

# The Image of a Woman as A Wife in The Select Novels of Stephen King

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## Abstract

Women empowerment is one of the targets in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) in 2015. Women and girls must have equal rights and opportunity and be able to live free of violence and discrimination. In this literary research, the roles of women are studied as portrayed in one of the major characters in the selected novels of Stephen King.

This research analyzes the character development of Dolores Claiborne and Rose Madder in Stephen King's novels. Specifically, it focuses on the following: plot and sub-plots; literary technique used; and themes and sub-themes. This uses the qualitative method of descriptive discourse analysis of the two novels by Stephen King entitled "Dolores Claiborne" and "Rose Madder." Specifically, the analysis is conducted using literary theories: formalism and feminism. Each of the novels are carefully investigated using these theories to come up with the result of the study. To accomplish the goals of this study, the following phases are used. The first phase is extracting the plot and the sub-plots that show the course of action in the novels. In this phase, the plot is extracted and segregated into: 1) beginning, which entails exposition and initial incident; 2) middle which includes the rising action and the climax and 3) the end which focuses on the falling action and conclusion. The second phase is identifying the literary technique used by the author that exposes how the characters are being molded. In this phase, the devices that the author used to present the characters are extracted to reveal the visual presentation of the protagonists, the kind of behavior that they show and their reactions and responses to challenging situations. The third phase is identifying the themes and sub-themes of the novels that show the universality on what the literary pieces are trying to convey. In this phase, the universal application and message of the novels are presented whether it is trying to show a resolution or just to relay a general message to its readers.

Based on the findings, the conclusion is established: Stephen King's novels, Dolores Claiborne and Rose Madder reveal that character development is used as the dominant literary device to reveal the central message of the novel.

**Keywords-** character development, novels, formalism, feminism, literary research

## INTRODUCTION

Literature is important in everyday life because it cultivates knowledge, provides wisdom and connects all people. It has a lot of purposes also; information, entertainment, education or something that fills the soul.

Literature has been one of the most used resources in unraveling many areas of human existence whether in a private or collective level. It has stirred a meaningful movement to advance society's level of thinking whether creative or analytical (Brereton, 2008).

According to Rosales' World Literature (2010):

"Literature is studied because it is the result of human experience. It is made more meaningful since, in literature, creativity is primordial. In

literature one must be imaginative, artistic, flexible and poetically inspired. Literature is an expansion of one's hopes and ideals. It is life itself. Through it, human being's emotions are represented. Life is explored and scrutinized through the study of the different literary genres." In the same light, Roberts' Writing About Literature (2003) also stated that literature aids in personal and intellectual growth. He also added the significant development of imagining, understanding and deepening the power of sympathy brought about by literature. Both Rosales and Roberts stressed the potential of literature and its parallelism to real life. It is clearly stated how literature is able to provide an opportunity to impact humanity either by giving it a voice or by implementing a change or improvement. In reading literature, Landy's The Heath Introduction to Literature (1984) stated that one of the most basic things that readers look into is the

desire for pleasure and that they derive pleasure in literature's ability to imitate life. They also added that a good book can present imaginary characters more vividly than real people on the streets and allows the readers to care about its characters as if they are actual friends.

In Knickerbocker, Reninger, Bratton and Legget's *Interpreting Literature* (1985), they stated that as readers begin to read, they are immediately confronted with diverse types of characters. According to Senatin (2003), aside from characters, readers can also be engaged by the sequence of events (plot) or be engrossed by human situation (theme).

In this study, although the elements character, plot and themes interact with one another to create a literary piece, it focuses more on character and its development as the story unfolds alongside other elements of the literary piece. Characters play a big role not just to the completion of the novels but also adds to the weight and importance of the literary pieces (Dobie, 2009).

In line with the importance of character development, this study investigates Stephen King's novels *Dolores Claiborne* and *Rose Madder* as the main materials for the research. Stephen King is an acclaimed author whose works have sold numerous copies and are also turned into films such as *Carrie*, *Misery*, *The Green Mile* etc. King is renowned for his works that uses elements of horror, tragedy and torture. In this sense, this study will dwell into the portrayal of the characters, along with its plots and themes, vis-à-vis King's unconventional style of writing.

Stephen King's novels *Dolores Claiborne* and *Rose Madder* provide a very good ground on depicting and analyzing character development as the stories unravel its message to the readers.

To add, the two novels also talk about two wives who face very difficult scenarios in life which push them to their limit and make them act outside their comfort zone in order to fight for their existence.

In this sense, this research will not solely focus on character development but will also extract feminism which allows better understanding on women as they go through a series of events that challenge and question their identity and role in the society by looking through a keyhole that is literature.

Although the feministic movement still continues to forward their cause to uphold the equality of the sexes, there are still traces of women being oppressed and abused (Guth, 1993). Evidently enough, women are obligated and almost automatically attend to household chores even if they have jobs. They cook, clean the house, do the laundry, take care of the children, attend to their husbands' needs and even manage the household's budget. Men, on the other hand are more inclined to relax and do as they please after work.

In Lautner, Yarborough, et al. *The Heath Anthology of American Literature* specifically in Fern's "Hints to Young Wives", he presented how wives are being portrayed (1998): "I have a little neighbor who believes all they tell her is gospel truth and lives up to it. The minute she sees her husband coming up the street, she makes for the door, as if she hadn't another minute to live, stands in the entry with her teeth chattering her head till he gets all his coats and muffles and overshoes and what-do-you-call-ems off, then chases round (like a cat in a fit) after the boot jack; warms his slippers and puts them on, and dislocates her wrist carving at the table for fear it will tire him." Similarly, Lautner, Yarborough, et al. also presented from Stanton's "Declaration of Sentiments" (1998): "He has made her, if married, in the eye of the law, civilly dead. He has taken from her all right in property even to the wages she earned. He has made her, morally, an irresponsible being, as she can commit many crimes with impurity, provided they be done in the presence of her husband. In the covenant of marriage, she is compelled to promise obedience to her husband, he becoming, to all intents and purpose, her master – the law giving him power to deprive her of her liberty and to administer chastisement." These two passages depict the challenges that women face especially when they are married. This is also the concern that feminism wishes to raise further not just to give a voice to women but also to stir a significant movement to continue to fight for justice and gender equality (Scott, 1996).

Furthermore, the two novels by Stephen King also provides the opportunity to understand women and empathize with the characters as they go through the plight in their life.

## II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

This research uses the qualitative method of descriptive discourse analysis of the two novels by Stephen King entitled “Dolores Claiborne” and “Rose Madder”. Specifically, the analysis is conducted using literary theories namely formalism and feminism. Each of the novels are carefully investigated using the aforementioned literary theories to come up with the result of the study.

The main source of data, which is essential to this study are the novels by Stephen King entitled Dolores Claiborne and Rose Madder.

These novels are used in the discourse analysis focusing on the character development. Aside from the primary sources of data, most of the relevant and needed information are also taken from books and the internet. In addition, published and unpublished materials are also used to enrich further related studies of this research.

In order to attain faithful assessment of the books, this study dissect significant elements which highlight the character development found on the texts. This is to carefully analyze the plot, literary technique used and the theme that contributes to the development of the character as the stories unravel. The novels Dolores Claiborne and Rose Madder are viewed through the aid of the literary theories namely formalism and feminism in order to uphold a better analysis and understanding of the literary pieces. This study utilizes published and unpublished materials as well as the World Wide Web in order to back-up further understanding and appreciation of the research material.

To accomplish the goals of this study, the following phases are used:

Phase 1: Extracting the plot and the sub-plots that show the course of action in the novels. In this phase, the plot is extracted and segregated into: 1) beginning, which entails exposition and initial incident; 2) middle which includes the rising action and the climax and 3) the end which focuses on the falling action and conclusion. Aside from the plots, the sub-plots are also extracted since novels are more complex and detailed than a short story and there are webs of other events involved.

Phase 2: Identifying the literary technique used by the author that exposes how the characters are being molded. In this phase, the devices that the

author used to present the characters are extracted to reveal the visual presentation of the protagonists, the kind of behavior that they show and their reactions and responses to challenging situations.

Phase 3: Identifying the themes and sub-themes of the novels that shows the universality on what the literary pieces are trying to convey. In this phase, the universal application and message of the novels are presented whether it is trying to show a resolution or just to relay a general message to its readers.

## III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This presents the analysis of Stephen King’s novels in terms of their character development in the plots and sub-plots, the literary devices used in each novels and the themes and sub-themes.

In line with investigating the character development in the two novels by Stephen King namely *Dolores Claiborne* and *Rose Madder*, table 1.1 and 1.2 show the plot of the literary pieces indicating the events that had happened at the beginning, which includes the exposition and initial incident; the middle, which includes the rising action and the climax; and the end part, which includes the falling action and conclusion. Table 1.3 shows the sub-plots present in the stories that also interlinks within the unraveling of the series of events in the novels.

Table 1.1 Plot structure on the novel *Dolores Claiborne*

Episodic Events		
Beginning	Exposition	Dolores is in the police station to give her statement regarding the murder of Vera Donovan
	Initial Incident	(In a form of a backtrack) Vera has had enough beating from her husband Joe and she hits him back
Middle	Rising Action	Dolores found out that her daughter Selena is being molested by her husband and that she is also robbed by Joe in her very own bank account
	Climax	Dolores struggles for her very life against her husband as she executes her plan to kill him

End	Falling Action	She got away with her husband's murder but is accused instead of killing Vera Donovan. Dolores becomes so furious that in the course of the story, she comes up with a decision to kill her husband (Gordon, 2005).
	Conclusion	Dolores is acquitted of any crime and became heir to Vera's wealth but she donated it to an orphanage. Dolores continues to live her life but her daughter has grown distant from her.

**Dolores Claiborne.** The exposition shows Dolores in the police station ready to tell the entire account of what happened to Vera Donovan and even admitting the murder of husband.

Dolores was accused of Vera's death thus, she intended to clear up everything as with her statement:

"I do give a shit about one thing, though, and that's why I come down here on my own hook. I didn't kill that bitch Vera Donovan, and no matter what you think now, I intend to make you believe that. I didn't push her down that frigging staircase. It's fine if you want to lock me up for the other (pertaining to the death of her husband), but I don't have none of that bitch's blood on my hands."

It is suggested in this part that she has already made up her mind and has already gone through life changing events.

The initial incident which follows the exposition is in a form of a back track wherein Dolores has been a battered wife for quite a while until she finally decides to put a stop on it by hitting back. It is clearly stated how Dolores has had enough of the beatings already that one day when Joe hit her bad in the kidneys, she waits until Joe dozes off and hits him back on the head with a pitcher. Aside from that, Dolores also carries a hatchet that signals Joe how serious she is if he ever makes a wrong move. From thereon, the hitting stops but the worse things are at bay.

As the story unravels towards the middle, the rising action reveals a darker event. Selena is able to witness Dolores carrying a hatchet and Joe's head bleeding. She sympathizes with her father and spent more time with him Joe takes advantage on Selena's kindness and molests her. On top of that, Joe also robs Dolores from her bank account by lying to the bank manager that the bank book is lost

and the entire savings is moved to Joe's private account that Dolores has no chance of getting back. Dolores becomes so furious that in the course of the story, she comes up with a decision to kill her husband (Gordon, 2005).

The climax of the story is when Dolores finally executes her plan to kill her husband. She triggers Joe to lose his temper by telling him that she has the money secured. When Joe starts beating Dolores, she tries her best to run towards the dried up well. Joe follows Dolores and is led directly to a trap and falls down the well. The highlight of the suspense in the story is when Dolores thought Joe is already done for, but when she goes near the well, Joe gets a hold of her ankle and she almost falls down with him. Dolores is able to redeem herself and throws a boulder right down Joe's head.

The falling action of the story shows Dolores goes free from the murder from her husband, which indicates that her plan actually works. However, she is accused of killing Vera Donovan simply because the witness misunderstood the scene. Vera actually falls off the stairs and is badly injured. Vera having issues in the past becomes very frightened and exhausted that she requests Dolores to end her life. When Dolores accepts the request, she goes to the kitchen to get a rolling pin to strike with but Vera already dies when she goes back. This is the scene that the witness sees with Dolores carrying the pin and covered with blood. Just when Dolores thought that she has faced enough circumstance, another thing comes up to try her.

The conclusion of the story is when Dolores was altogether acquitted on any crimes and is heir to Vera's wealth. She has, however, continued to live her life but mostly in isolation since her neighborhood still find her a criminal and her daughter, whom she risked her entire life for, has grown distant.

Table 1.2 Plot Structure on the novel Rose Madder

		Episodic Events
Beginning	Exposition	Rose is beaten by her husband that led to a miscarriage
	Initial Incident	Rose ran away from home with Norman's credit card
Middle	Rising Action	Norman becomes furious and seeks to kill Rose

		while Rose tries to live in her life. Norman on the other hand, is furious when he finds out that his wife left him. He is most
	Climax	Rose struggles for her life as Norman is trying to kill her. Norman is greatly insulted and his ego is challenged since he thinks he has everything under control. In
End	Falling Action	The woman in the painting gives Rose final instructions as she is about to go out from the painting. In other way, Norman's outrage is also a sign of fear; that Rose might not fear him anymore and worse, Rose might get even with him.
	Conclusion	Rose lives in a seemingly normal life, married to Bill and is trying to control her "wild side". The climax of the story is presented with surrealism since it involves travelling to a different dimension through a painting that Rose bought in a pawnshop. The peak of the conflict starts when Norman finally locates Rose in her apartment followed by physical violence between Norman, Rose and Bill. The story then transitions to a surreal setting when they are transported to a different dimension through the painting that Rose has bought in the pawnshop.

**Rose Madder.** The exposition shows Rose being beaten by her husband Norman that caused her a miscarriage. Rose clearly shows how she fears her husband and the fear that she feels become a part of her system that degrades her very own sense of self. Norman uses his position as a police officer to inflict more pain and fear on Rose.

The exposition is followed by the initial incident where Rose has finally had enough and decides to run away from everything that she has suffered for over fourteen years. There was hesitation before she finally took off as stated in the passage:

"I'm going." She murmured. "I'm really, really going. But she stayed where she was a moment longer, like an animal which has been kept in a cage so long it cannot believe in freedom even when it is offered. She reached behind her and touched the knob of the door – the door that led to her cage. 'No more!' She whispered. She tucked her bag under her arm and took her first dozen steps into the fogbank which was now her future."

Rose also takes with her the credit card which belongs to her husband even if she knows that she will be in big trouble. She has not much of an option since the money is always with her husband. This part shows Rose taking the first step in taking her life back which also triggers more violence on the part of her husband.

The rising action is when Rose rediscovers life including meeting new people, getting a job, getting herself her own apartment and finding new love. These episodes signify her character being rebuilt since it is preparing her for the biggest battle

in her life. Norman on the other hand, is furious when he finds out that his wife left him. He is most furious about his credit card being stolen by his wife. Norman is greatly insulted and his ego is challenged since he thinks he has everything under control. In another way, Norman's outrage is also a sign of fear; that Rose might not fear him anymore and worse, Rose might get even with him.

The climax of the story is presented with surrealism since it involves travelling to a different dimension through a painting that Rose bought in a pawnshop. The peak of the conflict starts when Norman finally locates Rose in her apartment followed by physical violence between Norman, Rose and Bill. The story then transitions to a surreal setting when they are transported to a different dimension through the painting that Rose has bought in the pawnshop.

The final battle happens in the painting where Norman becomes a bull and Rose plays as bait as she leads him to where the woman is. The climax ends with Norman's death by the hands of the woman in the painting, who turned into a spider-like figure that devours him.

The falling action shows Rose being given some final instructions before she steps out of the painting with Bill. One of the instructions given by the woman in the painting is to let Bill drink a concoction to make him forget everything about the surrealistic events in the painting. She is also instructed Rose to "remember the tree" which is a mystery at that time. When they are finally out, Rose gives Bill the potion to forget everything that when the police officers arrive, the information given also becomes a mystery.

The conclusion of the story is when Rose finally understands what the tree means. Rose marries Bill and starts a family with him; they are also able to find good jobs. Just like ordinary couples, they also fight and have their own share of conflict. This time Rose has the capability to strike back anytime she likes but is reminded by the final instruction about the tree which actually pertains to her duty to control her wild side. There is now a hint that in a way, Rose Madder (the woman in the painting) is actually the alter ego of Rose McClendon.

Table 1.3 Sub-plots of the novels

Novels	Sub-plots
Dolores Claiborne	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dolores is complaining about her employer's unbelievable attitude and the difficulties she goes through because of her</li> <li>• Dolores' concern about her children especially Selena's change of countenance and also her sons' attitude</li> <li>• Dolores is challenged from the ill treatment of their neighborhood because of the accusation on the murder of Vera</li> </ul>
Rose Madder	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Norman goes to lengths just to look for Rose with a strong desire to kill her</li> <li>• Rose experiences a whole new different environment in the D&amp;S shelter</li> <li>• Rose finds a new job and a new love interest</li> <li>• Rose gets an unexpected and surreal experience from the woman in the painting</li> </ul>

Sub-plots in Dolores Claiborne. One of the sub-plots in the novel is Dolores' unlikable relationship with her employer Vera Donovan. She expresses how annoying Vera is and how she just forces herself to endure since she cannot find any other form of employment to raise her three children. Her experiences with Vera actually make her tough, as if a rock undergoing polishing.

Another sub-plot presented in the novel is the challenge that Dolores has to face regarding the welfare of her children. When Selena gets molested by her own father, she becomes distant, irritable and incompetent. Dolores' sons on the other hand, become unstable as well; one son hates his father and the other is very much like his father. This event is tearing Dolores apart since it's not just her life that she has to take care of and her life is not even a priority anymore.

The last sub-plot the novel shows is her neighbors' treatment towards her. Dolores actually gets away from her husband's murder. She has executed her plan well and in spite of the neighbors' speculations, she manages to act as if nothing has happened since in her mind she is more than glad that a thorn in her life has been removed and her children are safe. However, the death of Vera Donovan is another blow in Dolores' life. It is more than she could already bear since she actually owes Vera her life, but is now accused of killing her.

Sub-plots of the novel Rose Madder. One of the sub-plots in the novel is on the side of Norman where he is furious after knowing that Rose has left her. This incident consumes Norman from within that he becomes obsessed in killing Rose. Norman is already an unstable person from the past that he is not able to overcome; so when Rose leaves him, his pride and ego are broken and vengeance is his only option. Norman's behavior, in a way, sends a danger message to Rose's instinct, which enables Rose to equip herself for the ultimate stand off against her husband (even if she is not aware about it).

Another sub-plot shown in the story is Rose's new experiences in the new world. When she meets new people, she is able to acquire new skills and perceptions that are vital for Rose's battle with Norman. She is able to open herself to the concept of teamwork and the value of friends.

Another sub-plot which is related to the previous one is Rose's experience to discover her talent that she is able to utilize to earn and allows her to stand on her own. She now has the notion that she is independent and is good at what she does. On top of this, her new found love in Bill gives her the chance to see herself attractive and beautiful once again. Despite the fear that boggles her at the back her mind, she still gets the chance to be restructured which, points again to her preparation for the ultimate battle.

The last sub-plot in the novel is when Rose buys the peculiar painting of a woman when she drops by a pawnshop where she meets Bill. According to Rose, the painting actually chooses her than the other way around. She feels a unique sense of connection and she is not wrong since the picture is actually alive. Her first experiences with the painting are tricky since it would appear that she is only dreaming. However, there are also evidences that prove the actual existence of the painting especially when Rose notices the grasshoppers coming from the painting as well as the flowers. On top of that, she also notices that the picture changes and that there are actually activities going on inside it. Although the story shifted into surrealism, this sub-plot is readying Rose to fight against Norman. The woman in the picture is testing her if she is obedient enough to the force that will allow her to win against Norman.

These sub-plots clearly show Rose's remodeling despite its mixture of delight, fear, confusion and magic.

**Synthesis of plots and Sub-plots.** The women of the two novels encounter a similar difficulty in life: their abusive husbands. Dolores suffers for her motherhood since she cannot leave her abusive husband for the sake of her children. She is able to overcome the physical abuse, but when her daughter is molested, she becomes highly provoked that she is able to welcome the idea of killing her husband. Rose, on the other hand, suffers from excruciating physical pain that leads to mental and emotional quakes. She becomes highly provoked when she sees the drop of blood on the beddings which, pushes her to run away. This incident is like a drop of water in an already filled up jar. Both of the women prove that they can use their pitiful circumstance and convert it into a driving force of transformation to eradicate the source of their misery which is their abusive husbands. The different episodes in the plot and sub-plot of each story has clearly shown how each woman is being prepared and sharpened to become stronger and fearless; no longer cowering in the presence of an abusive husband.

Aside from extracting the plots and the sub-plots, the study also investigates what literary devices are used in the novels, which is also tied up in the bigger umbrella pertaining character development. The literary devices extracted in this

phase are presented in table 2 with an in-depth discussion.

Table 2. Literary techniques used by the author

Novels	Literary techniques used by the author
Dolores Claiborne	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Frame story</li> <li>• Violence/Suspense</li> <li>• Catalyst character</li> <li>• Catharsis</li> <li>• Bildungsroman</li> </ul>
Rose Madder	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accumulation</li> <li>• Violence/Suspense</li> <li>• Catharsis</li> <li>• Bildungsroman</li> <li>• Deixis machine</li> </ul>

**Dolores Claiborne.** The literary techniques that are prominent in the novel are: frame story, violence/suspense, catharsis and bildungsroman. These elements are further explained as it is presented in the novel.

Frame story

This technique is clearly shown in the beginning of the story where Dolores is in the police station and is faced with a couple of police officers and Nancy Bannister who is holding the tape recorder ready to record everything that Dolores is about to relay. This sets the focus towards Dolores – her side of the story, her thoughts, her opinions and her character.

Violence

The novel uses violence to highlight the trigger points of the main character undergoing a significant transformation. The triggers include taking a hit from Joe with a chunk of rock maple at her kidneys, Dolores' daughter being molested by Joe and Dolores burst of anger when she is robbed by Joe from her bank account. When Dolores has had enough of everything, she finally explodes and resorts to an even more violent solution which is to kill Joe.

Even as Dolores' violent encounters with Joe are done, she is faced with yet another form of violence (firing gunshots at her house) by the mob or the neighborhood after being accused of Vera's death which becomes the turning point of exposing herself entirely.

Suspense

The suspense that is presented in the novel where Dolores battles against Joe in the well is the fastest paced even in the story even if it is filled with action and seems to be the longest time lapse for Dolores. This is when the decision is about to be made whether or not Dolores is able to see her plans of revenge push through or everything will just be in vain. This also presents Dolores' "berserk mode" which is crucial to her transformation.

#### Catalyst Character

Placing Vera Donovan into Dolores' life acts as a catalyst for Dolores' transformation. In the beginning of the story, Vera is presented as a burden but eventually became a source of connection and comfort. On top of that, Vera also became Dolores' "eye opener" to get even with Joe. With Vera in the scene, Dolores takes her transformation to the next level.

#### Catharsis

In the course of the story, Dolores is bombarded with difficult scenarios that although pushed her to the limit, also gave her the opportunity to finally break from her chains.

When Dolores finally kills Joe, she is freed from the very source of her problem. She is now certain that her daughter is safe and Joe can no longer be an influence to her sons. Despite facing another problem from Vera's death, Dolores is still able to uphold that feeling of rejuvenation from her sacrifice for her children.

#### Bildungsroman

Dolores is presented like a jigsaw puzzle that perfectly fits every situation in the story. Each time she faces a difficult scenario, she becomes stronger and is more determined to face her adversaries.

First, she is given a hint that she can fight back after Joe hit her in the kidneys; second, she is given a more solid probability that she can kill Joe by Vera's implication and finally she is successful with her plan and kills Joe. She undergoes a certain metamorphosis in different aspects in her life such as her response to fear (when she battles against herself whether she can make it out alive or not and also her fear that her children might find out and hate her), her intellect (as she orchestrated the perfect plan to kill Joe), her strength (since she is only a woman and Joe is a big guy) and her ability to sacrifice (for the sake of her children's safety). All of these sequences are weaved together in order

for Dolores to have a perfect path for her character transformation.

**Rose Madder.** The literary techniques that are prominent in the novel are: accumulation, catharsis, violence, bildungsroman and *deus ex machina*. These elements are further explained as it is presented in the novel.

#### Accumulation

It is apparent that Rose had suffered so much that each of her recollection leads back to the traumatic experiences that are happening to her in the hands of her husband.

It is through this accumulation of her pain that pushed her to finally get out of the house. In the story, the phrase "Come over here, I want to talk to you up close" is repeated many times emphasizing the physical, verbal and emotional abuse that she has gone through for the past fourteen years. Rosie's accumulation of pain is also the reason that kept her alive. It works as an alarm button that triggers her to do something to survive.

#### Catharsis

Rose's transformation as a character took place at the moment she ran away from her husband. Although her emotions on leaving is mixed-up (relief and at the same time more worries), it cannot be denied that it gave her a sense of freedom regardless of that is to come.

Rose is able to experience the full extent of her freedom from her oppressor when she turned Norman over to the lady in the painting that she bought from the pawnshop. That was the end of her problem that ran over her for fourteen years. From there she discovered the strength she thought she would never have and experienced a form of cleansing from her past nightmares.

#### Violence

Rose has been facing a tremendously violent relationship with her husband for fourteen years. It is with this element that Rose's character is pushed to the edge. Rose's life is presented with a wide range of violence from threats to slaps, bites, punches, blows and even miscarriage. Eventually all these balled up in her life and acted as a grind that sharpened her just so she can finally decide to fight.

This element has effectively squeezed out the potentials that Rose has to maximize what she can still become.

#### Bildungsroman

Rose's storyline is presented as someone who just takes in whatever is blown at her to someone who resists and takes matters into her own hands. Her character is one of those that turned 360 degrees; although not abruptly, but by series of events that leads to such.

When Rose finally ran away from Norman, her development as a character started to take place. She began to think what possible route she could take, she managed to wear a disguise, she learned how to talk to people and reach out for directions, she was finally able to tell people about what really happened to her, she even changed the color of her hair; and as she continues to show progress, eventually she got a new job that she does very well and even found new love through Bill.

All of these sequences of events actually act as bread crumbs that Hansel and Gretel used as her guide to her becoming.

Deux ex machina

The first few chapters of the story is already full of action but nothing out of the ordinary until in chapter three when Rose purchased the painting of a lady with the name "Rose Madder".

The flow of the story did not entirely change altogether nor abruptly; however, there are elements of fantasy that are inserted when Rose is alone in her apartment. First scenario was when there were changes or movements in the picture's dimension.

"A sudden dismaying thought, an idea so strong it was almost a certainty, had come to her. The folds and creases in the rose madder gown were not the same. They had changed position. They had changed position because the woman wearing the toga, or chiton, or whatever it was, had changed position".

Another scenario which is more interesting than the previous "sightings" is when Rose actually goes inside the picture and is given a quest by the lady in the painting. She is given specific instructions to keep her safe from the place itself and from the bull. She was also told to bring back the baby.

This fantastical intervention is in a way a technique that measures Rosie's strength and to check her readiness to face her biggest adversary: Norman.

The final intervention takes place when Rose, Bill and Norman went into the picture and "Rose Madder" finally took care of Norman as part of her statement "I repay".

All that Rosie has to do is to lure Norman; who transformed into a bull, into the center part of that dimension.

It would appear that Rosie in spite of the development that she has undergone, still needs external assistance beyond her usual grasp of reality and yet surprisingly enough is still connected to her inner psyche.

**Synthesis of the literary techniques used by the author.** The common literary techniques found in both novels are violence/suspense, catharsis and bildungsroman. These literary techniques clearly target the main characters' (Dolores and Rose) transformation and development. Violence becomes a driving force for the women in the story to look for something different in their lives aside from just being maligned and abused. Suspense becomes their push to continue to live for another day and to tell themselves that they have to win in spite of the bleak chance for them to live. Catharsis and bildungsroman on the other hand, focus on how the women go through the process of being changed into better and bolder female species.

Table 3.1 Themes of the novels

Novels	Theme
Dolores Claiborne	A woman who appears to be weak and helpless can become wild and dangerous when fed up or provoked.
Rose Madder	

Table 3.2 Sub-themes of the novels

Novels	Sub-themes
Dolores Claiborne	Mothers will do anything and everything to protect her children
	Abused children are silenced by fear

	Help is always available even when least expected
	Patience and endurance make a person last longer.
Rose Madder	Help is always available when you least expect it.
	A change of environment can open a new perspective in life
	There is no victory for the abuser/oppressor; the good always win

Too many times women have been labeled as the weaker sex and too many times they have been pushed, beaten and trampled. In the real world, there are still an on - going reports on women raped, battered and beaten to a pulp. These women just keep mum and sulk in their sentiments on just being a woman. Hence in the field of Literature, a door of realization is opened for the woman and even to men to raise awareness, justice and equality to the female sex.

The themes that are contained in novels act as a bridge between the actual story and the readers. While some of the elements may be impossible and too exaggerated such as plots and characters, themes always bring everything together because it is universal.

The themes in the two novels that are used in this study are the same namely: A woman who appears to be weak and helpless can become wild and dangerous when already fed up or provoked. In these novels, the truth is not hidden at all. Women abuse is clearly exposed and the weakness among is not denied. Both Dolores and Rose portray being fear-stricken and helpless. However, these so called weaknesses are used to turn things to the advantage of these women. It shows that the more the women

are stretched, the more their characters are being molded.

In the novel *Dolores Claiborne*, Dolores is stretched by her pain and suffering which is caused by her husband. At first, Dolores was thought of as a character who can easily be overpowered by an abusive male. Her helplessness, however, only pushed her to acquire victory over her circumstance.

In the novel *Rose Madder*, Rose has suffered fear, pain and abuse at a higher level that such events only made her cower for more than a decade. However, an end point really has to come and she is pushed to wake up to take her life back despite facing the risk of venturing into the unknown.

### Sub-themes in *Dolores Claiborne*

Mothers will do anything and everything to protect her children. In this novel, Dolores portrayed the mother archetype. She has sacrificed herself for the sake of her children. Her children's circumstance especially her daughter, triggered her to overlook her own welfare and focused more on how she can avenge her children. When her motherhood is sabotaged, she transformed into someone who will do anything to protect her post; even to the extent of killing a man.

Abused children are silenced by fear. Dolores' daughter is susceptible to fear since she is still young and her abuser is her very own father who is supposedly her protector. This abuse resulted in her isolation and eventually turned her into a different person with low self-esteem. Her character change also draws suspicion towards Dolores. With Dolores' keen mother's instinct and strong desire to make things right, her daughter was able to recover.

Help is always available even when least expected. In spite of Dolores' pitiful situation – poverty, abuse from her husband and being robbed from her bank account - she still received help even in the most unusual way. Her employer Vera, whom she hated at first, is the one who assisted her in terms of money (housekeeping). Vera was also the one who helped her with the idea of getting rid of her husband to free her from her biggest misery.

Patience and endurance make a person last longer. Dolores showed a great amount of endurance as her story unfolds. In her job as Vera's housekeeper, she has undergone tremendous pressure, Dolores is greatly annoyed by her employer but she continued to serve her since she

found no other way to earn money. She also endured the beatings that her husband landed on her for the longest time until she finally had enough and strike back. She also displayed great endurance as she executes her ultimate plan to kill her husband. She still has to take in some beatings again so she could lead her husband to the well. Lastly, she also showed endurance when her neighborhood accused her of killing Vera Donovan and also when her daughter grew distant from her. Such endurance really stretched her as a woman, yet she was able to survive. This particular human attribute gives the main character a strong support on her entire being as she is stretched and molded to be ready enough to face her adversaries.

#### **Sub – themes in Rose Madder**

Help is always available when you least expect it. When Rose runs away from Norman, she fled into a place where she never knows anyone. She is confused and scared but her determination to stay away from Norman attracted the force of helping hands from Peter (from the bus station), the women of Daughters and Sister Shelter, Bill (her lover) and the woman in the painting. These unprecedented forms of assistance allows the main character to want to survive, keeping her hopes up that things will change to her advantage.

A change of environment can open a new perspective in life. Rose has been stuck in the same tormenting situation for fourteen years with her abusive husband, Norman. There was no option for her to do something different because is enclosed in the same exact walls of predictability, dominated by her husband.

When Rose finally decided to run away, her doors for new opportunity suddenly burst open. She realizes that freedom is not a myth and she has a fair chance to fight back for it despite uncertainty of what is going to happen next. Her abuser on the other hand has gone mad because suddenly he lost control and could not get himself to believe that his victim is capable of doing such unpredictability. The change of environment has a direct correlation of Rose's character development.

There is no victory for the abuser/oppressor; the good always win. The villain or oppressor in the story follows a pattern of being at the top at first since his victim has not yet mustered enough strength to retaliate. In this case, Norman has grown conceited of the dominion that he thinks he has over

Rose's life, thus, he becomes complacent (Griffith, 1993).

When Rose finally retaliated, she was not alone since she has won the favor of the good force to help her namely; Peter, the women of D & S, Bill and the woman in the painting.

It goes to show that a character who is driven and assisted by the force of good will always be able to rise up victorious; able to conquer what has previously trampled her.

**Synthesis of the themes and sub-themes of the novels.** Both of the novels carry a similar theme that points out to the main characters' development as the stories unfold. The theme clearly reveals that women who experience abuse from their husband follow a specific thread of action. First, the women freeze, which pertains to letting themselves continue to suffer in the status quo and just hoping for things to change. Second, the women flee, which pertains to escaping the situation without having to deal with it directly. Lastly, the women fight, which pertains to finally facing their adversaries heads on even without the assurance of winning. The sub-plots on the other hand, reveals how the women recover and rediscover themselves in spite of the almost impossible situation that they are faced with. They no longer allow themselves to be trampled over their abusive husbands since they have mustered enough strength hidden in their very own character with the help of external elements such as people, weather conditions, etc.

#### **IV. CONCLUSION**

Based on the findings, the following conclusion is established: Stephen King's novels, Dolores Claiborne and Rose Madder reveal that character development is used as the dominant literary device to reveal the central message.

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