

CHAPTER THREE

CONCLUSION

After having analysed the portrayal of the protagonist in Alice Walker's By the Light of My Father's Smile, I come to the conclusion that Alice Walker is a brilliant writer as she has described the protagonist of the novel in such a way that the readers can see women's condition today through this protagonist. The protagonist of the novel is very life-like and the problems she faces show the picture of what women face today – sexism, self-worth, gender discrimination, violence, oppression, and women's abuse. In addition, I am of the opinion that this novel is unique for it is written by using many characters or narrators. Alice Walker is skilful in presenting her protagonist as she reveals the characteristics of the protagonist through the different characters' points of view. Although sometimes I find difficulties in reading the novel – for it keeps changing characters in new chapters – I think the novel is enjoyable to read and it is worth while analysing the novel.

Magdalena, the protagonist of the novel, is portrayed as a beautiful and wild girl. She has the spirit to rebel to anything she dislikes. With so many excuses, Magdalena is successful in making Mr. Robinson, her father, believe that she is an obedient child; however, Magdalena is actually resourceful as she often sneaks around to meet Manuelito. After she has sex with Manuelito, Mr. Robinson beats her up. The beating really affects her life and it changes her into a person full of hatred; besides,

she is also resentful. Magdalena is angry with her family – she hates Langley, her mother, for not standing up for her; she is also angry with Susannah, her sister; but she especially hates Mr. Robinson, her father, for having abused her and broken her spirits. Magdalena lives an unhappy and empty life as she leads a loveless life. Magdalena does not want to forgive her father and she wants to punish him by making Susannah, her father's favourite daughter, reject, hate and feel afraid of her father. Magdalena is mean to ruin the relationship between Susannah and their father, which used to be so good. Actually, this happens because Magdalena cannot show her feelings to her father. All she wants is his love and blessings. As she cannot get what she hopes for in her life, she becomes a weak person; however, she tries to hide her weakness by becoming obese. What's more, Magdalena is stubborn for she does not want to control her eating habit and she would prefer to die rather than to lose her weight, which she considers as her power and her memories to her past. It is clear that Magdalena cannot forget her past and this really affects her life – she dies because of her bitterness and resentment she gets in her past.

Through this novel, Alice Walker clearly describes the effects which a woman gets when she gets sexual injustice. Magdalena is enraged at the injustice of her father's actions, which ruin her life. Alice Walker's purpose in writing such a story is that she wants to remind fathers to act or behave wisely over their daughters' sexuality. It is important for fathers to understand that their daughters would like to have a great time with their sexuality; but it is also their duty to guide their daughters through their sexual matters with love, patience and in a positive way. Alice Walker also stresses that fathers should realize that their daughters need their blessings – that daughters want their fathers to be happy for them. Therefore, instead of punishment, fathers should use their wisdom when dealing with their daughters' sexuality.

As stated in Chapter Two, this novel uses several narrators to reveal the characteristics of Magdalena. The narrators' points of view are used to show the qualities of the protagonist of the novel. Alice Walker mostly uses Mr. Robinson, Manuelito, Susannah and Magdalena herself to describe Magdalena's characteristics. Walker mostly uses their thoughts, speech, direct comments, actions, and their conversations to portray Magdalena. In the novel, Magdalena is described as a round character. Walker starts the story by presenting Magdalena as a lively, active, wild and happy girl but as the story continues, Magdalena turns to be a stubborn, mean, resentful, and unhappy person. Furthermore, she becomes a woman full of hatred. Walker creates such a character as to make the story interesting to read and therefore the readers can enjoy reading the book. Besides, they can get the author's message more easily and they can be aware of something that they do not realize before- that injustice can do serious harm to one's life.

Having analysed the novel, I conclude that Alice Walker is a great novelist for she is able to write a book which is so touching, daring, interesting, and enjoyable to read. Through this novel, Alice Walker wants us to be observers and relate the problems presented in the novel to our lives. I think there are many fathers facing the same problems today. The problems are usually about sex, which is considered to be a taboo topic to discuss with their daughters. In my opinion, fathers should make a personal approach to their daughters. They should give their daughters understanding about what love or sex is so that the daughters can understand and will not take the wrong way in expressing their feelings. I believe that fathers' roles in their daughters' lives are important; therefore, it is necessary for fathers to give their blessings to their daughters' love life. I can learn from the novel that Alice Walker wants to open fathers' eyes and minds about their daughters' sexual matters so that they can understand and bless their daughters in their love life. If fathers always use

punishment in solving the problems, the entire family will fall apart – as described in the novel.