

Women Write Their Existence in Multiple Ways: An Analysis of Female Characters in *Color Purple* and *Madame Bovary*

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In feminist literature, the term “locations” is approached not only as geopolitical, but also temporal zones related to self- reflexivity, consciousness, self-narrative and memory, which explicate existence and experience of different women as diverse, depending on personal as well as social factors which influence the articulation of the individual gendered identity. This research study aims to evaluate how women write their existence in different ways by analyzing the texts *Madame Bovary* written by Gustave Flaubert in 1857 and *The Color Purple* by Alice Walker in 1982. *The Color Purple* is a pivotal text in the tradition of literature by black women writers which illustrates a young black woman’s journey from silence and subservience to voice and “authentic female selfhood” (Eysturoy ,1996) which highlights an autonomous identity that reflects the female protagonist’s self-assertion, self- identity and her authority over her own life and her own story. Alice Walker situates her novel in an extreme situation of women’s subordination and oppression within the male-dominated social order, in order to highlight the black woman’s capability to ultimately transcend and transform her social position through the development of her own self-identity and self-expression. On the other hand, sexuality as a mode of liberation through self-expression is further portrayed in the character of Emma in Gustave Flaubert’s novel *Madame Bovary*. Emma Bovary is the epitome of nineteenth-century culture; she embodies the superficiality and shallowness of the romanticized bourgeois. Instead of submitting to the accepted social conventions which were beneath her expected romantic reality Emma decides to escape her reality by engaging in promiscuous sexual relationships. Unlike Celie in *The Color Purple* who used sexuality as a means of self- assertion and altering her existing reality by challenging the norm, Emma uses her sexuality to escape the disappointment which she experienced in her domestic life. Through an in-depth analysis of the two novels, this research aims to underline how different women from varied socio-cultural, political, ethnic and economic backgrounds express their existence in different ways where women from different social locations react to the same force differently.

Keywords: authentic female selfhood; female existence; *The Color Purple*; *Madam Bovary*