

Chapter 1

Toni Morrison and Her Struggle against Racism

Toni Morrison is one of the most respected American writers and cultural critics, who brought recognition to the genre of African American literature. She won the Pulitzer Prize (1988) for *Beloved* and Nobel Prize (1993) in Literature. She is an Editor and Professor at Princeton University, who continues developing her skill in writing. She has an extra-ordinary ability to create beautiful language and striking characters. Her most important gift is the one which gives her a major author's universality and the insight with which she writes of human problems. Her writing clarifies about the trouble of Afro-Americans. At the core of all her novels, there is a penetrating view of the unyielding heartbreaking dilemmas which torment people of all races. Her writing explores Afro-American experience, culture, and language, which is widely taught in literature, history, women's studies, and African American studies courses in high schools and higher studies.

Toni Morrison was born on February 18, 1931, in Lorain, Ohio. She is the second oldest out of four children of her parents. Her writing is also greatly influenced by her family, as her father is the main contributor about her perception towards the whites. Her grandparents had relocated to Ohio during the national movement of blacks out of the South known as the Great Migration. Morrison continued to pursue her interest in literature at Howard University. She majored in English literature and chose the classics for her minor. After graduating from Howard in 1953, Morrison continued her education at Cornell University. She wrote her thesis on the works of Virginia Woolf and William Faulkner, and completed her master's degree in 1955. Literature was the subject of great interest in her childhood and youth. She experienced poverty, hatred, exploitation and racism throughout her life. As she

grew up, literature became her favorite subject and reading /writing became her good job.

Morrison has published nine novels, each of them enjoyed wide critical acclaim and sustained scholarly attention. Her works includes *The Bluest Eye* (1970), *Sula* (1973), *Song of Soloman* (1977), *Tar Baby* (1981), *Beloved* (1987) *Jazz* (1991) *Paradise* (1998), *Love* (2003). and *A Mercy* (2008). She was honored by different awards. Such as, in 1996, the National Endowment for the Humanities selected her for the Jefferson Lecture, the U.S. federal government's highest honor for achievement in the humanities. She was honored with the 1996 National Book Foundation's Medal of Distinguished Contribution to American Letters. On May 29, 2012, President Barack Obama presented Morrison with the Presidential Medal of Freedom. In 2016 she received the PEN/Saul Bellow Award for Achievement in American Fiction. Morrison wrote the libretto for a new opera, which was firstly performed by Margaret Garner in 2005.

The Afro-American history is the history of racial discrimination. Racism is the belief that a particular race is superior or inferior to another. It can be defined as the hatred of one person towards another or the belief that a person is less than a human because of his/her skin color, language, customs, cultures etc. Morrison therefore deals with racial issues taking race as a metaphor, a way of referring to forces, events and forms of social decay, economic division and human panic. Morrison's fiction has always been concerned with deconstructing the frames of Afro-American experiences. However, racism was and still is quite common in American society and in fact, racism was taking new forms in 1940s America. Morrison attacks the slave trade in America. She regards racism as a scholarly pursuit. She writes in black vernacular, full of new terms and figures of speech which are unique to the

community. She has created a body of work informed by a distinctly black sensibility while reading across racial boundaries.

Morrison's first four books, *The Bluest Eye*, *Sula*, *Song of Solomon*, and *Tar Baby* constitute her struggle with racism both for her characters and their communities, as well as in her writing. Roberta Rubenstein opines that, "the recurrent imagery of deformity and mutilation visually represents the injurious effects of oppression and marginalization, whether resulting from gender, ethnic minority identity, economic circumstances" (141). The alienation of the blacks is the effect of domination by the whites as well superior to inferior, blacks to blacks regarding their race and culture. The blacks are fragmented due to racism and cultural differences. Her main goal is to overcome the racism from the existing African American society. So she chose the way of fighting indirectly through writing using the real characters of the community. She depicts the male and female protagonist failing of succeeding on the difficult journey to freedom through self-awareness. In this regard, Patrice Cormier-Hamilton states:

Morrison's steadfast concentration on the importance of the past indicates that for her, self-realization for African Americans can only be achieved through an active acknowledgement of one's cultural past. Only by understanding and accepting the past can African Americans achieve a psychological wholeness in the present and strengthen their power as a race in the future. (111)

Here, Hamilton says that by understanding and accepting past, African American can achieve a psychological wholeness in the future. The concentration of writer is on self-realization of African American through the past culture.

Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* reveals the profound effect that the intra-racial

oppression has on the psyche and spirit of the characters, but subjugation within creates an environment where African-Americans are forced to assume dual and conflicting roles. Morrison's protagonist faces a world that is more complex, oppressive and destructive. They battle against intra-racism and inter-racism as well as poverty and sexism. Her works do exhibit naturalistic tendencies and she presents them in a new way illustrating different challenges specific to minorities and offering alternate ways of dealing with these challenges.

The existing African American cultural rituals of her childhood and adolescence are vividly evoked in her writing. Things like music, folklore, ghost stories, dreams, signs and visitations became empowering forces throughout her life and they are prevalent in her novels. Abdellatif Khayati also talks about Morrison's writing. He says, "African American novelist Toni Morrison espouses a political-ethical perspective that integrates past memories of an historical struggle among communities" (4). Here, he talks about her writings that are mostly about her childhood experiences and the existing struggle of the black and white communities of America, which highly advocates the unyielding racial discrimination of the society.

Racism and *The Bluest Eye*

Discrimination or conflict within same race is Intra-racial conflict. The intra-racial conflict has been defined as a conflict amidst people who have a sense of belonging to the same race. Here, Prasant Kumar Padhi opines that, "Black women in America being black, female and poor have been victimized by racism, sexism, and classism, not only from the white world, but also from their own men" (144). We came to know that in America many people were victims of racism, sexism not only by the whites but by the same race. So, African-American literature has focused on a

number of recurring historical and sociological themes, all of which reflect the politics of black experiences. The political content of African-American literature includes correcting stereotypes of African-American culture, experiences and achievements, and exploring racial issues, including, institutionalized racism, internalized racism, intra-racial racism and the combined oppressions of racism, classism and sexism. These themes constitute surviving life's negative experiences and questions, and rectifying them the positive.

Morrison's first novel, *The Bluest Eye*, written in 1970, prominently expanded American literature. *The Bluest Eye* was written during the 1960s and 70s, but is set during the 40s. Despite the setting, her novel reflects the happenings of the late 60s and early 70s in which Afro-American culture was becoming well defined and recognized as a part of the once dominantly white American culture. In *The Bluest Eye*, Morrison takes a different approach to the traditional white-versus-black racism. She acknowledges that most people are unaware of the racism that exists within a culture and often the racism that exists within them. This novel analyzes the destructive psychological effects of racism on both children and adults and also explores rape thoroughly and realistically, which affects forming one's identity. The novel is about a naive girl whose quest for self-esteem, self-definition, and self-value ends in identifying ugliness within blackness.

Pecola Breedlove is an unloved, lonely black girl. Breedlove is the daughter of black parents Cholly and Pauline. She is of 11-years old when she knows the huge chasm about racism. She is hated by her own parents, rejected by her classmates and teachers. She believes that the absence of blue eyes is central to her ugliness. She falls prey to intra-racial discrimination and the brutal lust of her adopted father. Finally she knows that racism is the main cause of her rejection. She accepts her inferior position

because society devalues her ugly and unworthy affection, value, esteem, and encouragement. Pecola's story shows her complete victimization by both white and black culture. She is lost in obsession towards the search for self-identity, self-respect and individual life when the black community, mainstream society, and the biological family affects Pecola's victimization. The Afro-American women's obligation is to live a life of a complete drudgery as they are sexually abused and crushed emotionally which is also identified with Pecola. Pecola's story shows her complete victimization by both white and black culture. In this novel, we can find Pecola's desire for beauty and not to be dominated or discriminated.

Reviews on *The Bluest Eye*

The Bluest Eye is Toni Morrison's first novel which is praised for its richness of language and boldness of vision. The vision of writing this novel can be defined in various ways. Here, Morrison's intention of writing the novel *The Bluest Eye* is to diagnose the fatal effect of internal racism. As a critic, Paul Smith undertakes the task of discovering Morrison's goal through this:

In the afterword to *The Bluest Eye*, Morrison explains her goal in writing the novel. She wants to make a statement about the damage that internalized racism can do to the most vulnerable member of a community—a young girl. At the same time, she does not want to dehumanize the people who wound this girl, because that would simply repeat their mistake. Also, she wants to protect this girl from the weight of the novel's inquiry, and thus decides to tell the story from multiple perspectives. She shapes a silence while breaking it, keeping the girl's dignity intact. (54)

According to Smith, an affirmation of statement as to how harmful internalized

racism is. Within the Black community, there are many vulnerable groups prone to disasters and hazards aplenty. To combat those risk factors, it is necessary to discuss openly how harmful the hidden inferiority is and how individuals should be empowered to deal with them.

Keith E. Byerman in *Beyond Realism* also makes a profound evaluation on Morrison's fiction and finds out that her fiction is much closer to that of the traditionalists. Byerman further proclaims that:

Her novels are quest tales in which key characters search for the hidden sign capable of giving them strength and identity. In a significant twist, those who find what they seek become the most thoroughly victimized; while those who are turned in their searches toward some other goals...are most often triumph. (100)

Morrison's novels are about the quest tales in which the characters seek their identity. They want to be free from the victimized world.

Pecola is the central character in *The Bluest Eye*, but she is not only one victim in the novel. The others, "We" individually and collectively are both victimizer and we all may be victim. The role varies with each character's own victimization by a large society.

John Tammy argues that the root cause of the problem of many mulatto Black is their inability to remain loyal to their selves. In the face of the alluring beauty of white girls and women, Afro-American girls are unable to remain attached to their selves. Different kinds of weaknesses and inconsistencies lurk in the bottom of their selves. That is why they are unable to handle the suffering. In front of the temptation of white beauty, they are too vulnerable. The idea of loyalty gives in to the looming threat of white beauty. Tammy delivers the following opinion as their decline of self

and soul native to Afro-American heritage:

The Bluest Eye provides an extended depiction of the ways in which internalized white beauty standards deform the lives of black girls and women. Implicit messages that whiteness is superior everywhere, including the white baby doll given to Claudia, the idealization of Shirley Temple, the consensus that light-skinned Maureen is cuter than the other black girls, the idealization of white beauty in the movies, and Pauline Breedlove's preference for the little white girl she works for over her daughter. Claudia remains free from this worship of whiteness, imagining Pecola's unborn baby as beautiful in its blackness. (74)

The problem of fascination to the alien beauty especially the beauty of the white and inability to remain loyal to one's own self are the striking causes of the disintegration of intra-racial harmony and fraternity. The increasing gradation in the class status of Afro-American blacks has implanted the seed of psychological inferiority and backwardness. The more inferiority welled up in their hearts, the more attracted and obsessed they became. As a consequence, degeneration and disintegration can take place in the entire community.

Joseph Gibaldi contextualizes psychological problem of individuals, faced by individuals need to be grounded in the socio-communal context. The disintegration of psychology and surrender to deviant taste are major events ruinous to the health of individuals. Gibaldi points out that, "Pecola is obsessed with having blue eyes because she believes that this mark of conventional, white beauty will change the way that she is seen and therefore the way that she sees the world" (71). The level of obsession faced by Pecola Breedlove is rooted in the phenomenon which has

happened in the Afro-American community. Thus it can be said without a moment's delay that the problem faced by Pecola is not the individual problem but the problem that has arisen in the society of black people. The growing hierarchy amidst the Black people of Afro-American community has exerted pressures on the psychology of an individual.

G.M. Fredrickson also talks about intra-racial oppression that, "Intra-racial discrimination is one of many ugly legacies of slavery and plantation politics in which intentional intra-racial division was established on plantations by slave owners in the form of color codes"(98). Discrimination is legacy of slavery and politics plantation. It is the division of intentional plantation by slave owner or the master.

All those critics examine the novel from different angles and arrive at different findings. But, this research will explore about the intra-racial exploitation and its victimization. Is only Pecola victimized or were there other characters too under this problem? Who are the main causes of this problem and effect? The research deals with these kinds of findings in the second chapter.

Chapter 2

Racism A Means of Conflict

Racism is the ill treatment to the people on the basis of race, colour, and religion. It is a useless tradition and pointless hatred, envy or prejudice which is obviously expressed in the form of terrorization or abuse. Racial discrimination is often based on the bias of colour where the word 'discrimination' denotes the denial of equality based on personal characteristics such as race and colour. Discrimination results in prejudice, dead habit and stereotype refers to forming an instant fixed idea of a group, usually based on false or incomplete information and prejudice based on ideas that are formed without any knowledge about others. In this regard, Calvin. C. Hernton remarks:

Racism is a man-made, man enforced phenomenon . . . may be defined as all of the learned behavior and learned emotions on the part of a group of people towards another group; whose physical characteristics are dissimilar to the former group; behavior and emotions that compel one group to conceive of and to treat the other on the basis of its physical characteristics alone, as if it did not belong to the human race.

(175)

Here, one knows that racism is a man-made belief that the physical characteristics are dissimilar to another group of people. It is a learned behavior that compels one group antagonists towards another group. In the context of racism it is the formation of racial chauvinism, and it works with biological and sociological definitions. Queen and Greener define, "From the biological stand point, a race is a large body of people, relatively homogenous as to inheritable, non adaptive feature. There are various criteria of race- head, skin, hair, group and so on" (21). There are various things to

define race. They can be observed through skin color, hair texture, class status etc.

Racism springs from the term 'race' but the use of race for the biological, psychological, sociological and economic differences among the human characteristics is taken into considerations that these qualities of one group make it either inferior or superior to each other. European supremacy over the globe for the last few centuries has given conducive milieu to purport that 'the white skinned' or 'the brown skinned' individuals. These facets of definitions are brought into practices that Negroes are inherently to set up a system of social, economic, and political benefits for whites at the expense of blacks. So, the twentieth century racism faces the use of science to justify the whites' superiority over blacks. The intra-racial prejudice takes its form from physical slavery of 1860s to a more modified form of slavery. The physical slavery with the use of forces helps to develop psychological domination upon blacks' mentality. Science is there to support the existing superiority for its functions at the level of 'mind' and 'soul'. George W. Ellis writes about the psychological implications for justifying racism that, "we accept psychology as the science of the phenomena and functions of the minds and soul. Race is used as the mere convenience to designate the different branches of the human family" (11). Here psychology is the phenomena which affect mind and soul. Race is mere to convenience and designate.

Racism began in America when white masters brought the African slaves in chains and used them as laborers to work on plantation farms to fill their coffers. Very soon the black laborers ceased to exist as human beings in the white world and were reduced to a profit making body.

Sometimes the term is used to describe the belief that race is the primary determinant of human capacities, or a more general attitude that individuals should be

treated differently according to their race. The basic myth of racism is that white skin brings with it cultural superiority. The whites are perceived as more intelligent and virtuous than the blacks. Blackness is associated with sin, dirt and cultural.

The concept of colored race prejudice has worked with the production of natural inferiority of black to white, physically, intellectually, religiously, socially and morally. So, the whites take the advantages of economical, political and social superiority. For the whites, the justification works as the relation with human and less human. The Negro is less human because he has that:

An oval skull, flat forehead, snout like jaws, swollen lips, broad flat nose, and short crimped hair, calf less legs, highly elongated heels and flat feet. But still many views spring regarding the single human race that nature has endowed us. All the human beings have the same cephalic angle, texture of hair, shape of the head, color of the skin, shape and size and height and brain, which have nothing to do with the capacity of the mind or the moral quality of the soul. (13)

A Negro is no more naturally inferior for he is the product of the complex and subtle forces of his milieu. There are no questions that the world is replete with distinct races. They have different physical characteristics, ancestry, and destiny. From the sociological point of view, if a race defines its distinct form and builds up its mythology of racial separateness, superiority, and destiny like the Aryan mythology in Germany, then the concept of superiority and inferiority evolves and that is how the white is the victim of biasness.

Racism is a misconception of human, confused with ethnicity and culture which is discriminated by human beings against human into distinguishable groups, based on physical feature like skin color, hair texture and eye shape etc. Ethnicity is

an individual classification who share the common culture, religion, customs and traditions passing from one generations to another like patriotism, religion and dress whereas culture on the other hand is a broader category that extends beyond race and ethnicity to include any group of people who share common lifestyles which are passed on to members of the particular group like socio economic status, sexual orientation, geographic location and habitual action.

A child cannot be a racist by birth but, it is a learned social phenomenon through family, education, religion, the law and the media. It is difficult to grow up in a society without adopting the world views and biasness from the society. He becomes a made racist and subsequently perpetuate in the same society. It is based on the tendency towards adhering to add preferring the values and personal beliefs of one's own group; tendency towards associating with the individuals or groups that have similar values and beliefs. It is the belief of distinguishing human characteristics, often dealt with prejudice, that one group of human being is inherently superior to another group of human being.

There are many writers who have tried to explain the racist point of view. A writer's attitude on racism is part of his ideology or politics and is reflected in the writing. Race is a group or category of person connected by common origin. The word is believed that it entered in English language at the beginning of the sixteenth century. Since the beginning of the nineteenth century the word has been used in several other distinct senses.

Joel Kovel, in his critically penetrating analysis of racism, explains the theory whereby the Whites quantify the Blacks into a wholly new equation wherein they exist not as people, but as things. He says that:

The White slave-owner . . . first reduced the human self of his black

slave to a body and then reduces the body to a thing: he dehumanized his slave, made him quantifiable, and thereby absorbed him into a rising world market of productive exchange. . . . Thus, in the new culture of the west, the black human was reduced to a black thing, virtually the same in certain key respects as the rest of non-human nature—all of which could become property. (287)

The white slave-owner always dehumanizes his slave. He always thinks about his superiority. The black human is reduced to a black thing. The rest of non human nature of whites becomes the property of black.

Intra-Racial Exploitation within Pecola and Her Family

Pecola is the major character in the novel *The Bluest Eye*. Pecola belongs to the lower class of Black family. She falls prey to intra-racial discrimination and the brutal lust of her adopted father. She is compelled by situation to feel inferior in front of her white friends and upper class Black girls. Wherever she goes she comes to know that only girls having blue color eyes are encouraged, admired, recognized and properly treated. But she has black color. She is not treated like other friends of her. So she develops the impression that having blue color is to have identity, recognition and self-dignity. Therefore, she tries to have blue color in her eyes. She begins to detest her eyes, herself and her Black upbringing. Pecola's search for blue eyes is the beginning of her search for individual selfhood and identity.

Intra-racial conflict has been defined as a conflict amidst people who have a sense of belonging to the same race. In *The Bluest Eye* Pecola's family, is represented as that sort of family which has been disintegrating under the millstone of intra-racial conflict. Pecola's father Cholly Breedlove was brought up in the atmosphere of parentless. His mother had left him in a dumping site four days after he was born. He

was brought from this loveless and motherless state by his Great Aunt Cholly. She named him as Cholly. Thus, he came to be known as Cholly Breedlove. Cholly Breedlove received four years of schooling. As he entered into adolescent state he left school and began to seek about of his father. In course of his search of father, he came to know that Samson Fuller was his father. Samson fuller scolded Cholly Breedlove for coming closer to him. He said that he had already paid for having sex with Cholly's mother. Cholly's mother had already charged money from S. Fuller for having sex with her.

On the ground of sexual trade Cholly's father denied to offer parental identification to Cholly Breedlove. This act of denying parental acceptance created a profound sense of humiliation and an excruciating wound, psychological shock and alienation. Frustrated by the painful consequence of his search of parental recognition, he returned to his great relationship with her entailed him to do. After that Cholly Breedlove loved a girl from similar background, status and class. Her name was Pauline Williams. She was in the same atmosphere of parentless, loveless, ignorance and helplessness as he was. Whenever the love between them deepened, they married each other. After marriage they went to a place where Cholly Breedlove was supposed to get a job in the factory. Cholly used to work in factory and Pauline used to manage household work.

When the early hallucination of their love marriage faded, the warmth and understanding began to migrate from their early conjugal relationship. Cholly gradually started neglecting her. He began to disregard her negligently. Slowly she began to fall prey to his affront and unrevealed atrocity. He downplayed her dignity. He wounded her feelings and stripped off her freedom. She was confined within the atmosphere of loneliness. Consequently she felt troubled and torture. She desired to

spend a little time in the company of her friend. But Cholly disliked and vehemently opposed this desire of her for freedom and companionship. She wanted to buy some personal things for her satisfaction. So, she was in a sharp need of money. But Cholly became cruelly insensitive to her aspiration.

When Cholly Breedlove comes to know about Pauline's pregnancy, he begins to display his friendly and understandable attitude to her for the change of her husband's behavior and mentality, Pauline felt somewhat relieved. But after delivering her daughter Pauline was condemned to take the brunt of the same insensitive and cruel atrocious behavior and acts of her husband. She looked forward to see some optimistic behavior and acts of her husband. But Cholly Breedlove showed no sign of altering this sort of cruel color in his conjugal stupidity. Pauline's tirelessly repeated attempt towards her husband makes him a worthy man. So she started serving as a 'Mammy' in the house of white man. She was profoundly affected by the set of standard kept by the white family in almost all aspect of decent life of an individual.

The overwhelming experience of working as 'mammy' in a white man's family gets reflected in the following lines cited from the text:

It was her good fortune to find a permanent job in the home of a well to do family whose member were affectionate, appreciate and generous. She looked at their houses, smelled their linen, touched their silk draperies, and loved all of it. The child's pink nightgown, the stack of white pillow slips edged with embroidery. The sheets with top hems picked out with blue cornflowers embroidery. She became what is known as an ideal servant for such a role filled practically all of their needs. (98-99)

It has become apparently evident that Pauline Williams, Cholly Breedlove's wife and

a worker in white man's family, has been in the gripping spell of white standards and privileges. Her contact with white standards and privileges created to mount a sense of superiority, although she herself is a black privilege. Her frequent presence as a worker in a white man's house implanted an obsessive concern with the established set of white privilege. As her involvement in the household of a white man prolonged, she internalized the outside gaze. Pauline William becomes detached from her nigger self and happens to inherit a pretentious superior self.

She began to neglect her own house as she is more attached to the household affairs of a Whiteman. She began to deprive her daughter Pecola of motherly love and affection. She became enmeshed in the torturous problem of discrimination, and stopped trying to keep her own house. She is indifferent towards her own house and her thinking of superiority can be reflected from points of the text:

Mr. Fisher said, " I would rather sell her blueberry cobblers than real estate." She reigned over cupboard stacked high with food that wouldn't be eaten for weeks, even months; she was queen of canned vegetable, bought by the case, special fondants and ribbon candy curbed up in tiny silver dishes. Fisher's house, Power, praise and luxury were hers in this household. They even gave her what she had never had- a nickname – Polly. It was her pleasure to stand in her kitchen at the end of a day and survey her handiwork.... Hearing, " We'll never let her go we could never find anybody like Polly. He will not leave the kitchen until everything is in order. Really, she is the ideal servant. (125-126)

Mrs. Breedlove, Cholly Breedlove's wife, earned honest status as a servant in a white family. With that recently earned status as an ideal servant Mrs. Breedlove began to

breathe swaggering air of superiority within her Afro-American minority race. First of all she began to demonstrate a discriminatory behavior within her family.

Influenced and somewhat changed by her token of ideal servanthood offered from a white family, Mrs. Breedlove found her alcoholic bastard husband far more lowly, debased, decadent and corruptible. Certain psychological and so called superiority had got transmitted into Mr. Breedlove so, she began to dominate her own nigger husband who himself was tailor-made for suppression. Both a husband and a wife belonging to the same black race are engaged in intra-racial exploitation. Mrs. Breedlove began to goad her husband to indulge in those cardinal flaws and morally catastrophic weakness. Mrs. Breedlove had seen her friend's husband was utterly afflicted so, she goaded her husband to lead a minor life of moral ravages and psychological chaos. "She took on the full responsibility and recognition of bread winner and returned to church. First, however, she moved . . . to a spacious first own with the woman who had despised her, by being more moral than they; she avenged herself on Cholly by forcing him to indulge in the weakness she despised (124)". Pauline is fully thinking about her superior position in her home. She forces Cholly to indulge in his weakness.

Once Cholly Breedlove fucked his own daughter and impregnated her. Pecola told her mother Mrs. Breedlove several times about the sexual exploitation by her father Cholly. But Mrs. Breedlove disbelieved in the report. Why did not she react to the report about Pecola's sexual exploitation by Cholly Breedlove? Mrs. Breedlove becomes indifferent to her daughter's report about her sexual exploitation by Cholly Breedlove. She disbelieved it but why? The answer is that Mrs. Breedlove wanted to see her husband Cholly Breedlove falling from the grace and dignity to the lowest line of wickedness and disgusting situation, as in the following lines:

Well. Go ahead. Still what? I wonder what it would be like

Horrible

Really

Yes, terrible

Then why didn't you tell Mrs. Breedlove?

I did tell her.

I don't mean about the first time. I mean about the second time, when you were sleeping on the conch

I wasn't sleeping ! I was reading ! You wasn't sleeping! I was reading!

You don't have to shout.

You don't understand anything, do you? She didn't even believe me

When I told her.

So that's why you didn't tell her about the second time?

She wouldn't have believed me then either. (198)

Mrs. Breedlove being a wife of a nigger, deliberately goads her own husband to treat in terrible weakness to such a dangerous extent that she does not take any initiative steps to prevent her husband from fucking her daughter repeatedly. Mr. Breedlove was also tailor-made for such victimization. In the growing discriminatory hostility between Mrs. Breedlove and Cholly lies the most aspect of intra-racial conflict.

Mrs. Breedlove is not maintaining intra-racial conflict with her husband only. She also started giving more love and care to a whiteman's children. She deprives her daughter Pecola of full-fledged material love. Once due to Pecola's nervous awkwardness in the kitchen of a Whiteman, where her mother works, a kitchen pan dropped on the floor and splattered blackish blueberries everywhere. Swollen and infested by the germs of the white superiority, Mr. Breedlove chastised Pecola

recklessly Mrs. Breedlove spends more time in careful treatment of white baby. Her discriminatory revelation of thriftiness in displaying love to her daughter becomes transparent in the following textual citation:

The little girl in pink started to cry. Mrs. Breedlove turned to her Hush, baby, hush-come here. Oh, Lord, look at your dress. Don't cry no more Polly will change it. She went to the sink and turned tap water on a fresh towel. Over her shoulder she spit out words to us like pieces of apples. . . . As Pecola put the laundry bag in the wagon, we could hear Mrs. Breedlove housing and soothing the tears of the little pink-and-yellow girl. (107)

We know that, kindness of Mrs. Breedlove is with the white babies and cruelty is with the black one. She becomes rude with her own daughter. She cares the white babies but not the blacks although she herself is a black woman and has a baby.

Intra-Racial Conflict at School among Growing Children

Pecola hails from interiorized, impoverished, uglified and marginalized black minority class. She comes from the lowly and demonized, humiliated and culturally uprooted family background. She was discriminated and uglified in every section and cross-section of her life. At school she was discriminated and neglected to the point of shame and humiliation as for example from the text:

As long as she looked the way she did, as long as she was ugly, she would have to stay with these people. Somehow she belonged to them. Long hours she sat looking in the mirror, trying to discover the secret of the ugliness, the ugliness that made her ignored or despised at school, by teacher and classmates alike. Bobby loves Pecola Breedlove! Bobby loves Pecola Breedlove! and never fail to get peals

of laughter from those in earshot, and anger from the accused. (43-44)

Pecola spends a long time in front of the mirror. She is told every side of every friend and kith and kens that, she is ugly but does not want to accept by her inner core. She is forced to believe that she is not beautiful. She is pressurized to believe that her eyes are ugly, her face is ugly, her color is dangerously dark, her body is ugly, and her family is backward. She is brainwashed that she begins to feel anxious that perhaps even her soul is ugly.

Pecola had to spend sometime in the house of her friends- Frieda and Claudia. While living in that house she happened to drink three quarts of milk. Claudia's mother knew about the drunken milk, and then mother scolded Pecola in the language of intra-racial stereotype, "Three quart of milk. That's what was in the icebox yesterday. Three whole quarts. Now they aren't none. Not a drop. I don't mind folks coming in and getting what they want, but three quarts of milk! What the devil does anybody need with three quarts of milk?" (21). Pecola was scolded by Claudia's mother about the drunken milk. Pecola was exploited here too.

Further more Pecola is everywhere treated as outsider as alienated and as other creature. She is treated in department by a black storekeeper named Mr. Yacobowski in a discriminatory and dehumanized way:

How can a fifty-two-year old white immigrant storekeeper with the taste of potatoes and beer in his mouth his mind honed on the doe-eyed virgin Mary, his sensibilities blunted by a permanent awareness of loss, she is a little black girl? Nothing in his life even suggested that the feat was possible, not to say desirable or necessary. (46)

Pecola was right from her childhood convinced of the inferiority of her own sex and class. She thought that she does not have anything which is genuinely called beautiful.

She is ugly and implanted to the deepest corpus of her psyche.

Pecola's attention began to move on to the direction of beauty and charm. She began to watch those who had been held to beautiful. She began to talk about beauty and charm with her friend, she asked friend how to become beautiful, what makes one beautiful, how to attract boys, how to increase the number of boyfriends. Mourean Peal admired and respected for her standards and beauty. She gradually struggled to know that if she becomes beautiful, people stop neglecting her and care her.

In time she knows that blue eyes are the standard of beauty. So she started hankering after the bluest eyes. Frieda and Claudia incited Pecola to cultivate a hankering after the Shirley Temple's Cup. She was made to believe that by drinking milk from the Shirley Temple's Cup one cup make one's eyes blue. Pecola did so too. Her yearn for blue eye and beauty is because she suffered a lot from her own race people, friends, parents etc.

In course of her intense hankering after the bluest eyes Pecola happens to meet a bevy of prostitutes who also goads Pecola to indulge obsessively in the lowest art of attracting many boyfriends, of appearing beautiful. She built up an obsessive interest in the bluest eyes. Thinking that via blue eyes it would be possible to be charming and beautiful, Pecola becomes ready to lose anything and do anything. Blue eye, become her single most motto echoing in her outward quest for beauty.

Finally, she goes to meet Soaphead Church-a Mulatto bastard who claims to solve and suffering of any seeker and sufferer. Soaphead Church is a so-called spiritualist and psychic reader. He used to think that he is capable of bringing an appropriate solution to everybody's problem whatever brought to him by sufferer. Actually Soaphead Church is a Charlattan and a Wolf-in-sheep's clothing. His apparent mission is salvation. But his inner satanic mission is to lead a sufferer into

damnation.

Almost in an insane mood due to fever-pitch of obsessive hankering for the bluest eyes, Pecola reaches the haven of Soaphead Church. As she pleaded him to make his eyes blues, Mr. Soaphead reacts in a way suggestive of intra-racial biases.

Pecola speaks:

"Help you how? Tell me Don't be frightened".

"My eyes"

"What about your eyes?"

"I want them blue." (172)

Pecola asked to Mr. Soaphead about the way how he could help her? She almost talks about her eyes to make them blue. Here, Soaphead Church's manner of approaching Pecola is spoiled with trademarks of intra-racial disfavor and deceptive racial arrogance.

Likewise, Pecola's relationship with Maureen Peal further more brings into light some of the dark, terrain of intra-racial conflict. Maureen disdainfully and haphazardly talks to Pecola in the language of intra-race. Maureen asked Pecola that:

" Did you even see a naked man?"

Pecola blinked, and then looked away." No. Where would I see a naked man?"

"I don't know. I just asked." (69)

Maureen is blackmailing Pecola of seeing a naked man or not. She continuously blackmails her by asking the same question and Pecola becomes very angry. Maureen and Pecola has the conversation that:

"What do I care about her old black daddy? "Asked Maureen "Black?

Why you calling black?"

"You !"

"You think you so cute! "

Safe on the other side, she screamed at us, "I am cute! And you ugly,
Black and ugly black e mos. I am cute! " (71)

Maureen is also a black. But she is a light-skinned black. She is somewhat wealthy light- skinned on the strength of her slightly upgraded status. She started calling other dark skinned blacks as blacks. This brand of Maureen-Pecola episode fragrantly dramatizes open intra-racial exploitation.

Black Community and Racism

Frieda, Claudia and Pecola are three characters belonging to the dark-skinned race of blacks. They are economically, academically and socially much more backward. On account of this backwardness they are discriminated by other light-skinned blacks in school and elsewhere in community. In their class there is another girl named Maureen Peal. Maureen Peal is light-skinned. She is wealthy. She has certain status and standing. Even teachers and most of other white girls also admire her. Proud of her status and superior standing Maureen castigates other dark-skinned girls like Pecola and Claudia.

Indignant with her much vaunted superiorities, Frieda and Claudia began to find weakness in Maureen. They were delightfully amazed to find that Maureen had six fingers in hand. They twisted Maureen Peal into Meringue pie. They envied her. The growing conflictual relationship among Frieda, Claudia and Maureen Peal overtones the intra-racial conflict. "Frieda and I went bemused, irritated and fascinated by her. We looked hand flaws to restore our equilibrium but had to be content at first with uglyfing up her name, changing Maureen Peal to Meringue pie" (61).The change of name is the change of identity and it is also the medium of

discriminating and alienating people.

Intra-racial exploitation had taken firm at family level also. Light-skinned Afro-American parents do not allow their children to mix and play in the group of the children of dark-skinned blacks. Geraldine doesn't allow her light-skinned son to dirty himself by playing with the children of niggers.

Geraldine did not allow her baby, Junior to cry. As long as his needs were physical, she could meet them-comfort and safety; he was always brushed, bathed, oiled and shod. Geraldine did not talk to him, to indulge him in kissing bouts, but she was that every other desire was fulfilled. It was not long before the child discovered the difference in his mother is behavior to himself and the cat. He learned how to direct his halted to his mother to the cut, and spent some happy moments watching in suffer. The cat survived, because Geraldine was seldom away from home and could effectively soothe the animal when Junior abused him.

Geraldine, Louis, Junior and the cat lived next to the playground of Washing Irving School, Junior considered the playground his own and the school children covered his freedom to sleep late, go house for lunch and dominate the playground after school. He hated to see the swings, slides, monkey bars, and seesaws empty and tired to get kids to stick around as long as possible.

White kids, his mother did not like him to play with niggers. She has explained him the difference between colored people and niggers. They were easily identifiable. Colored people were neat and quiet, niggers were dirty and loud. He belonged to the farmer group: he wore white shirts and blue trousers: his fair was cut as close to his scalp as possible to avoid any suggestion of wool, the part was etched into his hair by the barbed. (85)

The light-skinned mulatto families did not allow their children to mix and play in the group of the children of niggers.

Owing to this brand of intra-racial exploitation as family level, children of the dark skinned black had to fall prey to the evils of interiorized and demonized. Light-skinned people and children assert their superiority and their sense of beauty. They constantly persuade the dark-skinned blacks and the children of the niggers but they are ugly. The light skinned class continuously implanted in the psyche of nigger children the idea that they are inferior and ugly. Every organ of nigger is taken to be ugly. The light-skinned Afro-American class set the standard of beauty. This class put forward a claim that it is essential to have bluest eyes to appear as beautiful. From every side dark skinned children were convinced that the means of their ugliness and inferiority is color. The worst effect of the interiorized of the black children by the light-skinned class fell upon the young growing children of black family.

Pecola is a black skinned girl ridiculously and dejectedly called nigger by her superior friends. Her delicate psyche was contaminated completely. She was harassed, interiorized, and ugly, demonized and madden by the slightly superior mulatto people. She is told that if she gets blue eyes by hook or crook she becomes beautiful. She will be recognized and perhaps she happens to have a large number of boyfriends. She has dark eyes in actuality. She moves heaven and earth to have the bluest eyes. She leaves no stone unturned to have the bluest eyes. The high-flown obsessive hankering after the bluest eyes renders her mentally insane. Her morally bankrupt father ruins her sexually. He impregnated to Pecola in her young age. Her teenage pregnancy invited unendurable shame and degeneration. Consequently she is brought to the state of insanity and social alienation. This is the thing that, she fell to the treacherous violence of intra-racial exploitation.

Chapter 3

Suffering under Racial Exploitation

From this research, it is found that the social, economic, political and psychological condition of the characters determine the degree to which an individual suffers in society and is made them as other. How the process of othering takes place and to what extent it torments and bewilders the subjugated characters reveal a lot about the forces responsible for the subjugated characters. These issues are distinguished into those who are under victim on the basis of sex, age, education, and profession.

In *The Bluest Eye*, Morrison challenges America's complacent belief in its benevolent self -image by representing the children who experience race, class, and gender oppressions through Pecola. She is exploited both by psychological and sexual issues. Pecola's search for beauty is full of several ups and downs, trauma and torture as she is a victim of inter-racial oppression as well as intra-racial exploitation. Pecola is the central character in *The Bluest Eye*, but she is not only one victim. The others also are collectively the victimizer and the victim as well.

This research clearly shows that, Pecola herself is not only the victim of intra-race but her family as well as black community are also under this problem. They themselves are victims by whites as well as they are the victimizer for black and mixed raced. This is because of discriminating cultural values in Afro-American society. Race, class, sex, social status etc play a vital role to create problem in the society.

Intra-racial conflict occurs in every step of every character in the novel that is because of their thinking of superiority. One character sometime is victimizer at somewhere but sometimes themselves are victims. The growing hierarchy amidst the

Black people of Afro-American community has exerted pressures on the psychology of an individual. The characters do experience direct oppression, but more routinely they are subject to an internalized set of values that create its own cycle of victimization within families and the neighborhood of Afro-American society. The black community in the novel has accepted white standards of beauty, judging Maureen's light skin to be attractive and Pecola's dark skin to be ugly. Claudia can sense the destructiveness of this idea and rebels against it when she destroys her white doll and imagines Pecola's unborn baby as beautiful.

The novel implicitly emphasizes the connection between the thematic of childhood innocence in American culture and an ideology of national innocence. In the Novel, Pecola is in isolation. Her mother, Pauline William becomes detached from her nigger self and happens to inherit a pretentious superior self. She begins to neglect her own house and is more attached to the household affairs of a whiteman. She begins to deprive her daughter Pecola of motherly love and affection. She is enmeshed in the torturous problem of discrimination. Mrs. Breedlove begins to breathe swaggering air of superiority within her Afro-American minority race. This kind of beginning of demonstrating and discriminatory behavior within her family clearly shows the intra-racial exploitation.

The general sense of precariousness of the black community during the Great depression, in comparison with the relative affluence of the whites in the novel, reminds us of the link between race and class. More directly, the sexual violence over Pecola is connected to the sexual violation of Cholly by a white who views his loss of virginity as entertainment.

The internalized white beauty standards deform the lives of black girls and women. Implicit messages that whiteness is superior everywhere, including the white

baby doll given to Claudia. The idealization of Shirley Temple is cuter than the other black girls. The idealization of white beauty in the movies, and Pauline Breedlove's preference for the little white girl she works for over her daughter is far better. Adult women take this hatred out on their children—Mrs. Breedlove shares the conviction that Pecola is ugly, and lighter-skinned Geraldine curses Pecola's blackness. Claudia remains free from this worship of whiteness, imagining Pecola's unborn baby as beautiful in its blackness. But it is hinted that once Claudia reaches adolescence, she too will learn to hate herself, as if racial self-loathing is a necessary part of maturation.

There the increasing gradation of the class status of Afro-American Blacks has implanted the seed of psychological inferiority and backwardness. People are the victim of racial and intra-racial discrimination and exploitation. Among blacks, dark skinned are in double colonization and double exploitation by light skinned black and even by whites. So, People are emotionally pushed away from the sense of proper human existence.

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