**Tribhuvan University**

# Subaltern Historiography in Morrison's *Home*



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**By**

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## Letter of Approval

This thesis entitled “Subaltern Historiography in Morrison’s *Home"* submitted to the central Department of English, Tribhuvan University by Tul Maya Sapkota has been approved by the under signed member of the research committee.

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## Letter of Recommendation

This thesis entitled "Subaltern Historiography in Morrison's *Home"* has been completed under my supervision. I recommended it for *viva-voce.*

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Supervisor

Dr. Tara Lal Shrestha

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**Abstract**

This research is an effort to study the writer's attempt to record the history from below in Toni Morrison's novel *Home*. In the novel, the writer has located the sites of subaltern silences through the troubles of poor Money family after WWII. The family moves to Georgia from Texas due to the fear of terrorist harassment and struggle due to poverty. The protagonist, Frank becomes the sole guardian of his sister, Cee after the death of their parents. Frank is enlisted to Korean War and Cee, always abused by her grandmother as a gutter child because her mother had given birth to her on a roadside during their journey to Georgia. She elopes with a wastrel boy called Prince. Frank has to travel again to Georgia after the war to save his sister when he has got a letter informing him that Cee was in danger. In the course of his journey, he has to face the hegemony of the fathers of church, the hospitals. He has to witness how the elite doctor named Beauregard has ruined the reproductive ability of his poor sister working as his assistant, in the name of an experiment of the eugenics. Cee is later rescued and saved by the traditional medicine based on the love and nature. Critiquing the neo-colonial elitist discourses of church, hospitals, wars, and eugenics, Morrison has valorized the cultural medicine system of the subalterns and has tried to recover the subaltern history in the novel.

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## I. Morrison's Concern for Subaltern Voice in *Home*

This research focuses on the examination of Toni Morrison's tenth novel *Home* from the perspective of subaltern historiography. The novel has many of the subaltern struggle and issues represented by the means of inferior and economically poor Money family during 1950s American society. The protagonist, Frank Money, is one of the participants of the Korean War who suffers from the post-war trauma and is very much passive and goalless person who cannot assess his problems. He has married to an ambitious girl Lily who works in a laundry. She wants to achieve economic success but her husband never shares her enthusiasm and hunger for success. He stays at home passively staring at the wall drowned in the trauma of the deaths of his childhood friends without helping his wife and being her burden. His life again finds the goal only when he receives a letter from his sister who is living as the domestic laborer in the Southern Georgian village named Lotus that she is in difficult condition and might die if he does not reach there on time to help her. There, he rescues his sister from the fatal experiment of the doctor she is working with and brings her back to the community of Lotus. The incessant love and care of the women of black community saves her life. Frank cherishes his childhood memories of Lotus as his homeless parents worked sixteen hours a day for the betterment of the family and died and the sufferings they bore as the children. Frank feels at home there, rents the same house his parents rented after a long refuge to their grandparents Salem and Lenore and stays with his sister. His quest for home full of love and healing power is the quest for the transcendence from his subaltern identity and the experience in the American society ruled by the white American elites.

Frank Money serves as a subordinate warrior fitting the literal meaning of the term 'subaltern'. Subaltern as a term refers to a person of inferior, subordinate rank in

an army. Frank Money returns to the terrors of racism in America after the terrors of war in Korea. On the battlefield he witnesses his two best friends die agonizing deaths, unable to save them. During the war, he performs his duty of ruthless killing. Now, he suffers from post-traumatic stress disorder— a condition which he is unable to understand at first. He tries to cure this with alcohol.

As the novel begins, he finds himself in a mental institution. He cannot explain the reason why he has been taken there. He finds himself drugged and strapped to a bed when he comes to consciousness. He has no idea how or why he got there, only that he must escape. Able to free himself, he takes refuge with a minister of a little church who helps him begin his journey back to Georgia, where his sister, Cee, lies gravely ill. The mental institution is run by the elites of the society and they experiment with the bodies of the poor, subaltern class so that they could serve the elite, rich class of the society becomes clear when the Minister Locke terms Frank Money's escape from there as lucky one:

> Reverend Locke grunted. "Have a seat," he said, then, shaking his head, added, "You lucky, Mr. Money. They sell a lot of bodies out of there."
>
> "Bodies?" Frank sank down on the sofa, only vaguely caring or wondering what the man was talking about.
>
> "Uh-huh. To the medical school."
>
> "They sell dead bodies? What for?"
>
> "Well, you know, doctors need to work on the dead poor so they can help the live rich." (12)

How the so-called social institutions serve the elites and abuse the subalterns is clearly highlighted in the conversation. The doctors serve the purpose of the social

elites and they abuse the subalterns so as to benefit the upper-class of the society is evident time and again that forms the core of Morrison's novel. Later, we see that Cee, sister of Frank has also become the subject of experiment of a doctor cum scientist called Dr. Beauregard. In the course of experiment, he nearly kills her. Frank reaches there in time to save her. Cee had taken a job "assisting" a notorious associate Dr. Beauregard Scott. She has become the subject of his experiments in eugenics, which have made her infertile and endangered her life.

When Frank travels back to Georgia, we learn his story and his history. The novel relates how his family was driven out of Texas; how he and Cee witnessed, as young children, the hasty burial of a murdered man. Further, how Frank hated the suffocating atmosphere of Lotus, Georgia, and the cramped life his family endured in the house of his coldhearted grandmother, Lenore are explored throughout the novel. Leaving for war in Korea had seemed a better option for him than the dead end of his hometown. But in doing so he left the sister he had always cared for and protected. Now he must return to a place he never wanted to see again.

*Home* follows the classic structure of the hero's journey. Frank leaves home, undergoes horrific trials, descends to the depths of human cruelty and his own capacity for violence, and then returns home a purified and changed man. He cannot save his homeboys on the battlefield, but he is given a chance to rescue his sister.

The novel has also pitted the subaltern black medical practice against the colonial white medical practice. *Home* is not only about the violence men both suffer and inflict. It is also about the healing power of women like Miss Ethel Fordham and her friends in Lotus. Fierce, resolute, deeply compassionate and rooted in their traditional healing practices their methods are sharply contrasted with the self-serving, aggressive techniques of a patriarchal medical industry.

Writing about a war that has received little attention in American fiction, Morrison vividly highlights that the particular brand of racism that prevailed just before the end of Jim Crow and the beginning of the Civil Rights movement. In dramatizing the abuses of the medical system, the devastating effects of war on those who fight it and the meaning of both leaving and coming home, she holds a mirror up to our own time as well.

"Home" is the persistent metaphor found in the works of Morrison. In her essay "Home", Toni Morrison writes that "matters of race and matters of home are priorities in [her] work" (4). She argues that her home would be "a-world-in-which-race-does-*not*-matter", a world "free of racial hierarchy" (3) even though she admits that she has never lived in such a world, and even though she recognizes the fact that she herself is "an already- and always-raced writer" (4).

The use of the term "home" allows Morrison to distinguish between "the metaphor of house and the metaphor of home" (3). In Morrison's view, this "house" is the impersonal, already existing racial structure, built in the course of time and issuing its own rules. The "home" is something more personal: a place that you can arrange yourself, to your own taste; a place where you have the freedom to be yourself; the place where you belong – the place which meets the "contemporary searches and yearnings for social space that is psychically and physically safe" (10). By equating home with "a-world-in-which-race-does-not-matter", Morrison "domesticates the racial project" (3): she wants to show that "the job of unmattering race" (3) is "a manageable, doable, modern human activity" (4). She considers it her duty as an author to try to "take what is articulated as an elusive race-free paradise and domesticate it" (8) in her work.

The question which then imposes itself is how to change the existing racial house into "a race-specific yet nonracist home" (5), how to imagine "race without dominance – without hierarchy" (11), "how to be both free and situated" (5), "how to enunciate race while depriving it of its lethal cling" (5). The major emphasis of Morrison using the metaphor of home thus appears to be the anti-racist project; a home is the metaphor to construct the world without the racial dominance or hierarchy. She wants to end the lethal racial hegemony and devise a world that has no racial prejudice through the imaginary of home. But it is very difficult task as one tends to privilege one race over other and again recreate the world in hierarchic racial order.

In the name of creating a home free of racial prejudices and hierarchies, according to Morrison, one runs the risk of incorrectly calling the redesigned racial house "diversity or multiculturalism as a way of calling it home" (8), of "[reproducing] the master's voice" (4), or of replacing his voice by that of "his fawning mistress or his worthy opponent" (4), positions which "confine [you] to [the master's] terrain, in his arena, accepting the house rules in the dominance game" (4). For Morrison, there is generally the hegemonic notion of the home that is actually a house rather than a home. It is full of hierarchy like dominant and dominated, master and slave, and the higher and lower race.

So, Morrison wonders whether it is actually possible to simply convert the racial house into a home. Whether converting this house would not mean "forfeiting a home of [your] own" (4); whether "life in this renovated house [would] mean eternal homelessness" (4); whether "it [would] require intolerable circumspection, a self-censoring bond to the locus of racial architecture" (4); whether we aren't and wouldn't always be unfree, "tethered to a death-dealing ideology even (and

especially) when [we] [hone] all [our] intelligence toward subverting it" (5). However, the other possibility to construct a home, that is to "escape or self-exile from the house of racial construction" (8), can stir up new dangers, or can result into "making a genuflection" in the familiar yard of the racial house instead of acting outside of it. (8)

The publication of Morrison's short novel or novella *Home* in 2012, large number of critics has analyzed it from numerous perspectives. Reviewing Morrison's novel in *Telegraph*, in her review "Home by Toni Morrison: review," Lucy Daniel sees the cultural expression of bebop as Morrison's attempt to highlight the strivings of the black people in the America where there is no control over own actions for the black people. The blacks have no agency even to control the rhythm they play rather the rhythm has the control over them:

> In Toni Morrison's slim tenth novel, the main character Frank drifts into a club where a band is performing bebop. When the trumpeter and pianist reach the end of the song, the drummer just keeps on going, until he has to be carried away by his band mates, still drumming, "his sticks moving to a beat both intricate and silent". Later Frank recognizes the feeling. "Maybe, as with the drummer, rhythm would take charge. Maybe he too would be escorted away, flailing helplessly, imprisoned in his own strivings." (11-12)

When Frank sees the drummer losing control, and the act taking over the actor, he himself fears that his actions may go out of control and take over him. The black people in America lose their agency to the work they do and are intricately entangled in the actions they perform. It is the bitter exposition of the racist pre-Civil Rights America that finds voice in Morrison's novella.

Blayze Hembree, in the review essay "*Home* by Toni Morrison" published in *World Literature Today,* sees the ground breaking picture of pre-Civil Rights America and the worries about the black masculinity in Morrison's *Home*:

> Morrison appears to question our conventional notions of a pre–Civil Rights America. But in doing so, she also casts a worried glance at black masculinity. Frank's subordinate rank on the front lines, for instance, seems to typify and reinforce dominant racial hierarchies. . . . In a story that knows healing, Morrison succinctly teaches us the value and dignity in a life. (8-9)

Hembree sees Morrison not only questioning the notion of pre-Civil Rights America rather she also poses the question upon the weakening black masculinity. Frank has to work as subordinate in the army and in war that highlights the racial hierarchy that keeps Frank as marginalized. The healing method used by the black women based on love also subverts the notion of White, elitist medical science. By subverting the notion of Western, Eurocentric medical science and emphasizing the healing power of love, Morrison has established the human dignity in her novella according to Hembree. Keeping all the criticisms of the novels in mind, this research further explores the issues of subalternity in the novel from the perspective of subaltern historiography that has been outlined in the Morrison's novel *Home*.

Subaltern means "of lower rank". The word is still in use in British military to refer to the military officer below the rank of captain. Thus, it become the catchall term for all the subordinate groups of the society like the Dalits, colonized, women , blacks, the working class etc. The first person to use it as a terminology to refer to the peasant group of Italy is the Italian neo-Marxist Antonio Gramsci who saw them in the society without the awareness of their subordination. Since the term subaltern

means the marginalized, Dalits, widow women, silenced groups of society and history, Subaltern Studies becomes the project for the retrieval of the minority, muted histories and voices of subalterns.

The subaltern for Gramsci is “The subaltern classes, by definition, are not unified and cannot unite until they are able to become a “State”: their history, therefore, is intertwine with that of civil society, and thereby with the history of State and groups of States” (*Critical Theory Since Plato* 946). So, with the aim to recover “the small silenced voice of history- the voice of subaltern” (Guha 45), South Asian intellectuals started to publish subaltern writings as *Subaltern Studies: Writing on South Asian History* in the editorship of Ranjit Guha. The main highlights of Guha’s argument propounding the discipline of Subaltern Studies is that Indian history, whether colonial, national, Marxist, or neocolonial, has been written by elite, about the elite and for the elite and by definition, and intent in the process has ignore everyone else, namely, “the people” or, in Antonio Gramsci’s term, the “subaltern”.

Spivak’s essay “Can Subaltern Speak?” is a classic application of Derridean analysis which looks at the problematic of subaltern voice and historiography. The first problem Spivak locates concerns the provenance of the method of analysis itself: postcolonialism applies external, male-dominated discourse from the Western academy to the question of the subaltern and therefore is in danger of reproducing a form of ‘colonization’ of the subaltern subject which it ostensibly professes to oppose. The second problem concerns the nature of what is identified by this analysis: to identify the subaltern and bring that voice out of the silent shadows of history is to render the subaltern no longer truly ‘subaltern’, but to incorporate that hidden or obscured identity into dominant discourse. The third problem concerns the valorization of the subaltern: for the subaltern to speak (or rather, perhaps, for

postcolonial discourse to speak for the subaltern) as a site of true and authentic identity is to essentialize that voice, again reproducing the very attributes the project set out to challenge in the first place. The logic of these arguments seems to be leading to an inescapable conclusion: for the subaltern to be 'subaltern' (24), he or she must remain silent. And so, too, must the postcolonial critic. To enable the subaltern voice, Spivak acts as an essentialist essentializing the ethnic, racial or any other identities of the subaltern. Her position is thus, strategic essentialist position. In favor of Spivak, David Richards further argues clarifying the position:

> Subaltern identification, however compromised, is necessary to enable agency, according to Fanon's . . . premise. In order to break open this dilemma, Spivak proposes a kind of compromise to enable subaltern identity and therefore agency. Her concept of 'strategic essentialism' argues that it is necessary to adopt certain 'essentialized' identities (national, ethnic, gender, racial) in order to 'speak' and to achieve specific strategic goals. (23)

The position of strategic use of essentialized subaltern identity is necessary as the humanist project of enabling subaltern agency. In the novel *Home*, Morrison has also adopted the essential subordinated black identity of South American Money family struggling amid the racial hierarchy and subordination. Their ethnic identity is necessary to enable their voice in the society marred by racial hierarchy.

Dipesh Chakrabarty underscores the need to write the history of the subaltern groups but he carefully avoids essentialism in the name of recovering the subaltern voices in such histories. In his essay "Radical Histories and Question of Enlightenment Rationalism: Some Recent Critiques of 'Subaltern Studies'", he asserts:

> What will history produced in this mode look like? I cannot say, for one cannot write this history in a pure form. The language of the states, of citizenship, of wholes and totalities, the legacy of Enlightenment rationalism…will always cut across it. At the same time this other history will present itself as that which disrupts these languages. (757)

Thus, the form of subaltern historiography is open-ended and is not codified as in the dominant modes of historiography for Chakrabarty. The history from below or the subaltern historiography is necessary but if one devises particular language or vocabulary to write them in the name of creating the subaltern language, it becomes essentialist. Even in the subaltern history, the language of elites, states and even the imperial language and vocabulary of the Western rationality may come overlapping to each other. Thus, subaltern historian should be non-committal to any particular position or jargons.

In this regard David Richards in his essay "Framing Identity" writes about the agenda of subaltern studies and argues that it is:

> concerned with the rewriting of the history . . . not as the traditional narrative of elites engaged in a heroic struggle with . . . but as small-scale local insurrections (often failing) enacted by groups and individuals-workers, peasants, women-ignored or 'written out' of the historical grand narrative. (23)

It is a clear from his assertion that the term subaltern stands for all the groups and intellectuals who are ignored by the traditional, elitist, colonial historiography including workers, peasants, women etc. To recover their history and to articulate their new collective political and cultural agency with the resistance to the discourses of elitist nationalism, Subaltern Studies Collective or Group (SSG) was found in India

by South Asian intellectuals and academics. Partha Chatterjee, the prominent member of Subaltern Studies Group (SSG) future defines the project that "the task now is to fill up…emptiness, that is, the representation of subaltern consciousness in elitist historiography. It must be given its own specific content with its own history of development" (62). Thus, the central question of subaltern historiography is to represent the subaltern consciousness with the articulation of the new forms of political and cultural agency of subaltern groups.

While reading the literary texts for the recovery of the subaltern voice the representation of characters and the writer's position and agency to speak about the subaltern characters, the characters' growth to awareness of their subordination and subalternity, their agency to their life and the conscious of resistance to come out of the subalternity are very important. Margery Sabin in her essay "In Search of Subaltern Consciousness", with the emphasis on analysis of the writer's position, writes, "In searching for subaltern consciousness through writing, projection of writer's own social position and values are always discernible" (178). For Sabin the writers may knowingly involve to repress or to articulate the subaltern voices.

With the consideration of the anti-essentialist, anti-establishment nature of Subaltern Studies, it has been used in this research to examine Toni Morrison's novel Home which is set in 1950s pre-Civil Rights America. Through subaltern inquiry into Morrison's novel, the major goal of the research is to justify Subaltern studies as an apt methodology to study the silenced, marginalized voice and values of the black people in America.

This research will be remarkable repertoire for the future researchers as it explores the subaltern struggle and silence in particular historical circumstances. It also helps to understand the marginalization of the minorities due to the power

exercised by the dominant elites with the construction of the elitist discourses. Those discourses silence the minority discourses and voices.

Though this research uses the concepts of the some of the noted subaltern historians, it does not offer comprehensive and overall analysis of the Subaltern Studies and its debates. The research will be purely textual and thus, field study about the issues of subalternity will not be included. The subaltern and Third world theorists will be drawn into the debate while examining the novel. The subaltern historians and theorists like Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Ranjit Guha, Gyan Prakash, Dipesh Chakrabarty and other will be brought into conversation to examine the subaltern silence and muted histories of minority blacks. The valuable guidelines of the lecturers, library consultation, and internet research will help further to shape this research to its complete form.

The present research work has been divided into three chapters. The first chapter fundamentally deals with introductory outline of the present study. It introduces critical review and the characters in relation to their subjection to the racial domination and the maintenance of silence in the subaltern voice and their strivings to find voice. Thus it presents the bird's eye view of the entire research. The second chapter aims at providing the theoretical methodological reading of the text briefly with both the textual and theoretical evidences. It attempts to examine the subalternity of black people in pre-Civil Rights America and their journey to consciousness of their condition and identity rooted to their home. On the basis of the various theories of subalterns and subalternity including Gramsci, Guha, Spivak and so on, the characters and their circumstances and strivings to consciousness are examined. This chapter further sort out some extracts from the text to prove the hypothesis of the research. This part serves as the core of the present research. The

third chapter concludes the ideas put forward in the earlier chapter, focusing on the outcome of the entire research. The various logical conclusions have been summarized as the proof that the novel is concerned to encompass the history from below.

## II. Subaltern Historiography in Morrison's *Home*

This research focuses on the study of Toni Morrison's novel *Home* with the study social, political economic, historical, official discourses beside the discourses of racism so as to examine the subaltern silence and Morrison's attempt to recover the silenced histories of the marginalized Black people of Southern American town, Lotus, of Georgia. The theory of race is not sufficient to give voice to subalterns because it itself is Eurocentric and elitist discourse professed by the whites to show themselves superior and is optimized with the language of the oppressors. This research stands in that weakness of the race theory and examines the elitism that has ruled the representation of the marginalized American Southerner Blacks and has silenced their voice with the systematic appropriation of the hegemonic, Eurocentric, elitist discourses. Morrison's novel frequently juxtaposes the Eurocentric discourses and the minority discourses in conflict as it presents the bitter criticism against the aggressive Western medical science and highlights the humane and soothing qualities of the traditional medicine system of minorities that is based on love. It unmasks Dr. Beauregard, white elite, who destroys the reproductive capacity of innocent black maid Ycidra Money destroying her womb in the experiment of the eugenics, the Eurocentric discourse of white dominance and the destruction of the minority subaltern groups. Morrison has depicted Hospitals, the very foundation of the Western discourse of medical science as mortuaries and the Christian fathers as hypocrite who lack the sympathy to the human beings though they present themselves as the saviors of the humanity.

The novel begins with the journey of Frank Money to the small Southern town, Lotus, of Georgia. He needs to reunite with his distressed little sister Ycidra, also known as Cee, and rescue her back to Lotus, the place where they grew up. Lotus

is the childhood home town of the Frank and Cee Money as their family had migrated to there to escape the invasion of Ku Klux Klan, when the members of the Ku Klux Klan destroyed their properties. Frank has the ambivalent memories of Lotus. Sometimes he cherishes them and sometimes despises them. He cherishes the memory of playing and hanging out with his friends but he is tormented by the memory of two of his friends dying in the Korean War before his eyes. He has the sweet memory of escorting Cee from danger in the countryside, but has the loathing memory of the tough love of their grandmother Lenore, who was like a "wicked witch"(53) to them. Their parents were always so tired after long days at work in the fields they that "any affection they showed was like a razor – sharp, short, and thin" (53). Lotus is very poor place of Georgia where there is no hope of progress. Frank had left the backward place as he was enlisted to the army to fight the Korean War. Cee elopes with a guest of her neighbors, called Prince, who never cares her and leaves her alone in a room in Tennessee. Their parents died in poverty and Cee spends her time with minor works around. Finally, in search of better job, she starts to work for Dr. Beauregard as his assistant in which she falls in fatal trap of the Doctor's experiment of Eugenics and her condition is very critical. Frank comes to her rescue and Cee is saved by the local women of Lotus with the traditional, naturopathic medicines and care. The condition of both Cee and the traditional medicine is subaltern, crushed under poverty and the elite, Eurocentric medical discourse respectively and both are marred with silences and lack of agency.

The Eurocentric discourses are laden with the colonialist elitism and the social discourses are full of the bourgeois-nationalist elitism. The question of elitism and their role on the silencing of the minority discourses and voices is prominent one in

subaltern historiography. It is clearly highlighted in Vinay Lal's essay "The Subaltern School and the Ascendancy of Indian History":

> "The historiography of Indian nationalism has for a long time been dominated by elitism", Guha wrote in the opening sentence, and added in elaboration that elitism contained both "colonialist" and "bourgeois-nationalist elitism", the former defining Indian nationalism "primarily as a function of stimulus and response". "The general orientation" of nationalist historiography, on the other hand, "is to represent Indian nationalism as primarily an idealist venture in which the indigenous elite led the people from subjugation to freedom". (248)

Morrison's novel draws the pathetic picture of the minority people of America who are suppressed by the elitism and indifference of the American mainstream discourses. They are living the life in the crushing poverty; they have no agency in the society to resist the hegemonic discourses and the tortures they have to bear from the white terrorists associated to the Ku Klux Klan. They are subalterns. The term "Subaltern" carries an adjective meaning "of lower rank." The subaltern as a designation is still used in the British military to describe the ranks below captain. In recent political and cultural theory, especially that is associated with the Subaltern Studies Group and with Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, the term "subaltern" is used as a catchall designation for members of subordinated populations— the colonized, women, blacks, the working class—although it is most often used to describe those oppressed by British colonialism and by the political and economic upheavals of the Postcolonial period. In the definition of prominent subaltern historiographer, Ranajit Guha:

> The word ‘subaltern’ . . . stands for the meaning as given in the Concise Oxford Dictionary, that is, ‘of inferior rank’. It will be used . . . as a name for the general attitude of subordination in South Asian Society whether this is expressed in terms of class, caste, age, gender and office or in any other way. (vii)

Though Guha proposes the use of the term subaltern for the South Asian subordinated populations crushed under the neo-colonial hegemonic discourses, it can be used for the populations around the world with similar experiences of hegemony. Subaltern lacks the agency in the society due to their lower rank in the hierarchy of social system in terms of class, caste, gender, age, office and or any other way. The phrase “any other way” gives the term flexibility so that it could accommodate the variety of the forms of the hegemony. The lower rank of Money family in the socio-economic hierarchy is clearly highlights their subalternity:

> Because Mama and Pap worked from before sunrise until dark, they never knew that Miss Lenore poured water instead of milk over the shredded wheat Cee and her brother ate for breakfast. Nor that when they had stripes and welts on their legs they were cautioned to lie, to say they got them by playing out by the stream where brambles and huckleberry thorns grew. Even their grandfather Salem was silent. Frank said it was because he was scared Miss Lenore would leave him the way his first two wives did. Lenore, who had collected a five-hundred- dollar life-insurance payment upon her first husband’s death, was a serious catch for an old, unemployable man. Besides, she had a Ford and owned her house. (43-44)

Money family's plights due to poverty are clearly seen in the quote. After their escape to the Southern American town, their living condition becomes miserable. Frank, Cee, their uncle Frank, their parents Luther and Ida, all have to be squeezed into a small house of their grandparents Salem and Miss Lenore. Their parents have to work all the day for the betterment of their pathetic condition leaving Frank and Cee with their grandparents where they suffer from the ill treatment of their grandmother Miss Lenore. They need to be silent about the abuses they receive and lie about the bruises she causes on them because they are dependent on her for the living space in her house. The grandfather also feels silent to those abuses because his wife, Miss Lenore is feeding him. He has the fear that she would leave him like his two wives did before he married to her as his third wife. Miss Lenore is an elite woman with a little fortune she made from the insurance company when her first husband dies. This shows the subalternity of the Moneys in terms of economic class. Their silence is resulted from their lower economic condition. They have to bear the hegemony of the elite like Miss Lenore due to their poverty.

The lack of time for parental love and the continual abuses Frank and Cee receive from their grandmother highlight the struggle of the working class people. They have to suffer the abuses because of the hegemonic socio-economic factors. Frank is the only support for Cee at their refuge to Lenore's house. They have the contempt for living in such a harsh place but they have to bear it in silence:

> Their parents were so beat by the time they came home from work, any affection they showed was like a razor—sharp, short, and thin. Lenore was the wicked witch. Frank and Cee, like some forgotten Hansel and Gretel, locked hands as they navigated the silence and tried to imagine a future. (53)

The parental love has been compared with the razor in metaphoric way. The parents of Frank and Cee are so busy in work that they hardly have the time to show affection to their children. Their love to their children was very short, thin and sharp like a razor. All the remaining time, Frank and Cee had to spend their time with dreadful grandmother who is compared to the wicked witch who detains Hansel and Gretel. The hatred of the children to their grandmother can be termed as the subaltern tendency to subvert the hegemonic authority that maintains their silence.

The position of the subaltern is the position of the subversion of the dominant authorities. In his essay, "Unsatisfied: Notes on Vernacular Cosmopolitanism", Homi Bhabha, a key postcolonial thinker, emphasizes the importance of social power relations in his working definition of 'subaltern' groups as "oppressed, minority groups whose presence was crucial to the self-definition of the majority group: subaltern social groups were also in a position to subvert the authority of those who has hegemonic power" (191-207). In Bhabhan definition, the term subaltern is used to denote marginalized and oppressed people who are in the position to subvert the hegemonic authorities. The hatred of Frank and Cee to their dominant grandmother is thus, the expression of their subalternity and desire to subvert the hegemonic oppression they have to bear in the family. Miss Lenore has her own discourse, an elitist discourse, to dominate them. According to her discourse, Cee is a perpetual inferior in the family and the society because she was not born in the hospital or home rather she was born in the street due to the profound poverty and troubles their parents had to bear. So, she always has the reproach to her lowly birth and has the excuse for her domination to the innocent children:

> Lenore took it as a very bad sign for Cee's future that she was born on the road. Decent women, she said, delivered babies at home, in a bed

> attended to by good Christian women who knew what to do. Although only street women, prostitutes, went to hospitals when they got pregnant, at least they had a roof overhead when their baby came. Being born in the street—or the gutter, as she usually put it—was prelude to a sinful, worthless life. (44)

The elitist discourse about the superiority of women has been expressed in the Miss Lenore's discourse about decent women. Cee has been hegemonized on the basis of her birth in street but she is not responsible to the circumstances of her birth. The poor economic condition of the family is the responsible for her such a birth that is hated by the elites of the society that gives her the silence and confiscates her agency.

Subaltern historiography is very helpful to examine such silences conditioned for the poor, marginalized characters like Cee, Frank and the other members of the Money family. The Subaltern School of historiography emerged in the 1980s. From its beginning South Asian historiography underwent revision and transition as it posed a strong challenge to existing historical scholarship. It was largely by its harsh postcolonial critique that Indian history came to be seen in a different light. Indian History had thus found a new approach in subaltern historiography. The Nationalist and the Cambridge Schools became the focus of their criticism due to their elite based analysis of history. They also contested the Marxist School because Marxist historiography had a tendency of merging into the nationalist ideology of modernity and progress. Moreover the Subalterns rightly pointed out that the Marxist found it really difficult to accept the ideology of caste and religion as crucial factors in Indian History, which to them was somewhat backward and degrading. They were thus, according to the Subalterns, totally unable to gather vital historical data from lived experiences of various oppressed classes, which were submerged in religious and

social customs. The history of Moneys and the poor class in American South is thus, can be seen in the light of the subaltern historiographers as the elitist discourses have silenced and hegemonized them.

The small Southern American town, Lotus, of Georgia, has no history at all and its history is in the gripping silence, assimilated to the national history of America. Morrison narrates the grim condition of Lotus:

> *Lotus, Georgia, is the worst place in the world, worse than any battlefield. At least on the field there is a goal, excitement, daring, and some chance of winning along with many chances of losing. Death is a sure thing but life is just as certain. Problem is you can't know in advance.* (Italics originally, 82)

Lotus, as narrated in the novel, is secluded place in America. It has no activity, no goal, and no chance of moving to the bright future. There is no progress at all and thus, Lotus is in shadow and plays no notable role in the American elite, mainstream history. Frank, the returnee of the violent war in Korea serving the army as a lower-ranked gunman, compares Lotus as the opposition to the war, no activities and excitement but a dead silence. The place itself lies on the very bottom of the national hierarchical order and thus, is the subaltern realm existed in silence. Morrison further narrates the pathetic condition of the marginalized town:

> *In Lotus you did know in advance since there was no future, just long stretches of killing time. There was no goal other than breathing, nothing to win and, save for somebody else's quiet death, nothing to survive or worth surviving for. . . . Nobody in Lotus knew anything or wanted to learn anything. It sure didn't look like anyplace you'd want to be. Maybe a hundred or so people living in some fifty spread-out*

> *rickety houses. Nothing to do but mindless work in fields you didn't own, couldn't own, and wouldn't own if you had any other choice.* (Italics originally, 82)

The small town of Georgia is the residence of the landless poor people who have to work in the fields of the elites. Since there is no future in Lotus and it is far removed from the hegemonic mainstream, it has no notable history at all. The nationalist and colonialist historiographies have undermined the subaltern history of the marginalized town. The people silently and aimlessly observe the life and death as if they were formality. They lack the consciousness about their subalternity and they do not have the curiosity to gain the knowledge at all. They are unaware of the impact of colonialism and the access to the cultural imperialism that has silenced their voice and consciousness that makes them subaltern as Spivak puts it in an interview, "In postcolonial terms, everything that has limited or no access to the cultural imperialism is subaltern – a space of difference" (47). The elites of the society, the Church, hospitals, scientists and army have the real access to the cultural imperialism in the American society that come under the scathing criticism in Morrison's novel *Home* paving way for the subalterns to come out of their silence.

Hospitals, the crucial parts of the imperial discourses of the Western medicine system come under attack from the very beginning of the novel. Frank Money finds himself strapped to a bed of hospital. He is brooding about the escape because he has been brought there without his knowledge while he was on the journey to Lotus, Georgia, so as to rescue his sister Cee. He would be given the dose of morphine so that he could fall unconscious and sleep in the bed of hospital. He is trapped for unknown reason. His miserable and neglected condition is highlighted in the detail:

> Although shoes were vital for this escape, the patient had none. Four a.m., before sunrise, he managed to loosen the canvas cuffs, unshackle himself, and rip off the hospital gown. He put on his army pants and jacket and crept shoeless down the hall. Except for the weeping from the room next to the fire exit, all was quiet—no squeak of an orderly's shoes or smothered giggles, and no smell of cigarette smoke. The hinges groaned when he opened the door and the cold hit him like a hammer. (10-11)

Frank is a poor army personnel listed in army only to fight the Korean War. He is trapped in a hospital that has very poor facility and is like a mental asylum. Frank's life has found a goal to rescue his sister after his goalless life after the trauma of the Korean War. So, he tries to escape the hospital that treats him not like a human being but as an animal. His poverty and the ill-treatment of the personals that bring him to the hospital are evident with the fact that he has no shoes and he is treated like an abnormal person. The hospital is the instrument of the imperial Eurocentric medical science that has silenced the natural and traditional medical discourses. The hospital is made for elites as the doctor experiments with a variety of medicines in the body of poor, subaltern people so that they could serve the elites. It is highlighted in the conversation between Frank and the father Locke of a tiny church called AME Zion in which Frank takes refuge after he escapes from the hospital:

> "You from down the street? At that hospital?"
>
> Frank nodded while stamping his feet and trying to rub life back into his fingers.

> Reverend Locke grunted. “Have a seat,” he said, then, shaking his head, added, “You lucky, Mr. Money. They sell a lot of bodies out of there.”
>
> “Bodies?” Frank sank down on the sofa, only vaguely caring or wondering what the man was talking about. “Uh-huh. To the medical school.”
>
> “They sell dead bodies? What for?”
>
> “Well, you know, doctors need to work on the dead poor so they can help the live rich.” (12)

The elitist, imperial mechanism of Western medical science, the hospital, comes under severe criticism in the conversation. The hospitals that are on the imperial mechanism are very harsh on the poor people. For them the poor people are not the people with feelings rather they are the objects to experiment. The elite rich people are benefitted from those experiments in the expense of the poor people. Reverend Locke has revealed the horrible fact about the hospitals and the dangers the poor people brought there are facing. The hospital sells the bodies of dead poor to the medical school, another organ of imperial mechanism, so that the scholars of the Western medical science find some new methods to cure the rich elites because the elites are the contributors of the imperial mechanism while the poor have no access to it. The history of subaltern is, thus, muted and they are considered as the insignificant by the colonial historiography and the nationalist elite historiography also tends to think them as insignificant ones. In this jeopardy of the subaltern voice and its presence in the historiography, the Subaltern Studies group was formed in India to counter both the elite historiographies. Vinay Lal’s essay “The Subaltern School and

the Ascendancy of Indian History" clarifies subaltern historians' critique of colonial and nationalist elitist historiographies as the former:

> . . . elitist historiography failed to "acknowledge, far less interpret, the contribution made by the people *on their own*, that is, *independently of the elite* to the making and development of this nation". Nationalist historiography understood the "mass" articulation of nationalism mainly "negatively" . . . . Colluding with the imperatives of imperialist histories, nationalist historiography had no space for "the politics of the people". Consequently, the task of a non-elitist, or subaltern, historiography is to interpret the politics of the people as "an autonomous domain" that "neither originated from elite politics nor did its existence depend on the latter". (248)

Lal clarifies the standpoint of subaltern historiography and the silence of subaltern history due to the apathy of the colonial and nationalist elite historiographies. Subaltern historians believed subaltern history to be an autonomous domain and free it from the clutch of the elitist discourses. Morrison is very critical, like subaltern historians, to the hegemony of the elite colonial mechanisms for their silencing of the subaltern voices. She criticizes the army that enlists poor people like Frank Money to fight the Korean War and traumatize them. The subalterns are used in the wars and bear the loss while the elites benefit from them. In army, the subalterns are not treated well that is clarified in the conversation between Reverend Locke and Frank:

> "Well, you not the first by a long shot. An integrated army is integrated misery. You all go fight, come back, they treat you like dogs. Change that. They treat dogs better."

> Frank stared at him, but didn't say anything. The army hadn't treated him so bad. It wasn't their fault he went ape every now and then. As a matter of fact the discharge doctors had been thoughtful and kind, telling him the craziness would leave in time. They knew all about it, but assured him it would pass. (18)

The Reverend is elite is the head of a small church called AME Zion. He is elite because he is the part of another mechanism of cultural colonization that is church or the Christianity. So, he is able to see the abuse of subaltern class in another elitist colonial mechanism, army. He sees the misery of the subaltern riflemen like Frank and terms integrated army as an integrated misery. He points to the hegemony embedded to the elitist mechanism of army and terms the army's treatment to the subalterns as the treatment to the dogs or the tamed animals. No love exists between the elites and the subalterns but there is only the hegemony the elites perpetrate to them. Frank, being a subaltern, is unable to see the magnitude of humiliation and dominance he has to bear in the army. He has been traumatized due to the hegemony and the craziness has tormented him in the war. He is psychologically shattered. Still, he does not understand the subalternity of the poor gunmen as he is moderate in his view about the army. His subalternity and silence has been highlighted by the novelist under the army's elitist mechanism and its discourses.

The elitist colonial mechanism of Christianity, the Church, has also neglected the subaltern characters even though kind Reverend Locke initially helps Frank to get well after his escape from the hospital and to continue his journey to Georgia to rescue his sister from a danger. The reverend called Jessie Maynard helps Frank in Portland as Locke has sent him a letter but even though he gives him some money for

his journey as a help, he shows no love to him. He does not let Frank enter his house and shows aversion to him:

> There was no love from Jessie Maynard in Portland. Help, yes. But the contempt was glacial. The Reverend was devoted to the needy, apparently, but only if they were properly clothed and not a young, hale, and very tall veteran. He kept Frank on the back porch near the driveway, where a Rocket 98 Oldsmobile lurked, and smiled knowingly as he said, by way of apology, "My daughters are inside the house." It was an insult tax levied on the supplicant for an overcoat, sweater and two ten-dollar bills. Enough to get to Chicago and maybe halfway to Georgia. (22)

Jessie shows contempt to Frank and does not consider him as a guest. Frank points to the pious motive of the reverend to help the needy persons but ironically puts that the needy person should be properly clothed and not a young person. It is clear that he is not actually for the help of the subaltern people who have no proper clothing; his conviction is elite one without the compassion to the problems of the needy persons. Further, he does not want the needy and poor people like Frank come into contact with his daughters. Thus, the rejection of the elites to listen to the voice of subaltern and their wishes to be treated as respectable human being is clearly seen in the instance. The elitism of the church, a mechanism of the cultural colonialism, has been criticized by the novelist by the critical representation of Jessie in the novel.

Beside the criticism of elitism associated to army, hospital and church, Morrison has also pointed to the gendered subalternity and the silence of women as the critique of patriarchal elitism time and again in the novel. In his journey to Georgia, Frank has seen an attack to a man. The man fights and gets beaten. His wife

goes to rescue her husband from the attack. The man turns more angry and violent to his wife than the person who attacks him because she dared to rescue a man being a woman and added to his insult:

> The abused couple whispered to each other, she softly, pleadingly, he with urgency. He will beat her when they get home, thought Frank. And who wouldn't? It's one thing to be publicly humiliated. A man could move on from that. What was intolerable was the witness of a woman, a wife, who not only saw it, but had dared to try to rescue—rescue!—him. He couldn't protect himself and he couldn't protect her either, as the rock in her face proved. She would have to pay for that broken nose. Over and over again. (26)

The patriarchal elitism is clearly highlighted with the feeling of Frank. Frank thinks the man would beat his wife after reaching home because not only he is publicly humiliated but the humiliation is also seen by his wife. Besides witnessing her husband humiliated, the woman also dared to rescue her husband that is intolerable to a male. The man is not feeling the pain of his wife as her nose is broken trying to save him rather he is angry at the insult he has to bear due to her attempt to save him. He is angry because his patriarchal elitism has been threatened as he seemed helpless before a woman. No elite wants to seem powerless before a subaltern, powerless and less-privileged group of the society. This shows the subalternity and silence of woman strictly maintained by the patriarchal elitism in the society.

Morrison focuses on the gendered subalternity, the subalternity of women, many times in the novel. She presents the subalternity of Cee in her family and the circle of friends. She was alienated in family and the peer circle because of the grandmother and the presence of her brother, Frank; her actions were controlled. She

was regarded as a lowly born inferior by her grandmother. Grandmother, Miss Lenore, has the prediction about the future of Cee that she would fall in love with a lowly man that eventually proves to be true. But the patriarchal control of Frank is responsible for her such a fate as she was denied the chance even to speak and flirt with the boys in her teenage:

> When Cee and a few other girls reached fourteen and started talking about boys, she was prevented from any real flirtation because of her big brother, Frank. The boys knew she was off-limits because of him. That's why when Frank and his two best friends enlisted and left town, she fell for what Lenore called the first thing she saw wearing belted trousers instead of overall. (47)

Cee's silence is profound. She is robbed of the agency being a poor girl taking refuge in cruel step-grandmother's house and raised under the guardianship of her brother. She has no privilege even to speak with a boy when she is fourteen. The patriarchal code of the society has neglected her voice and it finds expression as soon as Frank is enlisted to the army. She elopes with Prince, the first boy she sees. But he never loves her, leaves her in a room in Tennessee and makes her suffer. The patriarchal elitism is thus, the cause of the sufferings of the voiceless subalterns like her. The subalternity of the women is gendered as many of the subaltern historians have pointed because it is constructed by the patriarchal discourses in the similar manner as the construction of the gender roles.

Gayatri Chakraborty spivak in an essay titled, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" writes; "The Subaltern cannot speak. There is no virtue in global laundry lists with woman as a pious. Representation has not withered away. The female intellectual has a circumscribe task which she must not disown with a flourish" (308). She cited the

examples of widows burnt at the pyre of the husband in her essay. She emphasized the condition of women who are doubly oppressed–firstly by patriarchy and secondly by colonialism. The subalternity of Cee in Morrison's novel is conditioned by poverty and the lack of the care from her husband after she leaves Lotus with him and so, she has to look for a job to sustain herself:

> She had left Lotus with nothing and, except for the new dress; Prince had left her with nothing. She needed soap, underwear, toothbrush, toothpaste, deodorant, another dress, shoes, stockings, jacket, sanitary napkins, and maybe have enough left for a fifteen-cent movie in a balcony seat. Fortunately, at Bobby's she could eat two meals for free. Solution: more work—a second job or a better one. (55)

Women have their own needs but their husbands fail to understand their needs rather they exploit them for some advantage. In the novel, Prince is seen marrying Cee only to use the Ford of Miss Lenore rather than thinking about the need of Cee. So, she has become the victim of the selfish patriarchal behavior of her husband and is left alone in the unfamiliar place. Focusing on the patriarchy and the sufferings of the women, Morrison criticizes the patriarchal elitism and the domination of women.

It is because of her difficult condition; Cee has to look for a job and is vulnerable to the exploitation from her male bosses. She is neither behaved well at her grandparents' home nor by her husband. It is due to her such a condition she is compelled to work with an elitist doctor and scientist Doctor Beauregard Scott:

> The next morning, standing before her employer, Cee found him formal but welcoming. A small man with lots of silver hair, Dr. Beau sat stiffly behind a wide, neat desk. The first question he put to her was whether she had children or had been with a man. Cee told him she had

> been married for a spell, but had not gotten pregnant. He seemed pleased to hear that. (63-64)

We can see some evil plan of the doctor to torment the poor and young employee as he becomes pleased when he hears that she has not given birth and is separated from her husband. Later it becomes clear that the doctor has thought her body as the suitable one to experiment with Eugenics. Sarah, the maid of doctor is worried about Cee's health as soon as she knew he is making her weak with the strange experiment in her womb and the body. So, she decides to inform poor Cee's relatives about her potential danger of her death and writes to her brother Frank, who is living in Texas after the retirement from army that fought the Korean War:

> She knew he gave shots, had his patients drink medicines he made up himself, and occasionally performed abortions on society ladies. None of that bothered or alarmed her. What she didn't know was when he got so interested in wombs in general, constructing instruments to see farther and farther into them. Improving the speculum. But when she noticed Cee's loss of weight, her fatigue, and how long her periods were lasting, she became frightened enough to write the only relative Cee had an address for. . . .
>
> If the girl dies, she thought, it wouldn't be under her care in the doctor's house. It would be in her brother's arms. (112-13)

It is only with the help and care of Sarah, her condition is informed to Frank leading him to Lotus to rescue Cee. Little learnt and poor Cee has to bear the torment because she has no idea about the scientific experiments and no access to the cultural imperialism and the hegemony associated to the discourse of eugenics. She has fallen into the trap of racist elite because she has no idea what he is working on. Her

ignorance to the racist ideology and the colonial elitism is clearly highlighted in the novel as Cee is presented as a dumb to understand the discourse and hypothesis of the branch of Western medical science called eugenics:

> One day, a couple of weeks into the job, Cee entered Dr. Beau's office a half hour before he arrived. She was always in awe of the crowded bookshelves. Now she examined the medical books closely, running her finger over some of the titles: *Out of the Night*. Must be a mystery, she thought. Then *The Passing of the Great Race*, and next to it, *Heredity, Race and Society*.
>
> How small, how useless was her schooling, she thought, and promised herself she would find time to read about and understand "eugenics." (65)

Cee has no access to the discourse of cultural imperialism as Spivak would term it because she feels her schooling as insufficient to understand the discourses of race and heredity, the purity of race and so on. She does not understand about eugenics, the elite racist ideology that promotes the dominant race while destroying the fertility of the minority races. Cee has no option but to fall in the trap of such colonial and racist ideology because of her ignorance and poverty that forces her to work with the doctor. Lene Koch clarifies the colonial motive and elitist discourse of racial superiority of the dominant race over the minorities in his essay "On ethics, scientists, and Democracy: Writing the history of eugenic sterilization":

> Eugenics as ideology and practice did not occur in a vacuum, but rather was an integral part of the welfare states that developed in Scandinavia in the 1930s. Leading eugenicists, politicians, and scientists considered the sterilization of the biologically "unfit"

> necessary so that the state could continue to finance the welfare of the unfortunate but biologically "fit" poor. As the "unfit" were most often considered mentally deficient, the criteria to determine who was "unfit" was intelligence, most often measured by IQ tests. These less-valued citizens were sacrificed in order for others to benefit. (83)

Like the mechanism of church, the discourse of eugenics was also designed by the colonial elites as a part of welfare states. The poor but fit populations were expected to be benefitted from its discourse in the expense of reproductive faculty of the so-called unfit poor by eugenic sterilization. The discourse of eugenics is thus, used by the so-called superior, racist elites with the nullification of the so-called inferior race. Morrison criticizes the colonial discourse of Western medical science, the inhuman discourse of eugenics and strongly speaks for the minority, traditional, black medical techniques based on the naturopathy and human love. She narrates the changes the traditional medicine techniques brought on seriously ill Cee, "Cee was different. Two months surrounded by country women who loved mean had changed her" (121). The Western colonial discourses of the medicine are based on the principle of destruction of the life and cultures but the local medicine techniques, which have long been silenced by the discourse of Eurocentric medicine, are based on love and the nurturing and saving of the life. Thus, Morrison is very critical of the elite, colonial discourses and speaks for the minority, subaltern discourses with the critique of army, church, hospitals and the Western medical science and attempts to recover the history from below as the subaltern historians propose. She has drawn the sharp line between the elitist and the local, cultural techniques of medicine and highlighted the silence of the minority, traditional medical systems in the narration of the treatment of Cee by the local women of Lotus:

> Once they knew she had been working for a doctor, the eye rolling and tooth sucking was enough to make clear their scorn. And nothing Cee remembered—how pleasant she felt upon awakening after Dr. Beau had stuck her with a needle to put her to sleep; how passionate he was about the value of the examinations; how she believed the blood and pain that followed was a menstrual problem—nothing made them change their minds about the medical industry. (121-22)

The scorn of the local women who were treating Cee towards the barbaric doctor of Western medical science highlights the subaltern tendency to resist the colonial elitism. Cee, the ignorant victim of the elitism and barbaric idiosyncrasy of the cruel doctor is still unable to see that consequences of the torment she bears due to the colonial practice of Western medicine. She remembers the pleasant sensation when the doctor injected her with a sleeping medicine and bears the side effects of his actions like bleeding as the simple menstrual disorders. But the women of Lotus are aware about the hazards of Western medicine to the life and they are critical to the practice of colonial medicine. Their treatment includes the sun-burning of their patient Cee which she hesitates to follow:

> The final stage of Cee's healing had been, for her, the worst. She was to be sun-smacked, which meant spending at least one hour a day with her legs spread open to the blazing sun. Each woman agreed that that embrace would rid her of any remaining womb sickness. Cee, shocked and embarrassed, refused. Suppose someone, a child, a man, saw her all splayed out like that? (124)

Cee feels embarrassed with the local women's strange prescription of opening her genital to the blazing sun each day for an hour and embracing some people each day

for her permanent cure. The local medicinal practices are thus, grounded on the nature and love but the elitist Western medicinal practices have silenced them and made the local, cultural medicinal practices seem unusual to the minorities. With this instance, Morrison is able to clarify the colonial tendency of the Western medical science and the silencing of the minority discourses systematically from the subaltern groups. Morrison highlights the subordination of the black culture and need of voice with the critique of colonial discourses and attempts to recover the history of the subalterns freeing it from the colonial, elitist historiography aware of the complex nature of the task. Morrison's historiography unravels the ideologies embedded to the elite colonial discourses and writes the history from below which is also the basic goal of Subaltern studies group as Leela Gandhi has put:

> Fully alert to the complex ramification arising from the composition of subordination, the Subaltern studies group sketched out its wide ranging concern both with the visible 'history, politics, economics and sociology of subalternity' and with the occluded "attitudes, ideologies and belief systems- in short, the cultural informing that condition." In other words, Subaltern studies defined itself as an attempt to allow people finally to speak within the jealous pages of elitist historiography and in so doing, to speak for, or to sound the muted voices of, the truly oppressed. (1-2)

As Subaltern studies group suggests to understand the differences and multiple range of the subordination, Morrison has also examined subordination in the various discourses like the discourse of history, the army, war, patriarchy, church, the Western, elitist, colonial medical science and eugenics. With the study of the ideologies, attitudes and belief systems of the dominant, elitist, racist and colonial

discourses, Morrison has attempted to recover the minority history and the muted voice of the subaltern black characters of the small and neglected Southern American town.

## III. Morrison's *Home* as a Critique of Elitism

This research has focused on the examination of the subaltern silence and Morrison's attempt to recover the silenced histories of the Black minorities of Southern American town, Lotus, of Georgia, in Toni Morrison's novel *Home.* The theory of race is laden with the Eurocentric terminologies as it itself is Eurocentric and elitist discourse of the whites oppressors. The white elitism has dominated the representation of the marginalized American subalterns and has silenced their voice. The subaltern historiography is, thus, the only appropriate methodology to see how the subaltern voice is dominated and silenced by the Eurocentric elitist discourses. Morrison has pointed to the Eurocentric elitism and criticized it and set the subaltern culture and their way of life as opposition to the neo-colonial discourses in the novel. Morrison, in her novel, has juxtaposed the Eurocentric discourses and the minority discourses in conflict. In the novel, she has presented the bitter criticism against the aggressive Western medical science and highlights the humane and soothing qualities of the minority medicine system based on love.

In her attempt to recover the silenced history of the subaltern, she has criticized the racist elitism of Dr. Beauregard, white elite, who destroys the womb of innocent black maid Ycidra Money in the experiment of the eugenics. Eugenics itself is the Eurocentric discourse of white dominance and the destruction of the minority subaltern groups. Morrison has criticized the colonial mechanism of Hospitals, the network of European medical science as the sellers of dead bodies of the poor people so as to serve the rich. She has also criticized the elitism of the Christian fathers who love the people with suit rather than the poor black subaltern like Frank Money though they claim themselves to be the savior of mankind. The critique of Eurocentric

elitism is vocal and Morrison's concern to the lost subaltern voice is evident time and again in her novel.

Morrison's novel is the moving story of subaltern struggle and silence. It represents the plight of the Money family and their difficult life under crushing poverty. As the novel begins, Frank Money, a retired gunman who fought the Korean War, journeys to the small Southern town, Lotus, of Georgia. He has to help his poor sister fighting for life in the torturous experiment of a white doctor, Beauregard. Lotus, the neglected, marginalized town is the childhood home town of the Frank and Cee Money. Their family had migrated Texas to Lotus so as to escape the invasion of the terrorism of white extremist group, Ku Klux Klan. The family has to suffer a lot due to poverty. It is because of the poverty, Ida Money, Frank's mother, has to give birth to Cee on the pavement of a road. Cee has to bear the torture of her grandmother, Miss Lenore, because of her low birth despite her innocence. Frank and Cee's parents have to work whole day to save some money while Frank and Cee has to stay hungry and degraded by their grandmother. The poverty has kept them silent and since they have no other refuge than Miss Lenore's small house, they cannot complain or protest her domination.

Frank gets listed to go to war and sees the degradation of human beings to the level of animals. He is devastated due to the death of his two friends in war. Cee marries a man called Prince who never cares her and she has to face a lot of troubles living alone. Frank and Cee's parents die in poverty and Cee spends her time with little, running jobs. In search of respectable and higher paying job, she starts to work as an assistant to a white doctor named Dr. Beauregard. There, she is trapped in the Doctor's experiment of Eugenics that ruins her health. The doctor destroys her womb in the process of experiment and she is bedridden for many days in critical condition.

Finally, Frank's intervention rescues her and the local women of Lotus save her with the traditional, naturopathic medicines and care. The condition of the traditional medicine is subaltern, the elite, Eurocentric medical discourse has destroyed it but showing it used in the treatment of subaltern character Cee, the writer brings both to the voice. Further, both Frank and Cee accept the marginalized Lotus their home opposed to the so-called developed, elite towns.

The discourse of eugenics is designed by the colonial elites as a part of welfare states. So, it serves the colonial interest and it is the part of the mechanism of the cultural colonization. The poor people were supposed to be benefitted from eugenics at the beginning. But in the name of the welfare, this discourse is applied to destroy the reproductive faculty of the so-called unfit poor by eugenic sterilization so that it could increase the race of so-called fit people. Thus, the discourse of eugenics is used by the powerful, so-called superior, racist elites so as to destroy the so-called inferior race. So, Morrison criticizes the inhuman discourse of eugenics and the colonial elitism bitterly. In addition, she strongly advocates for the minority, traditional, black medical techniques based on human love as the alternative to the colonial elitism practiced in the name of welfare.

The Eurocentric, neo-colonial elitism of church is bitterly criticized by Morrison. She highlights the bitter reality that the fathers of the church do not care about the welfare of the subaltern people with a few exceptions. The father Locke of small church called AME Zion helps poor Frank Money giving him shelter and giving some money to pay the fare to travel to Georgia. But the father of big church in Portland called Jessie Maynard shows contempt to him as he goes to see him following the suggestion of Reverend Locke. Maynard does not let Frank enter his home and does not treat him like a guest. He shows contempt and regards him as

inferior human being. Though the churches claim to be the savior of humanity, it is clear that they are there to promote the colonial values and European superiority over the subaltern people rather than their welfare. Morrison highlights this so as to criticize the neo-colonial elitism that is prevailing in the American society with the neo-colonial mechanism of Christianity.

The patriarchal elitism is also criticized in the novel time and again with the reference to male-female relationship. Morrison presents the subalternity of women through the sufferings of Cee in the grandmother's house, with her husband Prince and working as an assistant to Doctor Beauregard. Cee has to suffer in the grandmothers' house as she takes her as a token of lowly life due to her birth in the roadside. The elitism of the grandmother that the good women are born in hospital or under a roof, in the care of pious ladies, torments Cee. Her husband Prince leaves her alone in a room in Tennessee and she has nowhere to turn to and share her plights. Doctor Beauregard, her employer, experiments with her body with the colonial Besides Frank also sees a brawl while travelling to Georgia by train and observes the expected silence of the women of the society. In the brawl the husband is severely beaten and the defeated condition of the man leads his wife to go to save her husband. The woman gets her nose broken trying to save him but the man is not happy with his wife. He feels ashamed at the intervention of his wife because a woman is not supposed to dare to save a man. He is not grateful to his wife because she tries to protect him out of her love because that makes him feel humiliated. Frank expects that this situation might ruin their family life as the man would beat her as soon as they reach their house. The silence of women is thus, typical to the patriarchal elitism and it has kept them in shadow. In this way, Morrison focuses on the gendered subalternity in the novel and criticizes the patriarchal elitism.

Thus, Morrison's novel frequently contrasts the Eurocentric, patriarchal, upper-class discourses and the minority discourses presenting the bitter criticism of the elitism embedded to them. She charges the elitism in any form and valorizes the minority discourses that are full of human values in the novel. By doing so, Morrison has discarded the traditional, elitist historiography and advocated the need of subaltern historiography in her novel.

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