteenth century, and their lives were always centered around men, either fathers or husbands. They had no chance of finding work because they lacked access to school, whereas male children did. While peasant women may work alongside men on farms, gentry ladies could only do needlework or function as governesses (Osborne, 2001: 10).

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Radical feminists contended that women were a sex class in the years between 1967-1973. The primary basis of societal oppression was the interaction between women and men. (Firestone, 1970: 89). It had evolved into cultural feminism by the mid-1970s, with a position that emphasized women’s fundamental similarities and an aim of forming all-female groups and societies as a response to gender discrimination. The focus of latter 1970s radical and socialist feminism, according to Daly, was on class discrimination rather than sexuality, which was the primary component of liberal feminism (as cited in Firestone, 1979: 98).

Third-wave feminism developed in the early 1990s. It arose in response to the apparent failure of the second wave, including the backlash against second-wave movements (Walker, 1995: 45). Rebecca Walker is the daughter of second-wave activist Alice Walker and the founder of third-wave feminism. She aims to challenge or avoid what it sees as the second wave’s essentialist definition of femininity, which overemphasizes the experience of upper-middle-class white women.

1.1. First-Wave Feminism

In the first part of the nineteenth century, the first wave of feminism swept Britain and the U. S. It began with philanthropic work and sexual equality for women in the classroom, then progressed to women's suffrage, asserting that women are neither subordinate to men nor distinct from them. The first wave of feminists' main concerns was centered on women's social position and marriage. The cult of the domestic life of the time dictated that a genuine woman's job was to stay home and care for her children and husband. Because women were naturally weak, with a lesser brain and a more delicate physique, they were also supposed to be modest and wield indirect influence. On the other hand, the cult of masculinity at the time governed those males are primarily dominating, better than the rest of everything, and everyone was regarded as inadequate, particularly women, and endowed with the authority to dominate and ruler over the weak through various forms of psychological violence and terrorism. As a result, Atwood (2007: 137) claims that they should "therefore be allowed to do the same jobs and same rights as men" (as cited in Şahin, 2017: 19).

Women's persecution in Western societies has a longstanding experience. The nature of that oppression and women's resistance to shifting forms of dominance varies across time and from culture to culture. Women have had their socioeconomic freedom taken away from them, and women have been labeled as "lacking men" who are incomplete without a heterosexual partnership. In Western countries, women's domination has been sustained through cultural norms, religious beliefs, and scientific knowledge, all of which males control. While there has always been resistance to male supremacy, the definition of the word has always been a source of debate. Feminism, according to West, encompasses any act of defiance of male hegemony: "I myself have never been able to find out precisely what feminism is; I only know that people call me a feminist whenever I express sentiments that differentiate me from a doormat" (as cited in Osborne, 2001: 9).

In Western societies characterized by Catholicism in the background, feminist thinking grew out of religious experiences. According to Catholic belief, women caused the original sin as Eve brought Adam's downfall, resulting in humanity's departure from the Garden of Eden altogether. According to Judeo-Christian mythology, God created Eve after Adam, thus, making women the inferior race. There were already proto-feminist voices protesting injustice before the modern feminist movement. Anger argued in 1589 that Eve is not wrong to Adam, despite the opinion that women are the originators of sin and the lesser sex. Eve was made from earth, but she was also created from Adam's rib. Therefore she is not inferior to Adam but relatively purer and superior. She also claimed that Adam was to blame for the original sin (as

cited in Walters, 2005: 9). Individual statements against patriarchal and religious stereotypes of women constituted the early period of feminism. They used religious ideas to counter stereotypes by emphasizing the equality of all souls. In 1694, the first secular book on women's issues was published by Astell, titled *A Serious Proposal to Ladies,* in which it was argued that women's low standing was a product of social persecution rather than a natural condition (as cited in Gamble, 2000: 13).

The first-wave feminism evolved in the mid-nineteenth century, mainly driven by the individualist and emancipatory ideals of the French revolution. In England, feminism was first perceived in 1792 by Wollstonecraft. She took human rights and equality and applied them to women's issues. She attempted to awaken women in her well-known work, *Vindication of Women's Rights* (2014), by saying: "It is time to bring about a revolution in female manners, time to restore their lost dignity to them, as a part of the human species, work to reform the world by reforming themselves to reform the world. It is time to separate unchangeable morals from local manners" (Wollstonecraft, 2014: 31). This statement demonstrates that women had lost their dignity at the time or may never have had it. Wollstonecraft criticized girls' socialization, which she believed led to women acquiring traditional feminine attributes and duties. Wollstonecraft (2014) maintained that women must reach their full mental potential and be educated similarly to males. She characterized femininity as a barrier to women's full development, as she puts it: "Taught from their infancy that beauty is woman's scepter, the mind shapes itself to the body, and roaming round its gilt cage, only seeks to adorn its prison" (70). According to Shukla, Wollstonecraft is the "first feminist "or" mother of feminism" (as cited in Shukla, 2007: 2).

There were also significant educational advancements during the nineteenth century, particularly in higher education. Women believed they could not be denied access to higher education and struggled to get admission to these institutions. Finally, they achieved their goal. In 1867, London University opened its doors to female students. On the other hand, the universities of Oxford and Cambridge paused for a spell. Srivastava (2000) states that:

> Oxford and Cambridge took a long time to get over their prejudices. It admitted women to its tripos examination in 1872, and it was not until the end of the first World war that they were admitted to its titular degree. On the other hand, Oxford University admitted women to its examination in 1883. (74).

In the nineteenth century, increasing manufacturing and urbanization created a variety of sectors for men and women. The house became a womanly realm in Victorian culture, and 'genteel passivity' was one of the most critical attributes for women. When women married during the time, they relinquished their property and independence, and they, together with their

kids, became the property of their husbands. Divorce was a lot simpler for males. Actual evidence of adultery was enough for male divorce, though it was practically impossible for women. The Langham Place Circle was established in 1854 to organize campaigns for "better education and for increased possibilities of employment, as well as the improvement of the legal position of married women" (Walters, 2005: 56). In certain instances, they could improve women's legal rights. Thanks to the divorce regulations in 1857, women can now file for divorce based on adultery and cruelty by husbands. Finally, in 1923, the Matrimonial Causes Act established equal rights for women in divorce proceedings. In the 1870s, women were admitted to colleges but did not have the same degrees as men. But it wasn't until 1948 that women at Cambridge were handed degrees equal to men (Gamble, 2000: 25).

Even though the first wave is often associated with vote campaigns, the fight for suffrage did not begin until the late nineteenth century. For most of the nineteenth century, men did not have universal suffrage (Walters, 2005: 69). Other challenges, including education and career prospects, and married women's legal rights, were deemed more pressing than enfranchisement. Mill published The Subjection of Women in 1869, maintaining that enfranchisement was critical for women's freedom. Smith's *Langham Place Circle* also advocated for enfranchisement, calling for large gatherings and mass protests. Under the leadership of Pankhurst, militant suffragists engaged in certain forceful activities to protest various injustices. They organized massive rallies and hunger strikes, set fire to letterboxes, and broke the windows of some businesses to express their dissatisfaction (as cited in Walters, 2005: 80). Most men were enfranchised in the 1890s. During that time, women's dissatisfaction grew. They stressed the inequity of men "who were poor and barely literate had been given the vote while women, as taxpaying and legally accountable citizens, being denied the right to vote" (Walters, 2005: 74). Women in America were granted the right to vote in 1920. In 1917, British women over thirty were given suffrage; in 1928, all women in England were granted the right to vote on an equal basis with males.

1.2. Second-Wave Feminism

The 1960s and 1970s marked the beginning of the second wave of feminism (Lorber, 1997: 9). Feminism, as theoretical and practical aspects, has a long and convoluted history. The years 1960-1980s were crucial in that history because, in the 1970s, feminist critique emerged as a powerful force, notably in Western literature. Not only were there impassioned feminist demonstrations against a socio-political backdrop throughout this decade, but there was also a consequence of feminism in diverse areas such as Marxism, Liberalism, and psychoanalysis,

which affected today's understanding and debate of feminism in specific ways. When the dominant feminist agenda after this decade is examined, it becomes apparent that many resources treat feminist literary principles and methods in the 1970s as a monolithic text structure, neglecting regional distinctions.

The woman question was mainly ignored until the 1960s when it was "temporarily halted by a fifty-year counter offensive" (Gamble, 2000: 29). During World War II, most men were mobilized, allowing women to work in manufacturing and other occupations. Men returned to their homelands in the United States and England when the war ended. As a result, women were displaced from the workforce. During that time, the media established a myth of the "happy housewife," which encouraged women to take up traditional female duties and stay at home. House was designed as a calm respite from the complex realities of professional life, emphasizing standard feminine attributes such as attractiveness (Friedan,1974: 14). In 1974, Friedan published *Feminine Mystique*. She shattered the housewife myth and revealed the degrading effects of stay-at-home housewifery on women, which she named "the issue without a name" Friedan's work ushered in the second wave of feminist activism. The novel *The Second Sex* (1973) by De Beauvoir, a philosopher of the existentialist tradition, served as a source of inspiration for her. De Beauvoir looked at how society has molded female and male identities, dismissing biological explanations for differences in feminine and masculine characteristics. By saying, "One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman" (De Beauvoir, 1973: 301), she explained the distinction between sex and gender. The former refers to the biological features of men and women, while the latter relates to society's constructions based on this natural core. This evidence supports her argument that femininity is not founded on biological, psychological, or intellectual distinctions. Femininity is constructed by culture or civilization. It is due to variances in their circumstances rather than fundamental or physical distinctions between men and women. The socio-cultural background influences the character. Women are not entirely mature when they are born; their environment alters them throughout time. Biology has nothing to do with what makes a woman a woman. Both males and other women teach a woman about her role in society. Women are not born meek, second-class citizens, or inferior; instead, the outside world forces them to be thus. With the difference preserved, we can no longer ascribe women's values or social duties to biological necessity, nor can we effectively speak to natural or unnatural female sexuality: all gender is abnormal. Furthermore, if the boundary is used consistently, it becomes questionable whether being specific sex has many implications for being a particular gender. The assumption that sex and gender have a

deterministic or metaphoric relationship is shattered (Butler, 1986: 35). *The Second Sex* was at the center of a flurry of feminist theoretical literature in the 1970s.

De Beauvoir (1973) opposes the concept that one's identity is determined by biology, arguing that biology has social significance. She is also critical of psychology and Freud. Individuals, as she claims, cannot be reduced to sex derivates; additionally, they acquire their significance from a social environment, from human action. According to the existentialist viewpoint, identity results from specific choices and actions in particular contexts (301). Simone de De Beauvoir, who focused on the social construction of gender identity, in her *The Second Sex*, says, "one is not born, but rather becomes a woman" (De Beauvoir, 1973: 301). *The Second Sex* by De Beauvoir (1973) and *The Passion of New Eve* by Carter (1977) are critical responses to the essentialist trends offered during the 1970s. Carter proposes a model of gender acquisition in *The Passion of New Eve* that is more closely tied to De Beauvoir's earlier theory, which focused on the social construction of gender identity. Carter, like De Beauvoir, rejects the idea of inherent and natural gender identity, emphasizing that masculinity and femininity are performed acts. Carter, it could be said, distinguishes between bodily sex and gender. Carter compares gender acquisition to "a performer playing a character" (Carter, 1977: 69).

The women's liberation movement had many varied branches and approaches, even though nineteenth-century feminism was centered on suffrage issues (Osborne, 2001: 29). Although the suffragist movement was unified on political rights, the second-wave movement had a far more comprehensive range of perspectives on the origins of women's oppression and remedies to their difficulties. Liberal feminism, socialist feminism, and radical feminism are the three strands of second-wave feminist ideology. Liberal feminism was founded on a reformist perspective and a universal feature of human nature. Liberal feminists emphasized gender equality and equal access to education and employment for men and women. In a meritocratic society, women should be able to realize their full potential, they maintained, because "the rights of the individual are sacrosanct in liberal ideology; it is up to the individual to pursue success through merit" (Whelehan, 1995: 37). Socialist feminists addressed women's concerns by referencing Marxist theory and explained gender disparities in terms of economic basis. Male supremacy will go away if class inequality is addressed, they asserted. Second-wave feminists sought to alleviate women's material and cultural restrictions; as Gamble (2000) puts it: "what is necessary is a revolution within language and culture as well as material structure" (39). Radical feminism differed from socialist feminism in that it defined women's oppression as solely sexual, but it was less organized and decentralized. To oppose male-

dominated culture, they emphasized the significance of a cultural revolution. Global patriarchy, they believed, was a system that oppressed women regardless of their socioeconomic or cultural backgrounds. Firestone demonstrated how socialist feminism fails to address the issue of women and criticized the economic explanation of women's oppression. She remarks, "It would be a mistake to attempt to explain women's subjugation using this solely economic explanation [...] There is a whole sexual substratum of historical dialectic" (Firestone, 1970: 4). She also envisioned a shift in social structures like marriage and childrearing to empower women.

The resurrection of patriarchal beliefs in the post-war period highlighted the continuation of male hegemony, causing radical feminists to argue that women's oppression is entrenched in psychology and social institutions such as marriage and conventional female roles. Men were the ones who systematically oppressed women. The patriarchal notion has been broadened.

Like race and class, sex is a category of human oppression, and patriarchy is deeply embedded in our brains. Then, patriarchy is the primary form of pressure, and race and class emancipation are impossible without it. As a result, radical feminists aimed to decolonize their ideas and demolish repressive institutions like marriage, heteronormativity, and beauty ideology. One of radical feminism's distinguishing traits was consciousness-raising activism. In discussion groups, women started to talk about their struggles at the workplace and in their relationships with men so that they might realize that their issues aren't unique to them but are tied to cultural and historical structures. Searching on New Zealand feminist writings between 1970 and 1984, Holmes argues that examining relationships leads to a realization that sexuality is both a producer and a producer of social power relations. A feminist understanding of power as "power over" hampered this insight, preventing a constructive exploration of disparities amongst women and perhaps causing individualized conflict among feminists. Diversity might be recognized, and feminists could begin to rethink how to represent themselves and their concerns in more complicated ways via the political examination of relationships and sexuality. Holmes concludes that second-wave feminists questioned liberal democratic political ideals. Relationships were politicized as part of this issue. Individuals' relationships were the main focus and were linked to disputes over how sexuality was political (Holmes, 2000: 235). Hence, the second wavers' motto was "the personal is political." These second wavers' collective awareness-raising activities were central to this movement.

According to common perception, feminists are portrayed as hating men and all being lesbians. These stereotypes developed in reaction to feminist critiques of normative explanations of relationships. Such issues occurred because of second-wave feminist critiques

of liberal democratic political ideology. Male-female interactions, feminists contended, were political, not "natural," and sexuality was a political problem (Jackson & Scott, 1996: 6–12). Even today, these stereotypes still maintain effectualness and cause misunderstandings in defining feminism and feminist.

Much of the fascinating contemporary work on gender and writing twists the word in ways that classic literary theories don't map out. But, to grasp the origins of that enthusiasm, we must go back to Millett's *Sexual Politics* (1970), where we can see how second-wave criticism began as a temporal building works, a border crossing, with its central theme of "the personal is political" connecting two previously conceptually, individually spaced worlds. What feminist literary criticism presented uniquely and why Millett's work is so influential is a revolutionary perspective, not just new critical tools (as cited in Jackson & Jones, 1998: 195).

While the writings cited above were significant comments on the foundations of male dominance, feminists were not simply interested in developing 'grand theory.' In keeping with the slogan "the personal is political," there was a heavy focus from the start on the necessity to theorize from our experiences as women. Feminism shifted the political and theoretical agendas, turning areas of life that had previously been considered personal into political battlegrounds and theoretical targets. In the 1970s, sexuality and housekeeping would become critical theoretical issues. During this period, much effort was made to make women visible and regain things like women's history and literature (Jackson & Jones, 1998: 4).

Feminism influenced academic institutions from 1970 through the end of the decade. Many feminist activists were also students, teachers, and researchers in the movement and began incorporating their feminist ideals into their academic work. As a result, theory formation was easy to migrate across activist and scholarly groups. For feminists, the educational sphere was a battleground in and of itself. Feminist women were a poor, powerless, and youthful group with political skills derived from their actions, but they were still a tiny percentage of individuals with secure academic positions. They began to organize to question the current male-dominated curricula, and they began to fight for change.

Second-wave feminist philosophy is a "hyphenated feminism" that encompasses a variety of theoretical frameworks, including radical, liberal, Marxist, and psychoanalytic perspectives, all of which are unified by a commitment to homogeneity, justice, and universal activism, and sisterhood (Arneil, 1999: 153). Also, second-wave feminism uses binary categorization such as straight/gay or man/woman to populate a fixed unitary identity, the female identity that refers to the equality among sexes, secular humanism, and sisterhood (Genz, 2006: 337).

Second-wave feminism's ideology is also affected by psychoanalysis, a practice popularized by Freud. The Freudian philosophy, which dealt with sexual differences, drew feminists in. According to Freud, the male has a prominent sex organ, the penis, which the female lacks or does not have. As a result, her distinction is "perceived as absence or negation of masculine norm" (as cited in Moi, 1990: 132). As a result of this deficiency, the female experiences deficiency and develops penis envy. In binary oppositions, women are pitted against men.

Women are victims, according to first-wave feminism, and males are the ones who cause their pain. According to biological essentialism, only women could experience motherhood. Hence, second-wave feminism emphasized sexual distinctions and women's superior status owing to physical reproductive powers and commended women because only women could experience motherhood. Second-wave feminism emphasized women's superiority over men, Atwood (2007:137) claiming that "women are more deserving than men, but because of the lamblike nature of their superiority, they also need more protection" (as cited in Şahin, 2017: 23). Women are defined by their wombs, breasts, and ability to bear children.

Much of the power of the reproductive function comes from cultural myths or religious texts that elevate motherhood or the womb to an exalted position. Motherhood frequently "gets wrapped up in some weird kind of holiness," according to Irigaray (1993), because women's reproductive position has been ironically regarded as the only guarantee of female identity. (84). The womb or motherhood is invoked to legitimize women's enslavement. Because they possess the womb, women are revered. In other words, this maternal role symbolizes women's place in the symbolic order, and motherhood is the foundation of their social identity.

1.3. Third-Wave Feminism

Because of the many interpretations among researchers, post-feminism has become a problematic concept in the terminology of feminist media studies and cultural studies; most of the argument revolves around the "post" prefix, which some think indicates "after feminism" (they feel as if feminism has gone). In contrast, others argue against this assumption, saying it means "latter feminism" coming after second-wave feminism.

It could be said that it is impossible to fix the meaning and goals of post-feminism. Brooks (1997) defines it as "Post Feminism is a contradictory pluralistic discourse that is mainly located in the academic context of television and cultural studies in the media context of popular culture and within consumer culture" (5).

Considering the feminist engagement with difference, post-feminism is a political perspective. This movement aims to break down gender norms and prejudices that lead to injustice by encouraging women to define femininity for themselves. Hence, according to Gamble (2001), the term "post-feminism" refers to a "backlash" against second-wave feminism. Post-feminism encompasses challenges to the second wave's concepts and critical approaches to former feminist discourses (306).

Easton (2012) studied feminism in medieval art history, arguing that feminism may have become more irrelevant, or at the very least outmoded, due to various apparent concentrations on women. Thus, academic departments and programs formerly known as Women's Studies or Feminist Studies have increasingly been renamed Gender and Sexuality Studies. Such changes may appear to culminate in a natural progression—women cannot be understood without men, and men have gender (143-169). Jones (2003) questions to what extent women's concerns are being absorbed into those of men? The backlash to feminism has come in waves, and American culture has often been labeled postfeminist. Others could describe it as "antifeminist" (314-329). Regardless of how it has been perceived, feminism has become an "F word." Many young people appear hesitant to identify as feminists, even if they unequivocally embrace the core notion of equal opportunity (Jones, 2003: 108). "But even if "feminism" is out of fashion as a term, as a methodology, it has shaped various disciplines and opened new avenues of investigation. Because of the influence of feminism and other postmodern strategies, we have fields such as gender studies, postcolonial theory, and queer studies (Easton, 2012: 108).

A woman's image in society is crucial to her identity. In the past, women in commercial marketing and media were represented as young, childlike, and feminine who lived in a world where she dealt with house chores, children, and her bedroom. Friedan (1963) says that "In battling for women's freedom to participate in the major work and decisions of society as the equals of men, they denied their very nature as a woman, which fulfills itself only through sexual passivity, acceptance of male domination, and nurturing motherhood" (71). Friedan (1963) adds that women do not answer the question of "Who am I?" as "I am Marry, I am Lisa," rather than they respond as "I am John's mother" or "I am Mark's wife" (68). The women were forced to forget their identities; they preferred to introduce themselves according to the social roles given to them by society. However, this picture has been modified in recent years. The image of the new woman is youthful, too; she has a job and is less feminine. Her interaction with the males is unique in specific ways. She isn't a stay-at-home mom since the reader interacts with this new woman; her having a profession is extremely important to the reader of the publications. For a woman, professional life is unique in that it allows her to fulfill herself

first and foremost by accomplishing something and becoming someone for herself, rather than simply living through or for others.

Since the first part of the 1990s, we've been living in what's been called the "third wave" or "post-feminism." The phrase "third wave" initially appeared in the United States when a group of young women named themselves Third-wave feminists assembled to oppose high court judgments. They aimed to bring together and organize feminists across the country. Besides, they tried to get together young and older women of various cultures, races, and socioeconomic backgrounds. Within third-wave feminism, specific methods might be identified. These include intersectional theory, postmodernist and poststructuralist feminist theories, postcolonial feminist theory, and young feminists' new generation agenda (Coleman, 2009: 3-9). There was a postfeminist idea at the end of the 1980s that thought that the feminist demands had been fulfilled and that feminism had ended. Furthermore, it may be claimed that non-Western reactions to a Western-centred, colonial perspective are included in the third-wave women's movement, known as postcolonial feminism. Movements like Black Feminism and Islamic Feminism are new additions to the feminist landscape.

Women living in the twentieth century witnessed Second World War and started to work under bad conditions. "In the years of war, although women worked under the dangerous circumstances and despite their long-time working hours, they were receiving less wage than men" (Kadıoğlu, 2005: 26). Women still work at jobs classified as non-skilled, part-time, and low-paid. Although women's voices began to be noticed more because of globalization, they became gendered. Men have continued to have the most power and authority around the globe. Masculine notions likewise dominate the economic system. Around the world, women earn a lower fraction of what males do. Women who contribute to production work in positions with inadequate structural conditions and are physically demanding (Peterson, 2010: 205-212). These works are not official. In addition to the fact that agriculture has the most significant proportion of women, women outnumber males in services such as tourism, export manufacturing, and food preparation. These industries have a terrible reputation and pay low wages (Elias & Ferguson, 2010: 235-237).

The third-wave feminist movement might be claimed to have stressed diversification and multiple identities rather than similarities, as well as the local rather than the universal. Assuming that feminism is primarily Eurocentric, regional issues such as class differences and racial inequality remain unaddressed. Third-wave feminists contend that such a perspective is insufficient to comprehend women's difficulties in non-Western civilizations, claiming that each society has its unique set of women's problems. They established a philosophy centered

on local concerns rather than a global one, recognizing that these difficulties would be individual. As a result, while the second-wave feminist vision calls for absolute equality, third-wave feminist perception develops a discourse that emphasizes disparities.

The third wave of feminists wanted to deal with women's issues at the individual level rather than all generalizing women's issues. In other words, they tended to engage in politics over the topics of individual women. They saw women both as a gender role and as an identity. While the second-wave feminist perception wanted absolute equality, the third-wave feminist perception believed that differences were valuable and important. Some women's movements wished to spread to a broad base rather than within groups. However, they attached importance to disseminating all kinds of activities, especially education, that would provide a social transformation and increase awareness (Heywood & Drake, 1997).

Language is one of the essential areas for feminists to work on because dominance relationships may simply be established through language from a male perspective. Even though culture has a vital role in gender inequality, language is one of the most important places where gender disparity is created. Language is a creator as well as a transmitter and reflection of culture. It is hard to suggest that a language dominated by a masculine point of view is free from prejudices. Post-structuralist feminist theorists highlighted that language defines gender's cultural position and that contemporary language cannot treat women fairly. The recognition of language as permanent and immutable is the most critical topic for Kristeva (as cited in Chanter, 2009: 99). Kristeva employed semiotics, recognizing gender discrimination in language. She adopted a position that articulated the distinction between literary feminine and masculine texts that would only serve to perpetuate gender inequality (as cited in Tong, 2009: 161-162).

As a result, Post Feminism might be seen as a critique of prior "traditional or classical" feminism. The targets of criticism are the second wave's binary thinking essentialism, thoughts on sexuality, perspective on the link between "femininity and feminism," and body politics. It also offers and articulates alternatives, such as anti-essentialism and hybridism, which emphasize female sexual pleasure and liberty, and denial of body politics, which defines the body as a fundamental aspect of a woman's identity.

In the following chapter, hooks' life and her perspective on feminism are laid bare.

CHAPTER II
HOOKSIAN FEMINISM

Feminism appears to have lost sight of its founding principle since the end of the twentieth century. “Men hatred,” “dressed like a man,” and “behaving macho” sprang to mind when one heard the words “feminism” or “feminist.” Feminist theorist and cultural critic hooks addressed her suffering from these anti-feminist approaches in her book *Feminism is for Everybody* (2000), after twenty years of preparation for writing. She says hearing about the feminist theory is:

> all about the evil of feminism and the bad feminists: how “they” hate men; how “they” want to go against nature and god; how “they” are all lesbians; how “they” are taking all the jobs and making the world hard for white men, who do not stand a chance” (hooks, 2000a: vii).

As a radical feminist, hooks had a different perspective which cannot be easily negotiated as her position does not hesitate to criticize even her closest allies. For example, one of her greatest wishes was to be able to write without labels. It also reacted to the labels that she wanted the pen name to be written in lower case. Hence, understanding hooks requires knowing some details about her background because her theoretical position is based on her experiences as a black woman.

2.1. About the Author

Gloria Jean Watkins, better known as bell hooks, was born on September 25, 1952, in Hopkinsville, Kentucky, and died on December 15, 2021, in Berea, Kentucky. Rosa Bell Watkins (née Oldham) and Veodis Watkins had seven kids. Watkins was one of them. In the houses of white families, her father worked as a janitor and her mother as a maid. hooks was an author, cultural critic, and activist. She was an academic and scholar most recognized for her works on racism, class discrimination, capitalism, mass media, and sexism. Before joining Berea College in Berea, Kentucky, in 2004, she taught at Stanford University, Yale University, and The City College of New York and launched the hooks Institute a decade later. hooks, who has over thirty books and numerous papers to her credit, became popular with her writings in the 1980s and 1990s. Gloria Jean Watkins is her actual name, but she prefers to go by the pseudonyms she got from her great-grandmother Bell Blair Hooks. She chose not to use capital letters in her name to emphasize her wish to draw attention to her opinions and reactions to various forms of capitalism rather than who she is. Cooke (2012) testifies that “hooks developed

her penname when she first began to publish poetry to assert her autonomy from another woman in her home community of the same name" (3). Davidson and Yancy (2009) argue that hooks' adoption of a penname exemplifies her continued refusal to be silenced because adopting a pen name served to transgress the role of passive observer to one of the active subject" (1-3).

hooks was born into a working-class black household. Feminism, according to hooks, should not be regarded as a movement by and for white, middle-class, educated women. She maintained that true female solidarity could only be achieved if economic inequality, racism, nationalism or chauvinism, militarism, homophobia, and transphobia were addressed. She wrote over thirty books, from essays and poetry to children's books. She authored several scientific publications, appeared in documentaries and gave public talks. Some of hooks' works are *Reel To Reel: Sex and Class at The Movies* (1996), *Killing Race: Ending Racism* (1996), *Outlaw Culture: Resisting Representation, Sisters of the Yam: Black Woman and Self-Recovery* (1993), *Black Looks: Race and Representation* (1992), *Yearning: Race, Gender and Cultural Politics* (1990), *Talking Back: Thinking Feminist, Thinking Black* (1989), *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center* (1984), *Ain't I a Woman: Black Woman and Feminism* (1981), *Salvation: Black People And Love* (2001), *Justice: Childhood Love Lessons* (2000), *Happy to Be Nappy* (1999), and *Homemade Love* (2002). She attempted to popularize feminism as she tried to do so in her book *Feminism is for Everybody*, written in the plain and pellucid language. In her writings, she tackled the issue of love to varying degrees by giving examples from her personal life to concretize and support her claims.

hooks portrays herself as the daughter of a working-class family from the South in *Bone Black*. She narrates her stories in first-person or third-person perspectives. She believes marriage is a place of pleasure for males and silence for women. She claims that the children have many reasons to weep and that the father and daughter who live in the same house are strangers to each other. She, a rebellious child keen on reading, hides behind all of these childhood disappointing memories and loneliness. hooks (1996) describes her childhood years in Southern culture as "sometimes paradisical and at other times terrifying" (11). For these bittersweet feelings, hooks (1989) says, "pain can be a constructive sign of growth" (103). Yet, she never gave up reading, although all family members wanted her to marry or become a teacher. She resisted her family, and their plans were done for her present. The little child had been busy: "mapping a different destiny" (hooks, 1997: 10) since she was just ten years old.

Slavery has been a part of their ancestors' lives for over two centuries. Her family lived in an era when racism was still prevalent. Even though they lived in America, their parents worked as servants for superior white people. Because they were Afro-American inferior

blacks, she sensed something was wrong with the society she lived in when she was a little child. She decided to struggle, rebel, and resist rather than accept her fate in a peaceful corner. Despite her struggles and punishments, she had not failed to be at peace with herself. She had never rejected her past but embraced and loved herself despite her qualities that could make her criticized in society:

> I must be kin to hooks – a sharp-tongued woman, a woman who spoke her mind, a woman who was not afraid to talk back. I claimed this legacy of defiance, of will, of courage, affirming my link to female ancestors who were bold and daring in their speech. […] hooks, as I discovered, claimed, and invented her was my ally, my support (hooks, 1989: 9).

She moved away from Kentucky to study English at Stanford University in Palo Alto, California. She was exposed to racism, sexism, class discrimination, and loneliness throughout her education. However, she started writing her first book, *Ain't I a Woman?: Black Women and Feminism*, during her university education. hooks was inspired by her black fellow, Sojourner Truth, and her speech, as seen in her book's title. She earned her master's degree in English literature from The University of Wisconsin-Madison in 1976 and returned to California after graduation. She began her career as a lecturer at the University of Southern California (1976-1979). And *There We Wept*, a collection of poetry published in 1978, was her first publication as a poet. Under the moniker hooks, the book was released. Her first non-fiction book, *Ain't I a Woman?: Black Women and Feminism* was published in 1981, after many years of hard work. She defended her Ph.D. at the University of California, Santa Cruz, in 1983. GJW advanced her academic and literary careers in the 1980s, publishing the book *Feminist Theory from Margin to Center* (1984) and working at Yale University (1985-1988). In an article titled On Being Black at Yale: Education as the Practice of Freedom, she discussed her experiences at Yale (1989). It condemned one of the Ivy League's oldest and most respected American colleges. She served at the Department of Women's Studies and American Literature at Oberlin College (Ohio) from 1988 until 1994. She became a professor of English literature at City College of New York in 1995 and stayed there until 2004. In 2004, she returned to Kentucky and began working as a Distinguished Professor in Residence at Berea College in Berea. The Hooks Institute was formed in Berea in 2014 (Ostaszewska, 2020: 6-7).

Dickinson was one of the writers who affected hooks tremendously on her path to becoming a writer. Dickinson didn't impress her because she was born a female. Neither the author's race nor the fact that she is a white woman impacted hooks. She had read the author's writings, ignoring all the labels since the essential point was that Dickinson "evoked those emotions I felt but could not talk about with anyone. It was all there in her words" (hooks, 2015:

9-10) and her writings compromises with hook's mentality. The author was a source of inspiration:

> Dickinson's field of vision made contemplation of metaphysics, religion, and nature the space where she experienced life to the fullest. While her race, gender, and class had shaped the outer boundaries of her experience, inside, she lived unbounded. She lived in service to the imagination. She had surrendered. That was the mark of the great writer: the willingness to submit to the power of the imagination (hooks, 2015: 10).

hooks wrote two essential autobiographical books, *Bone Black: Memories of Girlhood* (1996) and *Wounds of Passion: A Writing Life* (1997). Both volumes chronicle the author's transformation from a little girl to a woman and her family's rejection of her becoming a writer. They also raise the subject of whether a feminist can have a relationship with a male. Two of the most important topics are love and sexuality as well. The narrating language is non-linear, moving between first and third-person singular to narrate the story. (Moore, 1998: 12). Ethnic women authors have discovered that writing autobiographies are an ideal approach to recount their life stories from their unique viewpoints in their battle to communicate with their familiar voices and make them heard. They describe it as an alternate interpretation of reality viewed through the eyes of a black woman. (Braxton 1989: 201). This approach they portray themselves is one of the primary characteristics that distinguish them from other feminists as womanists as well. Telling a person's life story might assist them in coming to terms with their rejected self and identity. Autobiography can be qualified as "therapeutic" according to Kenyon and Randall (1997) "to attribute to the telling of one's life story, since storytelling (and story listening) is not merely a method for solving particular problems that crop up in our lives, but has an importance and integrity all its own, as a means to personal wholeness" (2). Gagnier points that about this genre: "there is a 'pragmatics of representation' where truth is less the issue than 'the purpose an autobiographical statement serves in the life and circumstances of its author and readers" (as cited in Anderson, 2001: 91). Thus "*Bone Black* is a significant addition to the traditions of autobiography by women and African Americans" (Shockley, 1997: 554). The author explains her aim for writing autobiographical studies in talking with journalist Moore (1998): "It's funny because people often act like I always say things about myself. There has to be a way to bring together audiences of people who are from different classes - that's how I entered into making the private public" (12-13).

In the autobiographical genre, hooks (1996) clarified the conflict between the perception of reality and fiction: "evoking the mood and sensibility of moments, this is an autobiography of perceptions and ideas. The events described are always less significant than the impressions

they leave on the mind and heart" (15). It is a kind of a storytelling version of one's memories. As the author remembers and interprets them, these past recollections and events might be communicated away from what happened (hooks, 1989: 157). Therefore, hooks (1996) says about her biography: "this is autobiography as truth and myth" (14). Lorde's autobiographical work, Zami, serves as a reminiscent of the author of her work: "I began to think of the work I was doing as both fiction and autobiography. It seemed to fall in the category of writing that Lorde, in her autobiographically-based work Zami, calls biomythography" (hooks, 1989: 157-58).

On the other hand, the author's autobiographical works are not written in chronological order but her memories are given in fragments: "I do not remember the big picture of childhood, everything comes to me in small broken fragments. Even when I piece things together, the pieces never make a whole fragment. There is never a complete picture" (hooks, 1997: 17). There is no actual time and place. Memoirs are not written chronologically. (Shockley, 1997: 553). Another feminist author used the stream of consciousness technique in her novels. *Mrs. Dallowey* is one of her best-known books about fragmented past events. In this regard, it can be claimed that these two feminist authors appeal similar techniques.

hooks lived her adulthood in the 50s and 60s. Those were the years of the Civil Rights Movement and the Black Arts Movement when black men's concerns were at the forefront and sexism reigned supreme. As a child, she often felt alone and yearned for belonging. Finally, the child finds her belonging in books, "creating the foundation of selfhood and identity that will ultimately lead to the fulfillment of her true destiny —becoming a writer" (hooks, 1996: 11). Her family and surroundings constantly criticized her. "I hear again and again that I am crazy, that I will end up in a mental institution. This is my punishment for wanting to finish reading before doing my work" (hooks, 1996: 101).

Instead of complaining about the suffering, inner conflicts, loneliness, and yearning she experienced as a child, the author reflected:

> In the end, I did not feel as if I had killed the Gloria of my childhood. Instead I had rescued her. She was no longer the enemy within, the little girl who had to be annihilated for the woman to come into being. In writing about her, I reclaimed that part of myself I had long ago rejected, left uncared for, just as she had often felt alone and uncared for as a child. Remembering was part of a cycle of reunion, a joining of fragments" the bits and pieces of my heart "that the narrative made whole again. (hooks, 1989: 159).

2.2. Woman of Color

Since "black is a woman's color" (hooks, 1996: 176), hooks' mother prevented her from wearing black clothing. Thus, black was a crucial color for hooks, and she had an intense

yearning for this ethnic hue. The dolls she plays with shouldn't be black, either. Her mother insisted that she and her sisters always play with fair-skinned beauties. However, hooks didn't want to quit playing with dark-skinned dolls since the uniqueness of barbie dolls irritated her:

> She tells us that I, her problem child, decided out of nowhere that I did not want a white doll to play with; I demanded a brown doll, one that would look like me [...] I had begun to worry that all this loving care we gave to the pink and white flesh-colored dolls meant that somewhere left high on the shelves were boxes of unwanted, unloved brown dolls covered in dust. I thought that they would remain there forever, orphaned and alone, unless someone began to want them, to want to give them love and care, to want them more than anything (hooks, 1996: 24).

She refused to straighten her hair because she noticed traces of patriarchy and oppression in this ritual:

> Secretly I had hoped that the hot comb would transform me, turn the thin good hair into thick nappy hair, the kind of hair I like and long for [...] Later, a senior in high school, I want to wear a natural, an Afro. I want never to get my hair pressed again. It is no longer a rite of passage, a chance to be intimate in the world of women. The intimacy masks betrayal. Together we change ourselves. The closeness is an embrace before parting, a gesture of farewell to love and one another (hooks, 1996: 93).

While continuing to read the authors she admired, she wanted to read a black author, someone of her kind. She was overjoyed when she discovered the edited volumes by Countee Cullen and Claude McKay. It brought her tremendous joy to read Johnson's short sonnets; she felt as if she knew by heart while reading her book. Since:

> Finding the work of these black poets affirmed that I was not a freak, a special aberration. …. That white world made me doubt myself. And in the space of that doubt I needed proof that they were all wrong—that there are great writers who happened to be black, just as my beloved Emily Dickinson happened to be white. Despite the fact that it was hard to find published writings by black authors, I found my proof and I was set free. (hooks, 2015: 12-13).

The world of white supremacy gives tremendous importance to labels in literature such as race, gender, class domination, and identity matters. Whereas being a writer should not be bordered by the color of a persona. "It was not the world of segregated blackness that sought to deny me a place of transcendence where the content of my writing would be deemed more important than the color of my skin. The world of whiteness imposed rigid barriers" (hooks, 2015: 13).

Isoke, one of two black women amid the white majority at Rutgers University, heard the following remarks from a white female lecturer defining hooks in the lecture: "angry," "mean-spirited," and "intellectually sloppy" (Isoke, 2019: 15). Black woman's marginality had

just turned into those epithets. It is one of the last things a woman should do to another woman, no matter being black or white, since "Our survival depended on an ongoing public awareness of the separation between margin and center and an ongoing private acknowledgment that we were a necessary part of that whole" (hooks: 1984, 18). Without this acceptance, is it possible to remain united and achieve the struggle for the same purpose on the same path? Moreover, it could be the reason for hating self and each other. "Women of color must confront our absorption of white supremacist beliefs, 'internalized racism' which may lead us to feel self-hate, to vent anger and rage at one another, or to lead one ethnic group to make no effort to communicate with another" (hooks, 1984: 57).

Isoke (2019) states that "Ironically, white women's co-optation of black feminist theory has become so pervasive that there are now black women and other women of color who publicly distance themselves from 'intersectional feminism' because the term is associated with white female college students" (17). This is a political way of distinguishing black feminist theory from black women's marginalized life experiences.

2.3. Sexism and Patriarchy

hooks recognized that she referred to her brother rather than her sisters when she read her whole autobiography (hooks, 1989: 159). This absence seems like an indication of estrangement from her sisters. Men in her life were dominant and took place more than women around. Women in her family and communion were taught to be silent and submissive towards the domination and patriarchy. Then, women's dependence on men shows a chain of events that pushes women to normalize male patriarchy: "She has chosen. She has decided in his favor. She is a religious woman. She has been told that a man should obey God, a woman should obey a man, and that children should obey their fathers and mothers, particularly their mothers. I will not obey" (hooks, 1996: 151).

For hooks, his father was the embodiment of patriarchy. On the other hand, her maternal grandfather, Guss, was entirely outside this patriarchy: "I need his presence in my life to learn that all men are not terrible, are not to be feared" (hooks, 1996: 85). Her brother was the symbol of the second patriarch following the father figure around as it was demonstrated in *Bone Black.* While her bond with her sisters did not exceed ten pages, her recollections of her brother did much more. In her family, men (father and brother) are always superior and are supported to sustain this domination and sex discrimination by the females. In an interview, the author describes the patriarch she experienced as follows:

> A lot of this book is about my brother ... And suddenly, the bruises all made sense because my brother would try to push me in this wheelbarrow, and he was very slick. It was like: I fall over, and my parents would say, 'Push her, she's the girl, you're the boy ...' and this was all our gender thing, you know. And as soon as we got around the corner, he would dump me out, and he would say, 'It's better to push this wheelbarrow than it is to ride in it.' This was his way of convincing me that I should push him and not be the rider. I felt that this was also such a metaphor of his own hatred of the male role; why should he not be pushed some of the times? Our parents didn't say (to push) each other equally. It was very much about the fact that you are the boy, you are the one who should push her and she is the little princess who should get a ride. His rebellion was against that. It was that kind of conflict. It struck me also that we don't always remember things exactly the way they happen. For twenty some years I had imagined my brother and I in that little red wagon that didn't exist. And yet, that memory had such a deep impact on my sense of gender, my sense of my brother, the bond between us (Moore, 1998: 13).

Cooke (2012) claims that hooks was exposed to violence in many forms, noting that his father disciplined her forcefully. Starting with this, patriarchal violence significantly impacted hooks' life. One factor that motivated her to become a writer was her early exposure to this pressure. hooks was subjected to three major incidents of patriarchal assault, namely, the red wagon incident, playing with marbles, and her mother's expulsion from the family home:

1. The red wagon incident: Her brother pulling her rather than pushing her in a red wagon symbolized castration and gender power relations (hooks, 1996: 19-21). "… [and he] … was to pull it because he was a boy" (hooks, 1996: 19). According to the men in the family, hooks "was to ride in it because she was a girl" on the other hand her brother "was the boy and should do this" (hooks, 1996: 20-21). Moreover, about her father's aggression toward her, her brother testified, "he hate, hate, hated her because she was a girl" (hooks, 1996: 21). hooks suffered from physical and emotional maltreatment coming from her father and brother.

2. Playing with marbles: hooks wanted to play marbles with her brother, but she was rejected because she had none to play with. She is offered to play with an old, beaded purse and a quilt. It made her frustrated and angry (hooks, 1996: 76-78). After a while, although her family gave her a few second-hand books, she was not satisfied since she was not permitted to play with her brother. Suddenly, she passed through the marbles on the ground her brother played with; her father blamed her for destroying that masculine space in a way to break down the gender roles. He physically attacked her, and her mother just watched at a distance (hooks, 1996: 29-30). In this African-American household, violence, force, tyranny, dominance, and masculinity were forced upon hooks.

In *The Will to Change: Men, Masculinity, and Love*, hooks tackled this experience-playing marbles- again. In this version, the rule of father patriarchy was the same, yet, some details shed light on this incident:

> one evening my brother was permitted by Dad to bring out the tin of marbles" since he banned playing each other with marbles and was highly eager to give a lesson to his son and daughter about gender roles. She described his act as beating and intervening with her again (hooks, 2004: 20).

hooks' way of describing the incident seems to have changed. This time, not only her mother but also the whole family watched the "rapt before the pornography of patriarchal violence" passively and silently (hooks, 2004: 21). Thus, "beating" is named "pornography" in this chapter.

Reading the marble game incident in *Bone Black*, Gonzalez (2001) hypothesizes that hooks was "not understanding the established premise that she must grow up to be a good subservient wife and mother" (240). Cooke (2012) supports this idea as follows: "The violent patriarchal policing hooks was subjected to is perceived as for her own good because a good subservient wife and mother are granted patriarchal 'security' through marriage which affords her the protection of a husband and the privilege of heterosexuality" (6).

3. Her mother's expulsion from the family home: In *Wounds of Passion,* according to hooks (1997), the incident was experienced as follows: "and she came running into the house with him close behind yelling and hitting ... [because] … he was confronting her about sleeping with another man" (9). Her father seemed to believe that "she was going to have to leave his house before he killed her" (hooks, 1997: 10). His violence aimed to re-established his challenged masculinity, briefly destabilizing the household's power, another sign of male dominance (Cooke, 2012: 7). hooks felt 'that night it was as though she and mama were one' for the first time (hooks, 1997: 9). Yet it did not take long. Her mother decided to return home. Returning to the family home rekindled hooks' anger as it fired her resistance while her relationship with her mum ruptured again (hooks, 1997: 177).

These critical incidents exemplified how the lives of many African-Americans were dominated by men: "In the world of the southern black community, I grew up in, "black talk" and "talking back" meant speaking as an equal to an authority figure. It meant daring to disagree, and sometimes it just meant having an opinion" (hooks, 1989: 5). The author's further comments shed light on this aggressive patriarchy a girl child witnessed:

> It was clearly the Gloria Jean of my tormented and anguished childhood that I wanted to be rid of, the girl who was always wrong, always punished, always subjected to some humiliation or other, always crying, the girl who was to end up in a mental institution because she could not be anything but crazy, or so they told her. She was the girl who sat a hot iron on her arm pleading with them to leave her alone, the girl who wore her scar as a brand marking her madness. Even now I can hear the voices of my sisters saying 'mama make Gloria stop crying. (hooks, 1989: 155).

It can be claimed that domestic violence turned hooks to nature. According to hooks, one could find tranquility in nature as she found solace there like Thoreau and Emerson, whose autobiographical accounts contained numerous events that glorified nature for being a peaceful space amidst the turmoil created in society. hooks (1996) stated that she liked playing with a bright green snake that lived in nature. She talked and listened to the snake: "She told the snake about the problems she was having, learning her left from her right. The snake understood her frustration, her tears" (11). Although one may assume that it was an individual experience, it must be clarified that trees play a vital role in the daily lives of African women who are spiritual individuals. Trees are powerful symbols. They are "beyond death, and beyond social injustice, deprivation, or personal assault" (DeVita, 2000, 51). hooks (1996) claims that her grandmother Salu "needs to have her fingers in the soil, to touch the dirt. She tells me this is part of her mother's legacy [...] From her mother, she learned ways to make things grow" (52). Accordingly, for hooks and her grandmother, "[c]ommunion with life begins with the earth" (hooks, 2000b: 16). All these examples show that hooks' involvement with nature was first a bodily experience and then a spiritual one. As the quotes above articulate, such bodily involvements refer to a collective experience shared by likely women. In hooks' case, these women were first found in her family.

2.4. Family Relations

It is possible to reach information when one reads the author's autobiographies that the figures of father and brother are the symbol of violence and patriarchy, contrary to her eternal grandfather Guss. Her interaction with her sisters is pretty fewer. hooks explains this lack:

> when I finished the book and I read it, there were ten pages on my sisters and I felt really shocked by that, and I felt like should I go back and rewrite the book so that it would include something about my sisters. And that was when I said, well no, if you didn't write them, if they weren't part of the memories that really shaped you then they shouldn't be there. I didn't have a lot of interaction with them (Moore, 1998:13).

For her mother, hooks was a "problem child," and for other family members, she was "next to nothing." She grew up as an isolated one from her family and communion. On the other hand, Big Mama and Granma Saru took place affirmatively in hooks' life to "teach hooks how to interpret dreams and tell her about the heritages that belong to her as a woman, as an African American, as someone who is part 'Indian'" (Shockley, 1997: 553-554).

Instead of protecting her daughter whenever hooks was subjected to physical and psychological abuse, her mother stood by silently and caved into her husband's demands. "The

maternal relationship was marred by the daughter's refusal to be silenced and her mother's refusal to defy her husband, despite the consequences for hooks" (Cooke, 2012: 6). As in the case of hooks' request to play marbles with his brother, her mother just responded: "… [d]idn't I tell you to leave those marbles alone? Didn't I tell you?" (hooks, 1998: 30). With each occurrence, hooks' relationship with her mother deteriorated a little more. After a while, the rest of the family surrendered to the patriarchy with the same apathy as the mother figure.

Saru the grandmother, knows well about the black art of quilt making, which is making new products by making patch-working from old quilts taken from others. Saru gave hooks a quilt, leaving an essential imprint in her memory. This particular anecdote points to the collectivity among women:

> MAMA HAS GIVEN me a quilt from her hope chest. It is one of her mother's mother made. It is a quilt of stars —each piece taken from faded-cotton summer dresses— each piece stitched by hand [...] Mama tells us —her daughters— that the girls in her family started gathering things for their hope chest when they were very young [...] I am glad she shares the opening of the chest this time with all of us. I am clutching the gifts she hands to me, the quilt, the beaded purse (hooks, 1996: 1, 2).

Quilt making was an essential asset for African-American women who learned much about this art. Kelley (1994) analyzed some African-American women authors, such as Walker, Morrison, and Naylor, and discovered the relationship between the quilt and the African-American woman:

> these literary women rely on partial, local, and fragmented knowledge to make a narrative. The writers acknowledge that both the quilts and the narratives -as well as the beings who are their makers- are constructed. However, they regard the need to piece and seam not as a reason for despair but as an opportunity to rework the outmoded, whether it be in clothing, novel structures or conceptions of the self. (Kelly, 1994: 66).

It may be stated that family relationships and events among family members may catalyze future female movements. It is not to be overlooked. Like quilts, novels and autobiographies are also constructed accounts of a person's life.

2.5. Racial and Social Discrimination

Watkins (hooks) "first searching for her own identity has started with using a penname -hooks- derived from her great grandmother. "hooks" pen name subsequently allowed her to claim an identity that served as an active process for breaking through the imposed forms of isolation which reverberated throughout her childhood" (Davidson & Yancy, 2009: 1-4).

hooks attempt to reclaim control of her subjectivity and identity. She would rewrite her own story or how Lorde (1984) describes it "to mother" herself, "claiming some power over who [she] choose[s] to be" (173).

hooks and Guss, her maternal grandfather, enter a dark cave holding hands. The girl sees her grandfather building a fire to interact with the spirits in the cave's darkness. Guss symbolizes spirituality: "his voice comes from some secret place of knowing, a hidden cave where the healers go to hear messages from the beloved" (hooks 1996: 86). The cave, according to Eliade (1994), refers to a place where matriculation ceremonies take place. It symbolizes the womb of Mother Earth, where the beginner re-creates the embryonic environment to be born (58). Thus, her dream is a kind of ritual of self-discovery and rebirth for searching for her own identity, which is depicted from the girl's perspective in this chapter of the book.

The images "bone black," "cave," "fire," and "ash" are repeated by the young girl frequently throughout the novel. It could be claimed that those images are traditional transforming rituals. While narrating a dream, she experienced while at school, she draws pictures of the walls of the dark cave and accepts the color black as the "beginning," especially the bone black, "a carbonaceous substance obtained by calcifying bones in closed vessels" (hooks, 1996: 170). She got this definition from a book on the history of pigments. She immediately believed there was a link between the bone black and the cave's sacred purification fire: "Burning bones, that's what it makes me think about —flesh on fire, turning black, turning into ash" (hooks, 1996: 170). It may be concluded that hooks enters her inner realm, the cave, where she burns in the fire of salvation and is reduced to ashes. After a while, she is reborn from the ashes into the realm of power she belongs to; the yearning for a spiritual home and belonging ends. She rescues her own life: "I read poems. I write. That is my destiny. Standing on the cliff's edge, about to fall into the abyss, I remember who I am. I am a young poet a writer. I am here to make words. I have the power to pull myself back from death —to keep myself alive" (hooks, 1996: 182). hooks (1996) praises his great grandfather, Guss, through the last chapters of the book: "lots of ways to belong in this world and that she is supposed to find out where she belongs" (183). hooks' search for her feminine and ethnic identity is expressed as follows:

> At night when everyone is silent and everything is still, I lie in the darkness of my windowless room, the place where they exile me from the community of their heart, and search the unmoving blackness to see if I can find my way home. I tell myself stories, write poems, record my dreams. In my journal I write-I belong in this place of words. This is my home. This dark, bone black inner cave where I am making a world for myself (hooks, 1996: 183)

When hooks first started reading Winterson's work, she didn't see any personal information about her in the text. Almost nothing existed about her such as her ethnicity, gender, nationality, or social status. She enjoyed her work immensely and empathized with it. Winterson's work fascinated hooks mainly because of how well Winterson transgressed boundaries albeit textually. However, hooks criticized people's reading habits because, traditionally, it was accepted that "Readers should only read gay writers if they are gay, and black straight writers if they are black and straight" (hooks, 2015: 20).

Similarly, Winterson's work worked against the grain as much as Allison's:

> I do not know where to find writers who are so attached to labels. I hear about them most in the works of conservative thinkers who are condemning their narrow-mindedness, their failure to understand that great literature transcends race and gender. In her collection of essays *Skin: Talking About Sex, Class and Literature*, Dorothy Allison shares again and again that her work as an activist for lesbian and feminist movement never led her to assume that she would write from a limited perspective. To her and fellow lesbians whose writing she admires, "literature was about refusing all categories" Allison remembers one of her teachers, Bertha Harris, declaring: "There is no lesbian literature, she told us. The relevant word was literature, real literature that came out of an authentic lesbian culture (as cited in hooks, 2015: 20-21).

It can be assumed that there is no black or feminist literature for hooks. All that happens is that black people adapt their personal experiences to literature, or a writer shares their feminist beliefs with the audience. A person's interest in universal concerns does not depend on whether they are a man, woman, white, black, feminist, lesbian, or homosexual. Race, gender, and social position differences in the past and today are the outcome of "hierarchy" and "domination," limiting an author's identity. Yet, hooks (2015) says: "I am not a writer who happens to be black. I am a writer who is black and female. These aspects of my identity strengthen my creative gifts. They are neither burdens nor limitations" (21).

Consequently, the author offers that "we could avoid using the phrase 'I am a feminist (a linguistic structure designed to refer to some personal aspect of identity and self-definition) and could state, 'I advocate feminism'" (hooks, 1984: 31). hooks "arrived at college confident that she was a poet. She was not searching for an identity. She was not even searching for love. She knew she was a poet" (hooks, 1997:39). Before her experiences became inside out, her first aim was so. Cooke claims that one of the main factors in hooks' *Ain't I a Woman?* is her isolation from paternal violence. hooks' marginalization resulted in shifting her identity while attempting to write about black feminism after witnessing racial and social discrimination intensively at segregated schools (Cooke, 2012: 10).

Racial discrimination has become a field in which white writers embrace it, not just in rhetoric but also in literature. hooks (1984) shows explicitly that "racism abounds in the writing of white feminists, reinforcing white supremacy and negating the possibility that women will bond politically across ethnic and racial boundaries" (3). It should suffice to say that many young people hold a white woman-centered understanding of feminist history.

As I explained in the first chapter, when white feminists could publish without using pseudonyms in literature over time, there were still no black female writers with the same right. Because the feminist movement did not incorporate women of various ethnic origins, black womanists or feminists had to operate separately from the white feminists to achieve this right equally.

Writing an autobiography is reconstructing one's own life experiences. It is long-term since it is dynamic and requires a process. It is almost as if she's writing in her inner voice. In this individual liberating path, this voice allows one to realize own identity. hooks was a regular user of this strategy, and speaking in her own inner voice played a significant role in her search for self-identity. hooks (1993) says: "there is no healing in silence" (16).

The autobiographical genre is referenced in the book, *Talking Back. Thinking Feminist, Thinking Black*, as it is in many of the author's other works. However, this circumstance cannot be regarded as hooks' only motivation for revealing his personal life. The fundamental objective of hooks is to bring attention to African Americans living in America's long slavery history that lasted more than two centuries, not to make them forget their experiences, and to open them up for public discussion. That is why, in her book, she quotes the Freedom Charter declaration, which says, "Our struggle is also a struggle of memory against forgetting" (as cited in hooks, 1989: 4). The author reconstructs her autobiographical experiences on issues such as racism, social discrimination, education, identity for women, and feminism in twenty-five essays in this book. The book's name and her first essay's name, "Talking Back," is derived from "black talk" and "talking back" (history of black people) (hooks, 1989: 5).

hooks enjoyed reading Dickinson, Worthington, and Hopkins in high school. Under the influence of these writers, she began composing poetry. Throughout her education, she "had wonderful Black women teachers" (hooks, 1989: 59). According to hooks, the transition from black public schools to segregated schools was the starting point of the dilemma between white supremacy and racism. hooks was abruptly forced into the desegregation environment after completing her secondary education, accompanied by the National Guard. Most white girls went on a full scholarship to a college where blacks were working-class at school. She didn't feel like she belonged in this school anymore. It was a consciousness-raising moment for hooks.

"She now understood that white supremacy was a political ideology which governed the social mores of her life" (Cooke, 2012: 9). As a result, hooks had always placed importance on black schools (hooks, 2015: 11-12). Yet: "Racial desegregation changed all that. In the white school, smart black people were suspected. Even though my teachers nurtured my longing to write, it was there that I first learned that I would confront barriers—that there would be folks who would not be able to take writing by a black author seriously" (hooks, 2015: 12).

Fear was an essential element of hooks' personal life and her writing (Arikan, 2002). Since she was thirteen, "she had learned to fear white folks without understanding what it is she fears ... [because] … the world is more a home for white folks than it is for anyone else, that Black people who most resemble white folks will live better in that world" (hooks, 1996: 31). Fear and white folks are concentric for hooks since she feared 'without understanding' racism (Ibid). hooks, during her university education, was "invisible, a country girl from the south, with old-fashioned religion and a feudal sense of honor, things that had no place in their world" (hooks, 1997: 50). She further stated that such mismatches among students' backgrounds provided an opportunity for hooks because "[t]o be materially underprivileged at a university where most folks (except workers) are materially privileged provokes such thought" (hooks, 1989: 75).

Men and whites are not the only ones who wield dominance; it is an intertwined system. hooks began to use the word "white supremacist capitalist patriarchy" as a shorthand term that does not resemble anything to characterize these systems of dominance. Simply looking at an event from a sexist, racial, or white perspective is not enough. hooks explains "when we use the term white supremacy, it doesn't just evoke white people, it evokes a political world that we can all frame ourselves in relationship to". She adds that the only cause for her suffering is not only what whites do to blacks but also what blacks do to blacks when she considers her own life experiences. It is not only racism, she argues; therefore as a response, "We need to problematize nationalism beyond race" (Shockley, 1997: 7).

2.6. Capitalism, Media and Culture

hooks thinks that people who have managed to transform their lives somehow have critical thinking skills at their heart. Critical thinking is possessed by a person who is financially challenged yet can transform his/her life. Critical thinking, on the other hand, is lacking in people who have financial privileges yet live in a world full of challenges. For example, she compares schools where she worked as a teacher in Harlem (urban, predominantly non-white students' campus) and Yale or Oberlin (fancy, private, predominantly white schools). The

students in both schools were equally knowledgeable, as hooks observed. Students that come to Yale know how bright they are and have no concerns about their future. In reality, they perceive it as a right to have a future, not as a matter of knowledge. Students in Harlem, on the other hand, are frequently students who work, have children, live in challenging circumstances, and are unsure what to do with their education. Besides, hooks claims that "many professors do not try to give them the gift of critical thinking" (Shockley,1997: 3).

hooks explicitly claims in the preface of her book, *Talking Back. Thinking Feminist, Thinking Black*, that she is not scared to write about herself, that she embraces the opportunity to share all that is private since according to the author, "the personal is political". This approach serves a variety of goals. It contributes to the resolution of racism, social exclusion, sexism, and social inequality issues that an individual or ethnic group may face. It allows a person to see his or her place in society, as well as examine his or her own history and origins from the outside. However, the author adds that she is concerned about the reaction that may result from the publication of others' privacy (hooks, 1989: 1-4)). Her fear comes from the culture she lived in the black community has a strict rule not to reveal one's private life experiences.

hooks warns about writing an autobiography or telling life stories has an essential point in getting information about a nation's cultural characteristics since "[it] serves to illuminate and transform the present" (hooks, 1991: 147). It is a kind of memory that is alive for centuries:

> The longing to tell one's story and the process of telling is symbolically a gesture of longing to recover the past in such a way that one experiences both a sense of reunion and a sense of release. It was the longing for release that compelled the writing but concurrently it was the joy of reunion that enabled me to see that the act of writing one's autobiography is a way to find again that aspect of self and experience that may no longer be an actual part of one's life but is a living memory shaping and informing the present. Autobiographical writing was a way for me to evoke the particular experience of growing up southern and black in segregated communities. It was a way to recapture the richness of southern black culture. (hooks, 1989: 158).

Labels such as race, gender, or characteristics that separate one author from the others are given to authors in literature for commercial purposes. These labels limit one's access to literature as well as one's own identity. When a black or female writer works outside of these categories, his or her readership shrinks. Even if you've been labeled a "feminist" writer, publishing work that isn't about feminism will get you expelled. Though we live in a multicultural period, the mainstream mass media places restrictions on labeled authors. The less attention a person's work receives from the mainstream mass media, the more marginal his/her group position within the culture is. Since the mainstream mass media excluded individuals of diverse categories from reading the work, a black female writer detailing her life experiences

in black culture was less likely to be read by a white reader. However, if a white woman writes about her life experiences, the work might appeal to a universal readership. Although their lives are unrelated, hooks states she appreciated Jong's memoirs, in *Fear of Fifty*, about white Jewish society. The problem is that the media isn't aware that white women are interested in black women's work. This is especially true with women's mass-market magazines aimed at a large audience (hooks, 2015: 18-19). When hooks published her work *Bone Black*, "Again and again editors tried to describe it solely as a memoir about black girlhood. I resisted this so as not to imply that nonblack women could not relate to the experiences I recall" (hooks, 2015: 20) since it could be a way of "empathy" for all white women as well.

This is a wish for hooks as a writer: "I fantasize, as many writers do, of writing a book where no mention is made of my race or gender—where the work has to be considered on its own terms. To fantasize this is to imagine a publishing world that no longer exists, if it ever did" (hooks, 2015, 18). The quality of an author's work is no longer as crucial as his/her personality when it comes to marketing strategy. Unfortunately, the personality of an author is now just as crucial as the quality of his/hers work when it comes to marketing strategy. Lessing demonstrated this by publishing an anonymous work. When the author revealed her name, the book, which had previously received little notice, began to be purchased with tremendous enthusiasm.

Likewise, hooks criticize films and their deliberate representations because she believes blackness is commodified by American culture (Shockley, 1997: 21). hooks claims in Clark's Kids, the victim is chosen as a dark-skinned black man who has been brutally beaten to death. The reason is that "mass media uses more certain kinds of representations for specific impact and effect", the thing what is worse "we're also being told that these images are not really that important" (Shockley, 1997: 4).

hooks warns people about they should look at the producer and director of a Hollywood movie. Hollywood is controlled by the power of white male privilege. For the aim of more marketing Hollywood can produce whatever they want easily. She says about the impact of the movies: "Think about all the Americans who've never ever in their lives for one-second thought about Scotland and Ireland, who went to see Braveheart, who suddenly like put notions of British imperialism and the freedom of Ireland on their little social maps because of a Hollywood movie" (Shockley, 1997: 4).

In terms of racism, culture, and media influence, the author discussed and criticized Wang's film titled Smoke. Although the protagonist has no racial identification in the book, which was based on Auster's story, Wang preferred to cast a black actor to play the thief in the

film. Nobody wants to accept the reality of these conscious choices, such as white supremacy or racism, for commercial benefit. hooks says that “people consciously knowing what kinds of images will produce a certain kind of impact” (Shockley, 1997: 5). Thus, Wang could not explain its reasons. If Wang could answer, he’d have to say: “This will give this movie more zip to make the thief black; it will make it more compelling to people. It will give a kind of good guy, bad guy quality to it, and it will just make it all the more stimulating because he would have to admit that the fact that he simultaneously in making that choice is also reproducing certain kinds of racial stereotypes” (Shockley, 1997: 5).

The feminism movement, according to hooks, has been America’s most successful political movement in the last two decades. In the face of this powerful political movement, the media is being utilized to build a backlash against feminism. Although movies like Leaving Las Vegas and others openly offer messages of misogyny and sexism, they are rarely challenged. The employment of mass media for the same goal has not been limited to the last twenty years. In the past, women began to work in factories to earn money when world wars broke out. When the wars finished and the men returned home, women were again urged to “go back home” through the media. Similarly, the mass media is one of the most potent propaganda tools employed today to save women from feminism and return them to patriarchal thinking (Shockley, 1997: 6).

hooks states that “Black people aren’t needed to produce black cinematic culture because white people can produce that culture” (Shockley, 1997: 14). Hollywood and its creation of the American dream was an excellent tool for marketing. Lee, a black filmmaker, was at the pinnacle of his career, despite attempts in the United States to portray him as a failure with Malcolm X in magazines such as Time and Newsweek. The fact that it was not published about Allen, a failed white filmmaker in the same period, was done solely to protect white supremacy and patriarchy. For instance, Hollywood thinks the black-made Crooklyn movie doesn’t have a plot because White America is not interested in the story of a black mother’s death. “it almost a public announcement of the white takeover of that particular territory, the issue of representing blackness in Hollywood” (Shockley, 1997: 15).

Popular rap music is a vehicle to be talked about in mainstream news and perpetuates misogyny with lyrics that are not authentic rather than constructed by marketing. It should be accepted that rap music earns millions of dollars (annually $700 million) due to the plot of misogyny, obscenity, pugilistic eroticism, anti-feminism, and anti-woman. About these lyrics, “I really want to be with you – I get hard after seeing you. How hard? Hard like a rock when you make that coochie pop” by 2 Live Crew Music video hooks says that “how they want to

fuck a woman, and that will make tons of money…. The kind of capitalist and market forces that are driving young male and female artists who produce rap would suggest to me that they are going to go for the gusto, they are going to go for those millions" (Shockley, 1997: 18-19).

As a result, we are the consumers, and we demand all those commodifications, and mass media presents them for commercial marketing. hooks indicates that we didn't change this; we didn't fight against it, so now all we can do is embrace it and live out the consequences of it (hooks, 2002: 20). The solution is not to get rid of these presentations; but to enlighten and criticize. Being an enlightened witness over displays is possible with mass-based literacy. Otherwise, we can not discuss issues such as freedom and justice in any culture, since hooks says "literacy as we know from the work of Marshall McLuhan and many others that the degrees of literacy determine so often how we see what see, how we interpret it" (Shockley, 1997: 8).

In the following chapter, I will analyze hooks' two books to find the relationship between a woman's body and love in the way of liberation/emancipation of women.

CHAPTER III

THE REVIEW OF ALL ABOUT LOVE: NEW VISIONS AND COMMUNION: THE FEMALE SEARCH FOR LOVE BY HOOKS

3.1. Love

Love has been an argumentative concept for many years. Lyon (1986) states that Freud's comment on love is "poly-perverse infantile sexuality" (as cited in Lyon, 1986: 160). Marshall (2011) has an exciting formulation for love: "love = sex + friendship" (6). On the other hand, it is widespread to hear that one can love their mom (as a person) or a meal, flower, dress, etc. (as something). Riyanto (2015) states beyond desires, love is a phenomenon that can be characterized as positive. It is described as a person-dependent activity or a reaction to someone or something. This universally felt pleasant sensation could boost positive emotions like enthusiasm, happiness, belonging, new hopes and ambitions, and negative emotions like resentment and hatred. On this occasion, love unites disparate attitudes and egos. (as cited in Huda, 2018: 730). Although most significant scholars and philosophers have studied love, identifying and describing love is impossible. Considering that the studies on love have exceeded 200 years, "Love, in short, has yet to be given its full due" (Monahan, 2011: 104). Gibran (1997) says that "I purified my lips with sacred fire that I might speak of love, but when I opened my mouth to speak, I found myself mute" (1). Since love may have various meanings and types for each person, it is hard to fix it as a single definition. Thus, the practice of love can be used and understood with multiple interrelated meanings.

According to Locatelli (2007), "Love is worthy of analysis and attention because its ambivalence is ineliminable from the relational statute of love itself, and no relationship can ever coincide with its representation" (340). In this context, feminist philosophy has provided little when the importance of the subject is considered. Love as a subject "is for the use of whoever is concerned about keeping it, though it has very an uncertain epistemological grounding" (Locatelli, 2007: 340). hooks, who is closely interested in love ethics, has considered it a unifying and transforming power in the political field to fight for dominance and oppression in society. Separating love as a form of emotion and a powerful act in society, hooks considered love a strategy women had to withhold. What distinguishes hooks's assessment of love as a practice is that she goes beyond the theological side of the matter and offers a theoretical perspective that contains practical uses. Although she respects and embraces the

theological side of love, hooks supports a theology of love that includes practical philosophy (Monahan, 2011: 104).

In *All About Love: New Visions* (2000a), hooks works on the subject of love in detail. Although the text has various references to love, it is necessary to combine hooks's other texts to arrive at more comprehensive documentation and presentation of love. Given the author's manner of presenting self-experiences while reaching conclusions, it is evident that she revisits the same subject in her other books, essays, and interviews at various times. For instance, while her book *All About Love: New Visions* (2000a) presents an extended meditation about love, her essay *Love as the Practice of Freedom* (1994) emphasizes the liberating power of love. On the other hand, in many of her studies, hooks presents partial replies to independent queries.

By the twentieth century, a supremacist culture had taken hold and one of the main reasons, according to hooks (1994), was that we had moved away from love. "A culture of domination is anti-love" (293) she exclaimed and formulated that the way to liberation was returning to love. Thus, for hooks (1994) love is a choice: "to move toward freedom, to act in ways that liberate ourselves and others" (298).

As in the examples given above, critics have different interpretations and definitions of love. hooks, on the other hand, included the practice of love in her works and clarified the liberating effect of love. She offers some new definitions, insertions, and tools to make the concept of love a practical reality that works against male supremacy. Although the concepts of love and liberation have lost their fundamental meanings and purposes over time, there is a direct relationship between them. Any liberation movement would fail if it did not include love. The way to the liberation of individuals and communities passes through love: "Love is a recurring theme in hooks' thought, where it is explicitly linked to her understanding of freedom and liberation" (Monahan, 2011: 102).

In a similar vein, Godden (2017) assesses Monahan's hooksian perspective on love: "reflecting the emancipatory imperative of social work, feminist hooks promotes love as a political process to transform systems of injustice such as capitalism, patriarchy, and racism" (1). Godden (2017) interprets hooks' struggle for love as follows; It is a call for a radical shift away from the dominance ethic, which intersects capitalism, racism, and patriarchy, and toward the ethic of love. hooks defines love as a discipline in which we choose to accept responsibility and accountability. Power and abuse are the opposites of love. Her love is philosophical ontology in practice (2). Similarly, according to Edelstein (2010), Nienhuis (2010), and Nash (2013) hooks' approach to the ethics of love is considered politically radicalising. Glass (2010)

adds that hooks' concept of love has a transformative power that includes spiritual as well as political aspects (as cited in Godden, 2017: 3).

It is essential to examine hooks' experience of love in family relationships first. The issue should be evaluated by focusing on her lived experiences one by one, but her love for the closest one- her mother- seems like playing the first fiddle. hooks' love for his mother is suppressed by vulnerabilities due to loneliness, misunderstanding, and fears. Her complex relationship with her mother, as she claims, prevented hooks from belonging to the rest of the family:

> To me, telling the story of my growing up years was intimately connected with the longing to kill the self I was without really having to die. I wanted to kill that self in writing [...] It was clearly the Gloria Jean of my tormented and anguished childhood that I wanted to be rid of, the girl who was always wrong, always punished, always subjected to some humiliation or other, always crying, the girl who was to end up in a mental institution because she could not be anything but crazy, or so they told her [...] By writing the autobiography, it was not just this Gloria I would be rid of, but the past that had a hold on me, that kept me from the present. I wanted not to forget the past but to break its hold. This death in writing was to be liberatory. (hooks, 1989: 155).

Although she suffered from the domination of the male figures in her family, her mother's silence, from her inability to sense her sisters' presence, caused hooks to feel loved by. Thereby, there was a yearning for belonging to the family of origin, a boon, or a ban. She defined "the hurt of that first abandonment" from her family as the "first banishment from love's paradise" (hooks, 2000a: x). "Like every wounded child" she says "I just wanted to turn back time and be in that paradise again, in that moment of remembered rapture where I felt loved, where I felt a sense of belonging" (hooks, 2000a: x). She believed that being loved would heal her soul and improve her life since a love as practice brings positive feelings and experiences: "Redeemed and restored, love returns us to the promise of everlasting life. When we love we can let our hearts speak" (xi). Hence, hooks encourages everyone to embrace the liberating power of love.

Unlike most ancient societies' cultures, the author claims that modern culture has caused us to forget about love through movies, music, magazines, and books. The meaninglessness and redundancy of love are continually imposed by the magic of power, the terror of fear, and popular culture. A youthful culture that fears and mocks love has been growing beneath this cynicism (hooks, 2000: xv-xviii). However, hooks (2000a) also claims that many "revered" books are written by men, and they "theorize about love, but women are more often love's practitioners" (xx). For this reason, the author believes that women can practice the transformative power of love, and then feminism should lead it.

According to hooks the notion of love is consciously imposed on the public via media. However, it is depicted as the opposite of love's practical aspect. These carefully constructed presentations have an unavoidable effect on people. For instance, one of the lines in the movie *Brave Heart* sends a strong message about love: "I will love you my whole life. You and no other" (Shockley, 1997: 5). For this reason, reaching the essential meaning of love is troublesome. Hooks (2006) supports this idea in her essay: "In this society, there is no powerful discourse on love emerging either from politically progressive radicals or from the Left" (243).

In her book *All About Love*, the author further endorses and expands on these views. The book highlights that people have difficulty talking with one another and that society requires alternate, equitable methods of communication. According to hooks, love has "transformative power" in this setting. In most communities, however, love is mainly characterized by the principles of individual, heterosexual, romantic, and passive (hooks, 2000a: 94). This limited view of love stops individuals from comprehending all aspects of love and happiness. If love is redefined, it can be utilized to fight "dominance and oppression" in society (hooks, 2000a: 76). This definition, according to the author, should incorporate elements like "care," "respect," "knowledge," and "trust" (hooks, 2000a: 94). She adds some other various ingredients such as "affection," "recognition," "commitment," "as well as "honesty" and "open communication." (5).

When explaining love, hooks (2000a) quotes Peck earlier in the book: "the will to extend one's self to nurture one's own or another's spiritual growth" (4). The author explains the word "spiritual" as a life principle that, when nurtured, enables us to be ourselves and more in unity with others and the world around us. According to hooks, "To begin by always thinking of love as an action rather than a feeling is one way in which anyone using the word in this manner automatically assumes accountability and responsibility" (13). hooks argues that love is a non-static practice rather than a passive feeling. This notion sets her apart from other mainstream feminists and demonstrates the liberating role of love.

Nurturing love spiritually is not just about caring for a newborn baby. The baby we invest in by promoting becomes essential to us. It is called "cathexis." On the other hand, cathecting does not imply love for the Pecks. Besides care, commitment, trust, and communication are also necessary for true love, enabling the person to learn love correctly while still a baby. Love as spiritual nurturing requires constant practice (5-6).

Emotionally, love in popular culture is generally perceived as a feeling that we fall into, are caught, held captive at first sight, and are uncontrollable (13). We don't have the right to choose what to love or whom to love; it just happens suddenly. hooks disagrees with this

viewpoint. Erich Fromm's definition of love supports that love is a practice and could be chosen: "Love is as love does. Love is an act of will-namely, both an intention and an action. Will also implies choice. We do not have to love. We choose to love" (4-5).

Across cultures, there are many numerous mythical definitions of love. According to parents and partners, abuse and neglect are closely associated with the practice of love. Parents often humiliate and abuse their children violently and talk about how much they love them. hooks gives many examples of neglected and abused people by their parents and partners and claims, "Abuse and neglect negate love. Care and affirmation, the opposite of abuse and humiliation, is the foundation of love" (20-24).

Although many people analyze imperialism, sexism, racism, and classism independently, hooks contends that they are all interwoven systems of dominance. People frequently begin to struggle when confronted with some type of dominance. It is pretty rare for someone who is fighting racism also to be resisting sexism. This is a more self-centered effort than one aimed at community reform. Individually acting draws us deeper into the dominance system and leads to failure. The method of dominance can be dealt with when we care about the oppression, anxiety, and exploitation of others, and this is only achievable with the ethics of love. "Without love, our efforts to liberate ourselves and our world community from o oppression and exploitation are doomed" (hooks, 2006: 243). Because it is based on a love ethic, the Civil Rights Movement successfully transformed America. The leader that emphasized the love ethic the most was King. On the other hand, the Black Power Movement of the 1960s was more "power" focused, moving away from the love ethics premise.

Consequently, patriarchal black power, sexism, and misogyny were likely to grow. Love was seen to be a sign of weakness. The only saving grace was that this reform movement had evolved into a revolution. However, the leadership was masculine, sexist, and divorced from the love ethic. King and Malcolm X are compared in this sense, "Even though King talked about the importance of black self-love, he talked more about loving our enemies" (as cited in hooks, 2006: 243-245).

Following the accomplishment of these two significant initiatives, black people were not able to assimilate into a racially integrated American society. They were in agony and anguish since the ethic of love that black people should have for one another had fled. They became highly pessimistic about their future. Furthermore, they had no public place, group, or organization through which they could express their despair. All hope for racial justice and the emancipation of black people has vanished (hooks, 2006: 245-246).

Love is portrayed as a useless, inconsequential, and weak emotion in contemporary popular cultures that glorifies materialism. The capitalist consumer market benefits from love. Although many communities are aware of this commercialization, they prefer not to criticize it. At the same time, love is the only way to liberate both black and non-black societies from oppression. According to hooks (1994): "A culture of domination is anti-love. It requires violence to sustain itself. To choose love is to go against the prevailing values of the culture" (246).

As contemporaries study an ethics and practice love in diverse fields. Ahmed's work seems, at first totally different context from any position in English or American literature studies. Yet, Ahmed is inspired by hook's love concept and has a transformative power to change the sensation of fashion should always be adapted mostly for female bodies that are sized 8 or 10 (Ahmed: 2018). In many fields, from fashion to societal or individualistic issues, love has essential characteristics to reach a solution and absolute happiness.

Another study, which deals with love as a practice in the nursing sector in Sweden, was conducted. For Arman and Rehnsfeldt (2006), love as ethics and practice, caregivers are more comfortable with their own identity and live more authentically. It is envisaged that love serves science as a universal or ontological philosophy. (11).

As a result, love is a transformative and emancipatory practice, contrary to what materialist and capitalist popular culture think. It is acknowledged that hooks are regarded as an ethicist who enabled to emancipate of popular culture from normative ideals such as "racist, sexist, homophobic, imperialist, and classist" (Valdivia, 2002: 432). For this reason, feminist women who want to struggle with domination and oppression should return to love immediately since "A love ethic presupposes that everyone has the right to be free, to live fully and well" (hooks, 2000a: 87).

3.2. Woman As Body

hooks claims in *Communion: Female Search for Love* (2002) that although the contemporary feminist movement critiques the patriarchal devaluation of women from birth, it is powerless to reverse it. Although girls appear to grow up in a world where they are taught that they are equal to boys, mainstream feminist ideology and practice have no place in this period. Girls continue encountering sex discrimination, just as before the feminist movement. On the one hand, there is a tiny area of women's freedom, but there are also girls trapped by patriarchy's dominance. The fear of not being loved is the primary cause of this impasse (xvi). hooks (2002) emphasizes that we do not need feminism to teach us that we are more interested

in “relationships,” “connection” and “community” than men. Instead, we need a feminist movement that will remind us that love and domination cannot coexist and that we will never find the love we seek unless we are liberated (xix).

Problems such as female competitiveness and the inability to love oneself might disrupt the link of love in the daughter-mother relationship. Mothers are revered as the source of all love; we are all expected to adore our mothers. When we look at the mother-daughter relationship, however, we also see a competitive dynamic. Some moms feel jealous of their daughters who are developing and possessing the vigor of youth, especially if their self-confidence is low and they have not been able to create for themselves. hooks refers to it as “maternal sadism” The tight relationship between mother and daughter results from mothers failing to demonstrate their middle-aged maturity, not loving themselves, and failing to develop a good relationship with their children based on love or dependency. Because mothers might overstep their bounds, the dependency relationship based on the caring responsibilities between the mother and the children can degenerate into child abuse. When the caregiver’s employment is the only place where she is valued, she does not want to give up her care because it is the only place where she can make a difference. After a while, though, this relationship may develop into one of dominance. hooks also discusses how difficult it will be to have a loving relationship with a woman who has grown up with this type of mother. We see that the act of love is not like women, starting with women who abuse their children, when it comes to women’s love and knowing the duty of love better than men. It is about socialization (hooks, 2002: 99-101). A woman learns not to love her female self-actualization from birth.

According to hooks (1994), there is a dilemma “Many people feel unable to love either themselves or others because they do not know what love is” (292). For this reason, the first point where women seeking liberation will understand love is within their bodies. They will confront and make peace with their identities to compensate for their flaws and failures. “Feminism offered us to promise that a culture would be created where we could be free and know love. But the promise has not been fulfilled. Many females are still confused, wondering about the place of love in our lives” (hooks, 2000a: xviii). According to the author (2002), “self-love was the key to finding and knowing love” (xix). hooks also includes quotes from writers like Griff, knowing she’s not the only one with this idea. Griff says, “The wish for communion exists in the body” (hooks, 2002: xx).

According to Godden (2017) in *All About Love*, hooks’ theory includes some limitations, and love for self comes first (3). The author Godden expands her argument by saying, “Loving practice is other- and self-centered, with a symbiotic relationship between the

self and others when seeking justice, equality, and rights" (Godden, 2017: 9). It can be interpreted that this symbiotic relationship between the self and others supports that there is a relationship between the self-body of women and love to be able to love others in the liberated phase of love's route.

The first obstacle we must overcome is self-hatred. "If we discover in ourselves self-hatred, low self-esteem, or internalized white supremacist thinking and we face it, we can begin to heal" (hooks, 1994: 297). Women who are oppressed must begin the ethic of love by accepting themselves and their bodies as they are. According to hooks, the decolonization process of exploited and oppressed group members begins when they become aware of accepting our identities as they are. Awareness is essential for individual and collective growth. This is a painful process, however, at the end of the way, there is the pleasure and happiness of emancipation.

"Females easily endorse a mind-body split that lets us cultivate the false assumption that we can hate our bodies and still be loving" (hooks, 2002: 106). Unfortunately, a woman's hatred of her body begins in childhood, and there are numerous reasons for her to refuse to accept it as it is and not live in peace with it. hooks' ideas on these "barriers" and their liberated solutions are discussed by making use of her selected work *Communion* (2002), and her other works. When hooks was just a little child this is the first time she lived a shame with her body, it was truly cataclysmically for her. Or she was felted so by her mother and sisters. To Moore's question "Have you ever written anything where you thought you really could not say these things?" hooks answered:

> There is one of these passages that begins, 'There's a white discharge in my panties ... 'and it's all about the fact that I had these yeast infection as a girl. You may know that when children are sexually abused often that's one of the tell-tale signs and the piece that I write in the book is all about the confusion where my mother is accusing me of having sex, I don't have any idea of what she's talking about but there is all this shame. There's the story of my mother and my older sister trying to give me a douche and me being terrified of this object that they are going to put inside me. And my mother keeps repeating, what are you going to do when some boy sticks his thing up you? And I keep thinking, what is she talking about? And why would I ever let any boy stick anything up me! And I'm just completely confused! Writing that was difficult because it brought back those feelings of intense shame that I had. What was wrong with my body? Why did I have this smell? Why did I have this infection? But reading it was something I was completely unprepared for and having other people read it was something I was not prepared for. If there was any passage in the book I would have liked to have taken out it would have been that one. (Moore, 1998: 13-14).

hooks lacks privacy and needs to explore her sexuality (Shockley, 1997:554) because everything about her adolescence and sexuality was an object of interest to her family members as her own body becomes a cause of shame for her.

The family as a unit is supported by numerous media messages when women's bodies are a matter of concern and debate. Since the media commodifies the female body as an object, it can be seen as another reason for women's hatred of their bodies. In the recent decades, the ideal female body image, which is the product of the popular media, has pushed women to eating disorders (Hart & Kenny, 1997: 462). Women are also prone to becoming patients in medical profession as they try hard to become more beautiful (Storey, 2005: 90). hooks is primarily concerned with media representations as "people want to deny the direct link between representations and how we live our lives" (Shockley, 1997: 4). If they don't deny the link they don't say "oh, if I look at a movie in which a woman is fucked to death" then I will go out and think I should let myself be fucked to death by any man who wants to fuck me" (Ibid). Such representations, as hooks argues, are closely related with male violence since, as she claims, "that's an absurd sense of a direct link, but that is not to say, that if I watched enough of those images I might not come away thinking that certain forms of unacceptable male violence in coercion in relationship to my female body are acceptable" (Ibid).

Patriarchal oppression is already one of the biggest reasons why women see themselves as powerless and marginalized since it includes abuse and violence. In *Bone Black* (1996), in which hooks recounts her memoirs, hooks reveals her father's domestic violence toward her mother. In some vignettes, her father appears with a gun in his hand directed toward his wife. Worse, all her mother could do was remain silent. hooks (1996) portrays her mother as follows in the face of abuse, violence, threat, and exile: "She can see the woman's body falling. No, it is not her body, it is the body of love. She witnesses the death of love" (50). This comparison of hooks' love and body proves the symbiotic relationship between the two concepts.

According to hooks, white supremacist power caused the black community to forget who they were and how valuable and beautiful they were after the 1960s via capitalism and commoditized media. Therefore, the author recommends "a process of critical remembering" for the black community (hooks, 1996: 19). All women, black and non-black, must recall their ancestors' ethics and identities in order to reclaim their love for themselves and their bodies. hooks (1994) presents a solution "the moment we choose to love we begin to move toward freedom, to act in ways that liberate ourselves and others" (298).

Regardless of age, women are constantly judged by the hegemonic power in society for what they wear, what they do, what they talk about, and their choice of relationships. These

judgments and endless criticism have also distanced them from love. The author emphasizes that whenever a middle-aged woman deals with the subject of love, she is exposed to a sexist point of view. The woman is labelled as “desperate” for a man or “fatal attraction” (hooks, 2000a: xx).

In most cultures, having a sexual experience as a young girl is considered shameful. While men are encouraged to participate in sexual rituals, society instils in young women the notion that “a woman’s discovery of her body should be forbidden, hidden, and shameful” hooks conveys these feelings while sharing her masturbation experience in her book:

> When she finds pleasure touching her body, she knows that they will think it wrong; that it is something to keep hidden, to do in secret. She is ashamed, ashamed that she comes home from school wanting to lie in bed touching that wet dark hidden parts of her body, ashamed that she lies awake nights touching herself, moving her hands, her fingers deeper and deeper inside, inside the place of woman’ s pain and misery, the place men want to enter, the place babies come through- ashamed of the pleasure. (hooks, 1996: 113)

Yi (2001) argues that there is a conscious transition between the pronouns “I”, “she” and “we” in hooks’ memoirs (4-28): “She refuses to move ... She cannot leave her mama alone ... She asks the woman if it is right to leave her alone ... She wants the woman to know that she is not alone” (hooks, 1996: 146-147). According to Yi (2001), the objective of hooks is to elicit empathy from the reader for a woman who has been exposed to violence, no matter where she is in the world. By narrating her personal story, hooks was able to reach a broader audience (28). Similarly, the argument of this dissertation is that hooks’ demand for collective ethics of love in society should be regarded as practice for women in the feminist movement for emancipation from dominance. As a woman, you must begin with loving yourself and your body. In other words, she believes in transforming from the inside to the outside.

In patriarchal cultures, the girl who could not get love from her family of origin starts to look for the love she longs for outside, mostly in men. hooks considers a woman should deserve and earn love. she compulsively believes she would be nothing without a man (hooks, 2002: xiv-xvi). Hence, “whether she is heterosexual or homosexual, the extent to which she yearns for patriarchal approval will determine whether she is worthy to be loved. This is the emotional uncertainty that haunts the lives of all females in patriarchal culture” (xvi-xvii).

hooks knows that many women still feel compelled to continue their unhappy marriages, although a woman should be free to choose her relationship in homosexual or heterosexual terms. Either case, a woman deserves to experience love by establishing friendships with both sexes (9). hooks also decided when she was only sixteen that she “would not be a subordinated

wife or homemaker" (20). When she fell, a boy who helped her offered to marry her when they grew up. Still, the little girl responded oddly: "She whispered a secret in his ear. She told him that she could not marry him because she had already promised the snake that they could live together forever near their favorite tree" (hooks, 1996: 12). The fact that the little girl chose to live with her friend, the green snake, instead of marrying that helpful boy, is a reference to both women's sexual choices and their right to choose to marry both of which exemplifies hooks' conceptualization of women's bodies as autonomous entities that belong their will.

hooks invites ordinary women (those who are not avant-garde feminists) to remember one of the advantages feminism gives to women. The advantage is to challenge standards of beauty: "plump bodies were luscious and big bellies sublime, that hair hanging under our arms and covering our legs was alluring" (hooks, 2002: 2). Moreover, women with breast cancer used to suffer in silence in a corner, today there are women who can proclaim how beautiful their body is with their missing breasts (4). Hence, silent women heartbroken by love should know that "true love begins with self-love". This silence hurt the women's own female "self-actualized" (14-15). If necessary, we must give up when there is no love and continue to seek the transformative power of love for liberation again and again.

Aging, for hooks, is not only a matter of time but an issue of the body. She calls "midlife" a "magic time" since "a woman was no longer able to bear children (menopause), she was just freer" than before. (4). After the 40s, a woman's body is even more liberated. The author considers menopause, which is seen as a deficiency for middle-aged women, as an age to be celebrated. Menopause is not a deficiency for the female body, it is the birth of a process of a new sexual life, choice of companion, and freedom to search for true love.

After the 1960s, the type of man that feminist heterosexual women liked and wanted to have in their lives was that who supported all their efforts and did not cause a crisis about their equality in business life. The problem with these men was always based on the division of labor within the household. Even if these issues were resolved, the bedroom was an area of severe conflicts. At this point, hooks opens the discussion of sexual freedom. So, how did men approach sexual freedom, an area of freedom gained thanks to feminists? Hooks explains this issue as follows: Some of the men affirmed sexual freedom. The woman who pays the bill and can be with without any responsibility became the type of woman who was very attractive to them. Therefore, as long as women said "yes", men did not have much trouble with women's sexual freedom, but when it came to women's right to say "no" in sexuality, a crisis arose. This is especially a problem for couples in long-term relationships or married couples in the bedroom. What happens when the woman says "no?" Men do not see this answer as freedom.

Therefore, men have never let go of power in the bedroom, and the debate arises as to whether a man who does not relinquish power will love you or whether he can be a man you can love. hooks has evaluations and experiences about the female body in terms of sexuality, the bedroom, and having a right to be gay (35-41).

After the 70s, it became a problem for a feminist woman to have sexual and emotional relationships with heterosexuals at the same time, and the mass media began to insist on "man-hating" (34). It has been questioned whether heterosexuality is "sleeping with enemies". The slogans "feminism is the theory and lesbianism the practice" started to make a sound (35). hooks, who also experienced this situation herself, said that she was very pleased that he supported her in every intellectual field while talking about her male partner, who is seven years older than her. but when it came to the bedroom, he described it as the only place where they had a power problem. Although his partner called it "respond to", He believed that hooks should "service" him for his sexual desires. This was proof that they were not equal in the bedroom. She warns that men who do not respect our sexual rights "would never love us enough to let us be free" (43). According to hooks:

> if his dick was hard and he needed to put it somewhere to seek satisfaction, he had to find the place. He could not assume that my body was territory he could occupy at will. Like all my female buddies, I was into sex and sexual liberation. Radical feminism urged us to see our bodies as ourselves and to let no one make us into territory or property. (40).

Love has been replaced by care and respect by obedience in the masculine understanding of love. Feminism must emphasize that there can be no love where there is oppression and injustice and when there is no freedom. Feminism must stress that there can be no love where there is oppression and injustice and when there is no freedom. hooks offered "open relationship" with partners to be free in sexual life for women (41).

She argues that middle-aged women who have succeeded in loving themselves and their bodies should teach the new generation of young women that our bodies are desirable and lovable at any age, despite all their taught faults and shortcomings (220-221). She offers that "What we must say no to is a world that tells us we are solely defined by our physical bodies, that these female bodies are inadequate, lacking, and not good enough. Saying no to any devaluation and debasement of the female body is a loving practice" (108). We should love our bodies with all negations "we know, having learned through much trial and error, that true love begins with self-love" (14).

hooks, who had a hysterectomy due to a fibroid tumor, thought that she would be sexually reluctant, inadequate, and unsuccessful until her doctor asserted the contrary. She

attributed this to the lack of studies and stories that middle-aged women can experience sexual pleasure even though they do not have a womb because women have always been reluctant to talk about their sexual lives and bodies. If it were not so, who knows, maybe they would have known how many sexual lives told different areas of freedom (234-236).

"Any woman eager to learn the art of loving can start as the Buddhist teachers say "right where you are" by being self-loving" (105). As self-loving women, the first thing we must do is reclaim our right to a healthy body. We must avoid worrying about misogynistic beauty and slimness standards to provide it. This battle is constantly undermined by the mass media, beauty, and fashion sectors. Women with large feet continue to dislike their feet. When stereotypes of classic beauty and attractiveness are not provided, a woman is frequently criticized by other women rather than men. Firstly, our mothers attack us because they believe they are accountable for our appearance (106-113).

Moreover, the media portray the vagina as shameful and ugly. Families still cannot accept their daughters' vaginas as much as they do their sons' penises. Still, numerous girls grow older while hiding their menstrual cycles. Similar examples show that in most cultures, there is a state of silence in all sexual matters related to the female body. Women must be aware of all these barriers to embracing and loving our bodies as they are (114-115). This state of privacy applies to both the practice of love and the woman's body: "In private, women continued to agonize about the question of love" (55), as no feminist woman can express her search for love out loud without feeling ashamed (56). Furthermore, "When females turn our search for love in the direction of our bodies, we can collectively create a cultural revolution wherein the fundamental connection between loving one's body and being self-loving will be obvious" (118).

CONCLUSION

This study focused on women's love and body as problematized by hooks. The goal of this study, which began with the motto "There is a problem," was to determine the reason for the crack and present hooks' solutions to the problems faced by women worldwide. When hooks and her selected works are examined, it becomes visible that, while there are some fragmentary studies about love ethics, emancipation/liberation, and the body as a woman in the literature, no thesis on women's love and body relationship has been published apart from this present study. Hence, this study aims to close this gap in the related literature. The reader can access information on feminism as theorized by hooks.

Regarding the author's life and works, it is not unexpected that she addressed the love issue in the post-millennium period. hooks' ideas and criticisms as a feminist activist, writer, and cultural critic differ significantly from those of many other feminists. Therefore, although compressing hooks into a temporal period, a stream or labeling is not meaningful, her ideas can be considered liberatory, especially when her connections between love and women's bodies are concerned. hooks, who dedicated her life and writing to women's liberation herself, did not hesitate to provide details about her personal life, as seen in the quotes provided throughout this thesis.

hooks was treated as a nuisance by her family and immediate social surrounding and was frequently criticized and punished. Her experiences suggest that she was at times lonely; worse, she was a woman who deeply felt the agony of being unloved. All these experiences convinced her of how important it was for a woman to love herself, her body, and others for emancipation. hooks never gave up her academic and intellectual work while searching for love as she "was rescued from madness by feminist movement" (hooks, 2002: 31).

In conclusion, when hooks' life and selected studies are examined, it becomes clear that there is a symbiotic relationship between women's love and body on the way to liberation/emancipation from dominance. For hooks, love is not merely emotional, but theorizing love can be conceived as a practice of liberation. For hooks, women yearning for liberation should start to love their bodies first. Although women's bodies are perceived in society using physicality about specific values, hooks argues that women's bodies must first and foremost be perceived in terms of love. hooks' conceptualization of love and body, thus, is key to the liberation of women. Remember, "To seek love as a guest for the true self liberates" (hooks, 2002: xx). This quotation summarizes the symbiotic relationship suggested by hooks concerning the body, love, and liberation as (should be) experienced by women.

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