

Tribhuvan University

Double Victimization of Black Women in Toni Morrison's *A Mercy*

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Letter of Recommendation

Gopal Prasad Gautam has completed his thesis entitled “Double Victimization of Black Women in Toni Morrison's *A Mercy*” under my supervision. He carried out his research from 05 December, 2011 to 10 April 2014. I hereby recommend his thesis be submitted for viva voice.

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Approval Letter

This thesis entitled “Double Victimization of Black Women in Toni Morrison's *A Mercy*” submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University by Mr. Gopal Prasad Gautam has been approved by the undersigned members of the Research Committee.

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Abstract

This research attempts to study Toni Morrison's novel *A Mercy* by using black feminism as a theoretical insight. This work focuses on black female's experience in the patriarchal and racial society, wherein they have to undergo double domination. Male characters control over female is in the name of race and gender having sense of superiority upon them as seen in Florens, a female slave, is sold as an animal and exploited severely. The research study shows the female victimization in racist society wherein they are compelled to face severe exploitation due to double domination, i.e., in terms of race and gender.

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I. Victimization of Black Women in Morrison's *A Mercy*

This study on Toni Morrison's *A Mercy* shows the double victimization of female character on the ground of race and gender. Black characters in the novel have to undergo double domination. The racist society victimizes women because white superiority exploits black people. Moreover, the females have to be victim of gender exploitation, too. Therefore, the social structure makes the black female characters the victim of double exploitation.

Black women have to endure the domination in terms of race and gender in the society. Their common experience of oppression urges them to form bonds in order to fight back the impact of race and gender however their vulnerable position in the society does not allow them to be free from the chain of domination. But they attempt to escape from such suffocated society by uniting themselves.

In the novel, the protagonist is female named as Florens who suffers from ongoing slavery system. She is a black girl therefore she has to face racial segregation. The white society always looks her down. She has been made slave including mother. As a result, she has to suffer because she is a black female.

Not only Florens, almost all female slaves undergo similar destiny. Therefore, they want to be free from slavery as well as patriarchal domination. Black female has very lower and contempt lives under the domination. The society where racism is very prevalent therefore, white people or plantation owners exploit their body and mind giving inhuman torture, whereas black females are not free from male abuse within their family as well as outsider.

Having this kind of suffering, black female resist the domination or they attempt to resist. As the society practices slavery in a very cruel way that allows black

slaves who are victimized from the prevalent social system, the white people behave them as animal. Therefore they are bought and sold. Likewise, the novel presents a story where black female slaves are exploited in terms of race and gender.

A Mercy is the story of a young slave girl named Florens. She is sixteen years old and living on a plantation. The D'Ortega is a plantation owner who returns from Angola, where he deals with Portuguese, who were extremely cruel to their slaves. Minha Mae and her children live in the tobacco plantation where other many black are left. D'Ortega has fallen on difficult times because of Jacob Vaark, a trader who arrives at the plantation to collect a debt owed by him.

Vaark dislikes D'Ortega and practically everything he stands for from his cruel ways to politics, arrogance, and religious beliefs. D'Ortega admits that he cannot pay the debt but offers one of his slaves as partial payment. Vaark presents himself as a more moral man than D'Ortega which impresses Minha Mae. Therefore, Vaark decides to take a slave as payment and choose to Florens. Florens thinks she is being cast aside by her mother whose only goal is to protect her adolescent daughter. The story focuses on Florens but also gives the backgrounds on Lina, another slave, Jacob Vaark, Rebekka Vaark and Sorrow. Each has had trials and tribulations but when brought together form a type of family there.

Along with the passage of time, Rebekka falls in sick and the panic increases with Rebekka's illness. Florens and Lina are sent off the property to find the blacksmith. Florens is thrilled to be the one going since she has developed an obsession for the man. Florens' opinion soon changes with the behaviors of the people on the outside. Florens spends a great deal of time making her way through the wilderness.

At long last, Florens reaches the blacksmith and he goes to cure Rebekka. By this time, she is on the road to recovery. Upon arriving at the blacksmith's house, Florens receives a shock. The blacksmith is unmarried yet he seems to have created his own family. The blacksmith has taken in a foundling, a young boy named Malaik. Florens and Malaik scuffle and the boy is injured. The blacksmith returns and there is a brutal battle between him and Florens. Florens is sent away.

Florens becomes despondent. Willard and Scully, the white indentured servants, make note of all the changes and wonder what happen to their little family. Florens begins to come to terms with her life, including past and present. Finally, Minha Mae explains her actions and she wants her daughter to receive mercy.

The novel is one of the best selling in the world which has got much critical readings and thus finds analyses various. The novel has got many critical studies and all studies have shown the different interpretation and analysis on the novel. The book is one of their best sellers among many texts of Toni Morrison. However, the researcher has taken quite innovative dimension in reading the novel. Therefore, the perspective as double domination is one of the studies of the novel. Among many critics, Erin Miller reads the novel as the outcome of psychological phenomena. Therefore, he argues:

the psychological and experiential experience of enslavement; the destructive aspects of Christian piety and the spirituality of resistance; the brutal development and destruction of continent's landscape from development and or neglect; and how these crisis's effect relationships between men and women. But most of all she looks at how, why and when women come together in comradeship and how and why those groupings often fail. (12)

The studies find the psychological aspects in the novel are dominant which shows women suffering. Women have psychological inferiority in the society which makes them to adopt domination. Women psychology is defeated by culture and society therefore they do not raise their voices as well. In contrary David Gates gets the novel as religious ideology among different races. He further explains:

The novel includes Portuguese, Dutch, English, Native American, African, and mixed-race characters, all vying for a place in this new world. Neither religious freedom nor religious tolerance is a given, and while the Southern colonies are clearly strongholds of slavery, the North is by no means an innocent bystander. Diseases such as measles and smallpox run rampant. Nevertheless, there is an Eden-like quality in the beauty and richness of this new world, along with many decencies that transcend the evil elements. (25)

The novel goes on the discussion with feeling of slavery where the blacks have similar experiences. The cultural phenomena intensify slavery in the society therefore it has come into discussion among different races as well society. The society develops or promotes the racial case as social matters which root it deeply. Therefore, race or slavery of black people becomes the long term social ideology.

In the same way another critic has who is that gone through this novel and he interprets novel completely different perspective which focuses on social reality on racial practice. The American society racism becomes matter for society. As Marjorie Downie states:

In *A Mercy* Morrison's epic sense of place and time overshadows her depiction of people; she does better at finding poetry in this raw, scrappy colonial world than in populating another installment of her

noble and necessary fictional project of exposing the infamies of slavery and the hardships of being African-American. The white characters in *A Mercy* come to life more readily than the black, and they less ambiguously dramatize America's discovery and settlement. (21)

The American society is enmeshed with racism therefore Afro-American people face hardship for finding their independent identity. Along with birth of African come up with social tag of racism which restrict them from developing themselves. Therefore this critic has analyzed the novel from racial perspective.

Here Patricia Jones brings the complete different interpretation which take out the suffering of human existence. As the characters from the novel are from very lower level and they ever face difficulties in day to day lives. He put forward his words:

Religion in this novel is a mean thing that sucks the life out of people. The undelivered message Florens' mother has for her at the end of the novel is a condemnation of all forms of "dominion" and an assertion of self-determination. Ultimately, the characters of this novel are all "orphans" who have to find their own way. (58)

The above line shows the religion which matters social values and other fundamental ideology in the society. Almost all the interpretations have focused on different areas of study or insights. However, the researcher has chosen new approach for the study. The researcher intends to read the novel as double domination over black female because of prevalent racism.

Morrison projects oppression because of racism and sexism from which black women have been suffering: In confronting and overcoming oppressions in

their lives her women characters display strength, endurance, creativity, resourcefulness, forgiveness and resistance. She is frank in depicting the often devastating circumstances of the “twin afflictions” of racism and sexism. She is aware that black women are under two layers of oppression that is the racial and the sexual.

Alice Walker admires the struggle of black women throughout history to maintain an essential spirituality and creativity in their lives and their achievements serve as an inspiration to other. Thus, the main theme of her novels is the life of black women, their battle with the society for their equal economical, political and sexual rights, she shows black women trying to get their racial equality. She emphasizes the healing power of love and the possibility of change: change personal, change in society.

Toni Morrison's works are noted for their insightful treatment of African American issues in which there is the reflection of black and white racial conflict and black's miserable condition in white society.

Morrison emphasizes the black women's anger against the evil of sexism and racism. Her writing portrays the struggle of black people throughout history and are praised for their insightful portraits of black life, in particular the tragic experiences of black women in a sexist and racist society, suffering of black women at the hands of men and their struggle for survival.

In her novel, she examines the black women's search for better existence through an analysis of the individual's relationship to the community. They struggle to claim their identity in order to change their lives and secure a rightful place within the social network of relationship they themselves constitute,

usually absorb the psychic pain involved in such a struggle and shatter the iron bars of gender which limits self empowerment.

The theme of double repression by the White community and repression from black males to black women is American experience. The repression that female protagonists resist grounds for their mental and emotional rebirth. Her female characters are on search of psychological health and wholeness and eventually achieve it when they become able to fight against oppression.

They embody the struggle of being a double minority- both black and female. Morrison finds unfolding the oppression of Black Women in her fictions. In other words, Morrison's works depict the emotional, spiritual and physical devastation that occurs when family trust is betrayed. Morrison examines the black women's quest for selfhood through individual relationship to the community.

The novel has got many interpretations and it has been read from many perspectives. The research goes with female domination where black female gets racial and gender domination. The black female has to be the victim of race and gender. The research goes along with black female existence in white society where they have to be the victim of exploitation. The novel talks about black slavery where female go with racial and gender exploitation.

Regarding this, Walker reflects here; "For African-American women, critical social theory encompasses bodies of knowledge and sets of institutional practices that actively grapple with the central questions facing" (8). The need for such thought arises because African-American women as a group remain oppressed within the social context characterized by injustice. This means that all African-American

women within the group are oppressed in the same way; suppress from other patriarchal society.

The race issue is related to the problem for black women belonging to the society. Firstly, patriarchal agent oppresses women and causes them much pain. Physical embodiment of race and is social stigma for black women who are exploited because of having black color. Both race and female identity for patriarchal institutions represent a danger to female existence. These agents reveal a certain inequality in the society that translates into a form of oppression. The issue of race and gender are evil aspect for black female which are causes of the suffering social injustices.

A black woman is oppressed by patriarchy, black feminists observe, not just because she is a woman but because she a black woman, a category that has been defined historically in America as less valuable than the white woman. The Victorian ideals of the true women as submissive , fragile, and sexually pure which still influence patriarchal thinking today, excluded black women and poor women of all races, whose survival demanded hard physical labor and who were vulnerable to rape and to sexual exploitation in the work place. Being black and women they are double suppressed.

They are victimized by black men as well as the white society. White mainstream marginalize black women because of their race, nevertheless encourages them to prioritize gender issues over racial issues. Black women are oppressed more by sexism than by racism. At the same time, the black male community marginalizes black women because of their gender; nevertheless encourage them to prioritize racial issues over gender issues, arguing that black

women are oppressed more by racism than by sexism. Lorraine Bethel observes the double oppression in this manner:

The common socio-aesthetic problems of authors who attempt to fashion a literature of cultural identity in the midst of racial/sexual oppression. It incorporated a political analysis that enables us to comprehend and appreciate the incredible achievement Black women [. . .] made in establishing artistic and literary traditions of any sort and to understand their qualities and sensibilities. Such understanding requires a consciousness of the oppression these artists faced daily in a society full of institutionalized and violent hatred for both their black skins and their female bodies.

Developing and maintaining this consciousness is a basic tenet of Black feminism. (178)

Various writers argue that historically black women have been stereotyped as sex objects and breeders. The White men were also oppressing black women. They view black women as sexual temptress of White men and prostitute. These stereotypes and myth have helped control black women's characters in the society from the time of slavery black women have always been exploited as the object of White male sexual assault. White man takes pride in seducing black women.

They often become the victim of rape because sexism of white male was socially legitimized. Bell Hooks, in *Ain't I a Woman: Black Woman and Feminism* (1981), writes, "Rape was a method used to terrorize, dehumanized and to trip the female slave of dignity" (36). As they are themselves in a dehumanized situation, black men can no longer protect them.

The black female experience is characterized by the interlocking oppressors of class, rape. These oppressors are interwoven into social structures and work together to define the history of the lives of black women of color. Bell Hooks says that, the history of these cultural oppressors can be traced back to slavery.

Within her book *Ain't I a Woman: Black Women and Feminism*, Hooks asserts that “as far as black slavery, white people established a social hierarchy based on race and sex that ranked white men first, white women second, though sometimes equal a black men who ranked third and black women last” (53). Black women have been defined and categorized in dehumanizing term, term employed to attack the essence of black women's sense of personal integrity and self.

Several black female writers view feminism as a movement that is exclusively for women. The author and theorist Alice Walker, rejects the term “feminist” and called herself a “womanist” because she works for the survival and wholeness of her people, both men and female and for the promotion of dialogue and community as well as for the valorization of women and of all the varieties of work women perform.

Similarly, Carolyn Denard points out many African American women, “advocate what may be called ethnic cultural feminism” (172). It is “concerned more with the particular female cultural values of their own ethnic group rather than with those of women in general” (171). Denard explains that ethnic cultural feminism acknowledges the damaging effects of sexism on women of color, both inside and outside their ethnic community, but it “doesn’t advocate as a solution

to their oppression political feminism that alienates black women from their ethnic group” (172).

Black female writers raised the issues of motherhood, celebration of black culture, native language, their battle with the society for their equal economical, political and sexual rights. Alice Walker universalizes what are typically seen as individual struggle while simultaneously allowing space for autonomous movement of self-determination. In her book, *In Search of Mother's Garden* she defines a womanist as a black feminist or feminist of color, an outrageous and audacious woman who loves other women both sexually and non-sexual, a woman who appreciates and prefers women's culture: strength and emotional flexibility.

Walker identifies black female creativity from earlier generations in such folk arts as quilting, music and gardening. In *You Can't Keep a Good Woman Down*, her second volume of short stories, Walker deals with the female issues like pornography, abortion and rape from blatantly womanist perspectives. Walker's faith in black women's strength and creative powers is further revealed in the story, “A Sudden Trip Home in the Spring” in which Sarah Davis like Celie in *The Color Purple* survives and triumphs over the oppression. Thus Walker demonstrates that black women were free to peruse their selfhood in a society permeated by sexism and racism.

Ghaninian playwright and short story writer Ama Ata Aidoo in her semi-auto-biographical novel, *Our Sister Killjoy* dealt with the encounter between African and European cultures and the psychological impact of post-colonialism on women, the young heroine, Sissies, is disillusioned and alienated by her experience in England and in the heart of darkness of Bavaria, Germany. She

feels uncomfortable about the use of language that “enslaved” her, as she experienced racism and ignorance about Africa throughout her journeys. The novel is almost inevitably a working out of her rage against white oppressors.

African American women celebrate black culture, tradition and their- genesis and believe that they possess rich cultural and sexual properties as black and as female. They try to situate the study of black women’s writing in the context of black history and culture and explore its thematic and stylistic correspondence with the literature of black men as well as investigate its special use of language and imagery.

Justine Tally depicted the real black experience, day-by-day scene of black American life and defining Negro life in her works and also shows the realities of frustration desire and broken hope. Her poetry and autobiographical fiction also tells the tragedy of black life in America. He tries to present Negroes (blacks) not as curios but as people.

Later even when black anger began to enter her work. The slavery of black people recreates an age long domination upon black people whereas black female go with chain of exploitation in double domination. The sexist society victimizes female, similarly black female become scape-goat of race and gender. Blake feminism raises these issues of victimization and they resist to the bias society. The novel has portrayed the black women bitter experiences.

The present research has been divided into three chapters. The first chapter presents an introduction to a brief outline of the present study and a critical review of literature. The second chapter deals with textual analysis in terms of theoretical perspective. It will sort out some of the extracts from the text as the evidence to prove the hypothesis of the study. In this chapter, the

novel will be textually analyzed and attempts will be made to explore the unprecedented issues. The issues related to how the female characters undergo with double domination in terms of race and gender therefore they go against the patriarchy and try to improve their condition. The three chapters is the conclusion of this research.

II. Manipulation of Women in Morrison's *A Mercy*

The study shows the condition of black women in white society wherein they have to undergo exploitation, manipulation and physical violence. Therefore black female are victimized from double domination when white and black male are cause of their suffering. The research work studies black woman conditions in a racist society in which they are not free from exploitation in their community and outside the community. Because of patriarchy and race, black female are victimized from domination one after another.

The present study explores the possible violence in black females on the basis of race and gender where black women have severe oppression. The root of this violence to black women is caused by slavery where all blacks are treated as inhuman by their white masters. Moreover, black women have the worst condition as they have to be oppressed because of their race and gender. Black female face abuses and domination even in their community.

Morrison shows black females as victims of violence in all kind of relationships with white people. The focus on plight of black girls is maltreated sexually and exploited in the society. The female face the violent experiences even in their community because of patriarchal society that is cause of the severest affliction.

Morrison explores the concepts of freedom and slavery in every man and woman within the context of the African American experience. However, female experience in the society is more pathetic when they come under domination of white and black male. In patriarchal society female are explicated and they have to face white domination as well. Florens is a slave born in America of an African mother in Portuguese plantation owners. She becomes part of the household of the Vaarks

family. The household includes Florens, one mixed race, and two male indentured servants. Even within slavery, Florens is exploited from other black males.

However, black women have devised their own strategies for coping with their oppression which enable to survive and come out of their marginalized state. It shows the pathetic conditions of black woman who undergoes with physical, material, emotional, sexual, and intellectual damage. It exercises violence physically in which battering, assault, murder, and rape imposed upon black women.

The novel has explained the setting of plantation where slaves are kept. Florens a sixteen years old servant is born in slave plantation. All black female characters are victimized from double domination. On the one hand, white people sexually exploit these black girls. All plantation owners want to use them for their self interest. Florens, is Portuguese sixteen-year-old girl who lives in Jacob Vaark, a white settler. He has assembled members of his family in a farm. Rebekka, a European, was sent by her father to become Vaark's wife. Many black slaves are kept there but those black women as well as man have poor condition as it has been explained here; "making a place out of no place for themselves" (12). These women characters live under fear and anger however they are helpless under racial discrimination and gender discrimination. Their voices carry the physical and psychological scars but they want to struggle against unfavorable condition in plantation.

These voices have not been heard before cruelty of the dominant patriarchal power. Florens mother justifies the white man, Jacob Vaark, who comes to visit her master to get back his loan but Jacob does not have money to pay back him. Therefore he wants to sell a woman slave. Florens does not want to go with him but she is forced to go with him. Mother does not want to see her suffering in front of her cruel master forces to give her to this man: "to be given dominion over another is a

hard thing; to wrest dominion over another is a wrong thing; to give dominion of yourself to another is a wicked thing” (166). But Florens can never know her mother’s internal confession. Mother thinks that she can have better situation there because she has heard the new master is kind and generous than other. She always questions herself that how a mother can give her up little girl and send her off with a white trader. Her traumatic feelings get worse when the second time she is rejected again by her community.

Florens falls deeply in love with the blacksmith whom Jacob Vaark had hired to help him build the new mansion. He is very labourious man works in the field day and night. Morrison describes him as “he had rights, then, and privileges. He could marry; own things, travel, sell his own labor” (45). He is a black man who is different from the indentured servants of Vaark’s farm. He cures Sorrow and Rebekka. But when Lina sends Florens, are uncontrollably in love with him.

He rejects Florens’s love and she leaves the blacksmith. She is devastated by his notions about being slave. Her deep love for him changes to hatred. Florens is tormented by the traumas of her memories. She feels no belonging, neither to her own black culture and community nor to the white society. In fact, she has no position in white society and is deprived of her own identity whereas in the black masculine society, in complicity with white patriarchy, she is treated as a property. Florens feels no attachment to neither and wanders aimlessly in Vaark’s new mansion. Black female characters live is dominated by masculine power that deprived them from their true being and identity.

The novel clearly presents exploration of slave condition moreover it focuses on women slave who have under the two way domination. All of the characters set down in the patriarchal society where race and gender are prevalent. Florens, slave of

Jacob Vaark and his wife Rebekka. Jacob reluctantly took Florens in settlement of a debt from a Maryland landowner. Her own mother offered her so as not to be traded with Florens. Florens joined a household of misfits somewhere in the North.

They have been used for male physical desires. Female are silent because it is social tradition. It has been accepted in the society. Patriarchal social structure weakens them. Female is interpreted to be weak and feeble. Patriarchal society has constructed discourse, which always weakens female. It is clearly shown that female is not safe and comfortable in patriarchal society. They have to undergo with physical as well as ideological domination. It is very pathetic condition of women. Therefore Adrienne Rich says:

Women's honor something altogether else: virginity, chastity, fidelity to a husband. Honesty in women has not been considered important. We have been depicted as generically whimsical, deceitful, subtle, subtle, vacillation. And we have been rewarded for lying... Lying is done with and with silence. (186)

It signifies that women are exploited anyway; they have very risk and insecurity in the society. They cannot walk alone, they can be sexually harassed anywhere. Female body can be caused of exploitation.

Women are suppressed and devalued in the patriarchal culture. By living in the male dominant societies, women are objectified for male. Furthermore, women are victim of male dominated society which is distinct in the society. Florens becomes a victim of white plantation. She is only sixteen years old however she gets pain and suffering in plantation which is under controlled by Portuguese. Black people are extremely exploited in the plantation. Moreover, black women are victimization from double domination in the plantation.

The adverse effects of racism affect them. Kolchin writes; "Sex with whites was against the desire of slaves. Women became victim of rape and powerlessness in which they made the resistance futile" (124). The suffering of a black mother, girl or women is portrayed. Therefore, white wants to fulfill their sexual desires through black virgin girls. Florens a sixteen years girl faces similar experiences in society. The black experience in the plantation is presented here:

By eliminating manumission, gathering, travel and bearing arms for black people only, by granting license to any white to kill any black for any reason; by compensating owners for a slave's maiming or death, they separated and protected all whites from all others forever. Any social ease between gentry and laborers forged before and during that rebellion, crumbled beneath hammerer wielded in the interests of the gentry's profits. (8)

The line above explains female condition in the plantation has very miserable lives and they are just bought and sold. Black girls are abused within plantation. The majority of black female ever feel fear to live there because anything could happen there. In fact, the very people who are entrusted to protect and safeguard the children are often seen to bring about their ruin.

Violence in black females embodies two aspects, of race and gender. Violence is in African American experience. The history of blacks in America has invariably been one of victimization and oppression with the interracial violence. Black girls underscore the pervasive abuse in patriarchal society where women are not secure from black male white people.

Women who have been sexually molested as children experience confusion about their needs and accept the male as constant aggressor and forced sex as

normative. So such violation poses long-standing effects. In the novel, Morrison, raises female voices who have become victims of violence in the society. Florens is black girl, is innocence but she is not free from chain of exploitation.

Morrison goes back to the beginning of slavery in America where and when slavery was prevalent, depicts this novel. It includes Portuguese, Dutch, English, Native American, African, and mixed-race characters however present the female exploitation.

Florens is the main character in *A Mercy*, and it is through her journey to and from the home of the blacksmith that the present time of the novel's narrative. Florens is the product of the rape of her mother by a plantation hand; she is approximately sixteen years old as the story opens and as it ends. When Florens is very young, her mother warns Florens that she has "prettified" ways because she cannot bear being barefoot. Florens reports that her mother also described her as "dangerous" and "wild." When her mother appears to favor Florens' younger brother, Florens is emotionally crippled and sees herself as perpetually unchosen and unprotected.

Thus her mother haunts her throughout the narrative. It is not until after her brief relationship with the blacksmith and its aftermath, with Florens hiding in the master's unoccupied house, writing on the walls and floor, that she achieves any kind of closure and emotional balance.

Firstly, women are oppressed by the patriarchal institution of the social world. Secondly, being a black woman is a double burden. Thirdly, the brutal institute of slavery robs them from the right of motherhood as well as womanhood. Feminists ask to probe into the lives of woman in Afro-American social worlds in a better way.

Woman tried to exist and play their roles in all the possible ways in household and society whereas, men were either absent from the families or shrunk from their

responsibilities. Women have strived hard under the institution of slavery to fulfill their roles as mothers. This realization of self identity is the main craving of feminists and it becomes their predicament in societies where woman are taken as an inferior beings, as commodities with a prize tags. In order to come to terms with them, black women, fight for their rights and are cherished members of the black societies.

The novel presents an account of the victimization of Florens and each the damage becomes more intense. She is victimized from black male slave and white plantation owner. She wants to get freedom from plantation or slavish life.

Race has been a ground for contention in the treatment of violence, victimization and along with female experience causes the further more domination. So it is projected in the novel where black female share their experiences. Women in the society give rise to oppression and struggle as they are constrained under patriarchy. They are denied all rights, including ownership of themselves, their bodies, and destinies.

So women easily become victims of violence that is always associated with them. Power is the source of every person's self-esteem and the root of the conviction. Violence is possessed by power that involves the lust for destruction. As Kate Millet notes; "The relations between men and women have always been a matter of politics or manipulation of power" (23).

The position of women is the result of such symmetrical power relations. All the forms of violence, male violence against women in personal relationships are accepted because of the acceptance of this dominant-submissive relationship. Force is an integral part of all acts of violence, especially in the male asserting his masculinity. Bell Hooks observes; "While male supremacy encourages the use of abusive force to maintain domination of women; the western philosophical notion of hierarchical rule

and coercive authority is the root cause of all violence, including those against women and children" (118).

All the gender ideals open to the American man like the masculine have included self-assertion and aggression and violence has been a common thread in American ideals of manhood. Women and children are seen to be the typical victims of violence. This covers domestic violence, brutality in sexual encounters, and victimization of children.

Feminists have raised their voice against the subordinate position accorded to women under patriarchy. In order to contest the diminished status of women distinguishes between biological sex and socially constructed gender. However, women are not able to get justice to the black women's experience.

Morrison joins the protest of black feminists in black women in order to analyze how race, sex, and class work against black women in America. According to her, there is reality in American society, which reflects degrees of power and powerlessness. Black women experience pain, isolation, and vulnerability. She then goes on to explain the double domination of being black and female in white America, and how they are denied the privileges accorded to women as well as the power and influence. She adds the axis of class as well because from the time of slavery; "They were workers first, women second and always black, and the three identities locked them into positions of vulnerability" (66). She feels class oppression cuts across race and sex; it is not unique to black women.

The flaring injustice inherent in the black women's position had been challenged to black. She laments that traditional gender roles assigned to women to black women. On the other hand, they were required to perform heavy field work or other duties just like men. Black women continue to voice the peculiar predicament

that black women face in America. Charles Johnson suggests; "Black women can voice a Negro, a woman: three souls, three thoughts, three warring ideals in one dark body" (117). Black women manifest common approaches to the act of creating literature as a direct result of the specific political, social, and economic experience. Black men were ready to acknowledge the different voice of the black woman writer. However, most of these black women have similar experiences.

The complexity of the black female situation and identities is based on race and gender. Du Bois has given expression to the unenviable situation in which black females find himself in America:

The Negro is a sort of seventh son, born with a veil and gifted with second-sight in this American world... a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, the sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of assuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels this twoness an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder. (3)

Patriarchy oppresses and suppresses the female characters especially Floren and Lina who live a very difficult and miserable life. Their identity and freedom comes under crisis.

The society is racially and sexually biased. Therefore, Florens like slaves have suffering in the society. They do not have freedom under the double prison of race and gender. In patriarchal society, male has power which has been exercised from long before. Therefore black women raise voice against domination, repression, suppression and exploitation of them. All family members from Florens are under the

same plantation where they have to live very coercive suffering from white domination. As the text explains here:

Just then the little girl stepped from behind the mother. On her feet was a pair of way too big women's shoes. Perhaps it was the felling of license, a newly recovered recklessness along with the sight of those little legs rising like two bramble sticks from the bashed and broken shoes, that made him laugh. A loud, chest heaving laugh at the comedy the hopeless irritation of the visit. her daughter had not subsided when the woman cradling the small boy on her hip came forward. Her voice was barely above a whisper but there was no mistaking its urgency.

Please Senhor. No me. Take Take daughter. (24)

Therefore, Florens is sold but her mother decides her to sell because he is man takes her is very kind. In the sense of getting relief from domination, mother insists to Jacob to take her daughter. Mother wants to sell her daughter. Under the painful slavery, black have got inhuman exploitation of white people. Therefore, Mother thinks that if her daughter is taken away from there she has to be free from sexual exploitation. The race issue is related to the problem of most black women belong to the white society. A patriarchal agent oppresses women and causes them much pain.

Both race and gender as patriarchal institutions represent a danger to female friendship. These agents reveal a certain inequality in the society that translates into a form of oppression. Throughout the interaction of race and gender, female bonding is at risk because gender suffers from the influence of the first elements.

The hard economic situation of D'Ortega undergoes the problem because he has to pay back to his debtor Jacob. He is about to come there for taking back his money. Therefore, D' Ortega and his wife spend all money to have luxurious life.

Now they want to pay back slave girl instead of money. Black women are treated as object in the white society. As they decide:

Agreeing that the girl was worth twenty pieces of eight, considering the numbers years ahead of her and reducing the balance by three hogsheads of tobacco or fifteen English pounds, that latter preferred. The tension lifted visibly so on D'Ortega's face. Eager to get away and re-nourish his good opinion of himself; Jacob said abrupt goodbyes to Mistress D'Ortega, the two boys and their father. On his way to narrow track, he turned Regina around, waved at the couple and once again, in spite of himself envied the house, the gate the fence. (25)

Black women are treated as animal because D'Ortega sells them in return his debt.

Jacob accept the Florens as his money. Indeed, the combined effects of race and gender Florens victimize from her family because they send her to Jacob. A victim of prejudice, he, in return, becomes a passive agent of patriarchy. The racial and class oppression that black women experience make them likely to live in domestic work coupled with racial segregation.

Similarly another woman Lina has similar pain in the plantation. She is purchased for sexual exploitation. The lines explain:

His preference for steady female labour over dodgy males was based on his own experience as youth. A frequently absent master was invitation and temptation to escape rape or rob. The two men he used as occasions help presented no threat at all. In the right environment, women were naturally reliable. He believed it now with this ill-shod child that the mother was throwing away just as he believed it a decade earlier with the curly haired goose girl, the one they called Sorrow.

And the acquisition of both could be seen as rescue. Only Lina had purchased outright and deliberately but she was a woman, not child.

(32)

All the female characters in the novel are very much explicated therefore they have sense of unity against white male dominated society. When Florens is going to sell then all slaves raise their voices. This bonding allows them to fight against the impact of patriarchal oppression and helps them heal their common wounds. Racial segregation was designed to keep blacks oppressed; it fostered a form of racial solidarity that flourished in all-Black neighborhoods. In contrast, now that blacks live in economically heterogeneous neighborhoods, achieving the same racial solidarity raises new challenges.

Living in oppressive conditions enable black women to form bonds and cultivate female solidarity in order to survive. Because of the strong sense of community and the fact that individual experience could best be realized in a group, formal organizations became a way of life. This form of female friendship works well because in addition to caring and nurturing, the material aspect keeps relationships strong and eliminates or minimizes financial dependence on men. These organizations are very important in Africa where the economic context requires that women participate efficiently in the struggle for development.

Lina becomes worried having such kind of lives when she feels her position in front of white male dominated society. They have to be suffered from racial differences and being female in the society. She imagines the freedom of life. All the time, she does not sleep but walk around in the night and thinks in that way:

Walking in the warm night air, he went as far as possible, until the alleys and house lights were gem stones fighting darkness and the voices of

carousing men were lost to the silk rustle of surf. The sky had forgotten completely its mooring fire and was tricked out in cool stars on canvas smooth and dark as Regins's hide. He gazed at the occasional dapple of starlight on the water, then bent down and placed his hands in it. Sand moved under his palms; infant waves died above his wrists soaking the cuffs of his sleeve. (32-33)

The repressed desires of Lina search way out from double domination in the society where she does not find light but only darkness. The darkness in their future creates a kind anger against oppressor. Therefore she feels any attempt to compel all women to see themselves as sisters will fail because women have first to acknowledge the importance of female bonding, an acknowledgement that cannot be forced. Women have to be willing to participate and believe in the principles of female bonding to make a valuable contribution. Sisterhood between black women or women of all races needs to be based on principles that all the members share and acknowledge.

Florens tries to explain her story but assumes there are various things she does not comprehend: "Too many signs or a bright omen clouds up too fast. I sort them and try to recall, yet I know I am missing much" (4). She knows she does not understand the situation clearly, but she cannot imagine what she is leaving out. She has unresolved feelings towards her mother's actions and is greatly affected by being offered to Jacob to take her away. When Florens refers to her brother she says: "Mother, me, her little boy . . . her baby boy on her hip" (7).

She clearly and constantly remembers her brother on her mother's lap, showing how she is jealous of the boy who stays with their mother. She sees her mother as protective only of him; he is "her little boy," "her baby boy". Florens, however, is only a child and does not comprehend her mother's perspectives and

reality. She holds to the memory of her mother keeping her little brother and offering her to Jacob.

At Jacob's farm, Florens is constantly trying to please other people. She is scared through unfair treatment over them and abandons her in the same way she believes her mother did. Rebekka thinks; "amused by Florens' eagerness for approval: 'Well done.' 'It's fine.' However slight, any kindness shown her, she munched like a rabbit" (96). As Florens lacks self-confidence because of her past, she is happy with any kind of encouragement and she wants to be helpful and important. She feels like she does not belong anywhere as she ponders to herself; "Lina says there are some spirits who look after warriors and hunters and there are others who guard virgins and mothers. I am none of those" (68). Florens has suffered too much and is no longer the sweet little girl.

Florens is also influenced by the memory of her biological mother. Although she is separated from her birth mother when she a child, she constantly thinks about her mother and the fact that she is forced to leave her. Even with Florens's identification with Lina as her surrogate mother, she still has trouble to positively shape her subjectivity.

Lina becomes a surrogate mother for Florens, as both long to care and be cared for. It is important to consider the social context of slavery that Lina and Florens find themselves entrapped in. Both are separated from their families at a very early age. Florens is sold and is separated from her mother while still a child and longs for a mother figure. Jacob was a poor orphan who came to America to make a new start; Rebekka's parents essentially sold her to him to spare themselves her upkeep. They take in others similarly devastated. Lina, raped by a 'Europe,' has been

cast out by her Native American tribe. Mixed-race Sorrow survived a shipwreck only to be made pregnant by her rescuer.

Willard and Scully are indentured servants, farmed out to Jacob by their contract holders, who keep fraudulently extending their time. America was founded on the involuntary servitude of blacks.

Lina is one of the few survivors of a plague that attacked her village and wants to belong to a community and have a family. Lina's adoption of the role of the mother and caregiver can be attributed to the loss of her family. Because of racial inferiority, they have to be far away from their family. White dominated society does not treat them human being therefore they are sold.

Although Lina manages to survive by herself, she desires to have family connections as she used to have. She sees in Florens the opportunity to give the care she never received and create a family tie with the young girl. Lina is marginalized and treated poorly; she yearns for a family and for love. However, she feels that to care for Florens means that she has to protect and prevent her from making mistakes. As soon as Florens arrives in Jacob's plantation, Lina is absorbed with feelings of care as she: "had fallen in love with her right away, as soon as she saw her shivering in the snow" (60). Florens mentions that "Lina smiles when she looks at me and wraps me for warmth" (8). It show that both understands and sympathizes with each other. They slowly become more involved with one another: "they had memorable nights, lying tighter, when Florens listened in rigid delight to Lina's stories" (61) Florens feels safe in her arm and "would sigh then, she head on Lina's shoulder and when sleep came the little girl's smile lingered" (63). Lina comforts her and they begin to love and trust each other.

Florens likes to hear stories, but she loves most are always those about maternal bonds: “Especially called for were stories of mothers fighting to save their children from wolves and natural disasters” (61). She struggles to ensure the survival of their children and keep them close. They do not get safe from sexual exploitation from both black and white male. They intend to seduce them. Not limited to relatives, other mothers help women cope with the loss of their biological mothers is a common pattern in slavery. Collins also adopts the term widely refer to women bonds among black women that help them survive and shape their subjectivities.

While on her errand to get the blacksmith to save Rebekka, Florens longs for Lina’s guidance: “I need Lina to say how to shelter in wilderness” (42). As her other black female, Lina represents the wisdom and knowledge that Florens needs. Florens remembers her good times with her and misses “sleeping in the broken sleigh with Lina” (6). Like a daughter listens to her mother’s advice, Florens makes constant reference to Lina’s teachings as she runs her errand: “Lina says . . . not all natives are like her . . . so watch out” (5). She tries to remember things that she learned so she is able to survive and not be harmed. They perform the roles of mother and daughter. Slave holding society in which bear children did not mean that the black mother had any say in the fate of her child.

Lina and Florens become each other’s family and are quite intimate; not experiencing the distance that sometimes separates African American mothers and daughters. Lina openly shares with Florens how much she has suffered at the hands of men and the white community: “he uses the flat of his hand when he has anger . . . She tells me how it is to walk town lanes wiping blood from her nose . . . The Presbyterians stare at her face and the blood wipes on her clothes but say nothing” (104-5).

Black females who try to make their daughters strong enough to endure different hardships, Lina tries to help Florens by protecting her. This attempt is fruitless as she cannot control Florens or the events that happen. She tries to prevent Florens from getting involved with the blacksmith to keep her away from him. Lina is not able to stop their relationship.

During the blacksmith's stay at Jacob's farm, he and Florens become involved and she falls desperately in love with him. As Lina foresees her obsessive love for the blacksmith leads to her destruction in the end. Florens and Lina are in need of love and care as they are trying to survive in a world that has dilacerated bonds with families and loved ones.

The narrator states that "the mother hunger – to be one or have one – both of them were reeling from that longing which, Lina knew, remained alive, traveling the bone" (63). This illustrates how both feel the need to have a mother-daughter bond and how they complement each other. By cultivating mutual feelings of love and respect, both women compensate their previous traumas of abandonment and loss and, through their mother and daughter bond, they feel loved and cared for.

Lina becomes Florens's other mother, and as such she influences Florens's subjectivity and how she sees of herself and the world: "Lina says from the state of my teeth I am maybe seven or eight . . . Lina says Sir has a clever way of getting without giving" (5). Florens trusts whatever Lina tells her and she comes to view Jacob through Lina's perspective. Lina tries to teach her to be alert and, Florens. She tries to shape herself to please Lina and make her proud.

Florens understand her view and Lina's views: "Lina says my feet are useless, will always be too tender for life and never have the strong soles, tougher than leather that life requires" (4). By commenting on her feet, she is making a reference to

Florens's personality because Lina believes that Florens is too sentimental when she needs to be cautious and strong. In fact, Florens is sensitive and does not block out her emotions and that can be dangerous for a woman slave.

Lina's comments are a reflection of the notions she has learned, but her reality and Florens's do not fit those learned concepts. Neither has the opportunity to become warriors or hunters, because they are women, destitute and abandoned orphans. As slaves, they cannot assume traditional roles assigned to women because they are merchandise, and do not control their lives, much less their bodies. In this sense, Florens worries because she does not fit any of those categories that she is alone with no spirits or forces to look after her.

It illustrates the displacement young black women undergo during slavery as they try to shape their own subjectivities. In this novel, *Sorrow*, a young black slave, has trouble coping with her experiences, but through motherhood she is able to define her own sense of self. She is the only survivor of a slave ship, and left alone, she invents an imaginary and loyal friend. They do everything together: "Both skinned down the broken mast and started walking a rocky shoreline" (117). Twin becomes her only friend and a consolation for being alone and completely lost. *Sorrow* is found by the Sawyers and she remembers that she "woke up naked under a blanket, with a warm wet cloth on her forehead . . . A woman with white hair was watching her" (117). She tries to speak, but Twin "whispered NO, so she shrugged her shoulders and found that a convenient gesture for the other information" (118). She refuses to say more than a couple of words and "the housewife named her" (119). She stops talking and does not care to interact with others ever since.

Even after Jacob buys her, she only talks with Twin and constantly wanders off alone, away from everybody. *Sorrow* is abused several times by various men. She

is not even aware that what happens is a different form of domination, because for her she has experienced these abuses as long as she can remember and simply associates them to other forms of oppressions she suffers as a woman slave. During her stay at the Sawyers, there is various segregation that suggests that Sorrow is sexually abused. She says that “on occasion she had secret company other than Twin, but not better than Twin” (119). It seems that the Sawyers’ boys were secretly abusing her.

Further evidence is given when Sorrow first gets her period and the “housewife told her it was monthly blood; that all females suffered it and she believed her until the next month and the next and the next when it did not return” (119). This indicates not only that Sorrow is abused but that she is pregnant. She then talks to Twin, “about whether it [her pain] was instead the result of the goings that took place behind the stack of clapboard, both brothers attending . . . Because the pain was outside between her legs, not inside where the housewife said” (119-20). She tries to understand what is happening to her body but she lacks a mother figure to talk with about her body, the abuses and its consequences. She has no idea she might be pregnant and that she is hurting because she is constantly violated.

Later, in Jacob’s farm, there are various references that suggest Jacob too abuses Sorrow. Sorrow gets to sleep inside, but Lina does not envy this benefit. Besides, Lina knows that “no good could come of leaving Mistress alone with Sorrow, and now that her stomach was low with child, she was even less reliable” (55). As Sorrow is pregnant, there is a certain tension between Rebekka and her. The suspicions around who is the father increases. Lina believes that Sorrow is pregnant with Jacob’s baby.

However, it is not clear if that is true because only Lina mentions about the baby’s father. Further evidence is that she is abused throughout the narrative and, she

is privileged in the farm as Jacob tells her to sleep inside the house, implying that he follows the same pattern of other men. The possibility that Sorrow gets involved with a different man cannot be completely disregarded as it is only suggested that Jacob abuses her.

Regardless of the situation, Sorrow is determined to have her baby. She “took a knife and a blanket to the riverbank the moment the first pain hit” (132). Alone, she is “screeching when she had to, sleeping in between, until the next brute tear of body and breath” (132). She is convinced that despite the pain she will have her baby and she hopes that Willard and Scully, men who help out at the farm, will appear to help her. They eventually see Sorrow and “[k]neeling in water as Sorrow pushed, they pulled, eased and turned the tiny form stuck between her legs” (132). They are successful and Sorrow has a baby girl. Afterwards, she is “prompted by the legitimacy of her new status as a mother” (133) and is proud of having a child.

After she has her baby she starts “attending routine duties, organizing them around her infant’s needs” (134). She takes care of her baby, does her chores, and she interacts with others as she did not used to do before her baby was born. Her imaginary friend, Twin, disappears as Sorrow no longer needs to imagine a close bond with a friend because she now has a real and strong connection with her daughter. She starts to talk to Lina, Florens and Rebekka and she becomes “bold enough to remark to her Mistress, ‘It was good that the blacksmith came to help when you were dying’” (133). Sorrow’s process of discovering her own self and her confidence grows with her baby girl and she is finally able to speak for herself. Sorrow gives a positive connotation to motherhood, one that empowers her and allows her to care for her baby and consequently for herself. She then names herself “I am your mother’ she said. ‘My name is Complete”(134).

This illustrates how she feels complete, fully identified in her role as a mother. It also shows the importance of both the role of motherhood and of self-naming. As Sorrow feels strong, she no longer wants to be defined by others, she does not want the negative name given to her (Sorrow), and so creates her own name, which mirrors her blissful state of mind. Sorrow names herself to acquire control over her life and her newborn baby. In a time when any bonding is dangerous and many times harmful, Sorrow is able to positively shape her subjectivity through motherhood.

There is a clear corruption of the ethics of care when Lina help Sorrow give birth by the riverbank. As soon as Lina helps Sorrow delivers her first baby, she takes the baby: “Lina wrapped it in a piece of sacking and set it a-sail in the widest part of the stream and far below the beaver’s dam” (123). Lina tells Sorrow the baby is dead and quickly sets the child off into the river, giving no time for her to react. Sorrow believes she hears the baby cry and she suffers from the thought that her baby is drowning. She thinks about “her baby breathing water under Lina’s palm to recede” (123). Sorrow completely mistrusts Lina and relies even more on Twin. Lina believes that the baby is Jacob’s and realizes it would bring even more problems for them.

She is forced to make an unconventional compromise to ensure that she and Sorrow outlive the atrocities of slavery as there is no protection for two women slaves. Lina does not hesitate to put Sorrow’s baby in the river, although it is not clear if the baby is alive as Sorrow thinks it is. Nevertheless, Lina does not act with the intention of hurting her. She simply acts according to her instincts to ensure their immediate survival and, to maintain a peaceful existence on the farm, as she is close to Rebekka.

Even though the alteration does not necessarily represent lack of solidarity among the women characters, behavior and expectation causes a distancing between

Lina and Sorrow. Florens and the other slave's well, in marked contrast to the treatment they receive from the conservative, religious, racist villagers. However, she changes completely. During Rebekka's illness she constantly thinks about her sufferings and the losses of her children and husband. When she recovers, she is transformed into a different person, cold and distant, as Florens mentions: "Mistress has cure but she is not well. Her heart is infidel. All smiles are gone" (159). Rebekka is not sick anymore, she is not the same lively woman she was before.

Rebekka is traumatized by her lack of power to do anything to help her children, her husband and even herself, when she was sick. She seems to try to acquire some control by adopting by conservative and prejudiced community which called for mistreating slaves and maintaining control by power. Rebekka no longer allows Lina to express herself and live by her beliefs. Rebekka associates her with her daughter Patrician because she was a little girl when she died and, around the same time, Jacob buys Florens when she is still a child. By disposing of Florens, Rebekka tries to dissociate herself from her past in an attempt to forget the suffering she underwent and erase the feeling of solidarity she used to share with them.

It seems as if she suddenly becomes aware that she had tried to live according to her beliefs but it only brought her harm. She then decides to act like everybody else in her village. Florens and the other workers, while trying to assume a role of superiority based on race and gender. Even so, Rebekka should not be judged too harshly because although her actions are cruel, she reflects the inhuman principles of the slave holding society she decides to side with, which clearly alters any ethics of care.

Florens suffering always remember her mother, as she mentions: "I wake with a little scream in my mouth . . . I quiet down. That is a better dream than a minha

standing near with her little boy. In those dreams she always wants to tell me something. Is stretching her eyes. Is working her mouth. I look away from her" (101). From her nightmares Florens is able to see that she is missing something, that her mother tries to explain but she fails to hear her and cannot make sense of what it is. She does not understand what is implied when her mother says "take the girl, my daughter to Jacob" (7). This memory haunts her, afflicting her with constant flashbacks of this traumatic event that deeply affects her life.

Judith Herman explains that "a traumatized person may experience intense emotion but without a clear memory of the event" (34). Florens finds herself in this position, because although she has a hard time remembering precise details. She experiences intense and devastating feelings every time she remembers it. According to Ernst Alphen, memory is "usually seen as a special case of experience. It is not the voluntary controlled retrieval of the past itself, but rather of the experience of the past" (25).

Thus, Florens has no control over her memories and she is powerless against her nightmares. As different things may trigger a bad memory, Florens is reminded of her hurtful past, even when she does not want to think about it.

Florens's constant nightmares and involuntary acts of memory of this traumatic experience cause her even more pain, because she is hurt not only by what happened but also by constantly remembering it. These agonizing memories are consequences of the changes in the ethics of care as Florens judges her mother's actions as a sign of carelessness and detachment.

Florens's desire for the blacksmith is set on slippery grounds. She wants him only to herself because of the fear of abandonment and so she makes him her owner: "I am adoring you . . . You alone own me" (141). Florens wants to be with the

blacksmith in any possible way because she does not desire to be alone again. Florens wants to fulfill her desire of having someone love her unconditionally and as she tries to control the blacksmith and who he cares for, it leads only to violence. She is neither able to control her thoughts about her traumatic experience nor her actions in the present. Florens, who feels powerless and is overtaken by anger and fear. Florens does not realize the seriousness of the violence she is afflicted upon the blacksmith.

Florens is not portrayed as violent or dangerous, but as a lost woman suffering the consequences of the brutalities of slavery which causes the ultimate suffering. In this context, Florens becomes mentally disoriented because the blacksmith does not want to be with her any longer, calling her a crazy slave girl.

Florens is not able to cope with a second abandonment by a loved one in her life. Her memories and present reality merge as she starts to lose control over herself. Florens arrives back at the farm; they “were slow to recognize her as a living person” (147). She becomes disconnected from reality and is trapped in her thoughts of her traumatic experiences.

At the end of the novel, Florens encloses herself in the big house that Jacob had built and, Rebekka had locked, and starts to write on the walls. She writes compulsively by intermingling memories and experiences, in an attempt to make sense of her life. Shoshanna Felman argues that madness is the:

Impasse confronting those whom cultural conditioning has deprived of the very means of protest or self-affirmation . . . [it] is a request for help . . . [a] help-seeking behavior is itself part of female conditioning, ideologically inherent in the behavioral pattern and in the dependent and helpless role assigned to the woman. (7)

Thus, Florens's madness can be seen as a desperate cry for help and care as she feels abandoned and powerless to face the traumatic events she undergoes. The blacksmith judges her as cruel, but he does not consider Florens's experiences as a young woman slave. And Florens does not even know how to begin to explain her actions because she is herself lost and confused.

III. Black Female Experience in Morrison Novel *A Mercy*

Toni Morrison's novel *A Mercy* projects how women are forced to endure patriarchal as well as racial domination. It argues that this role is forced through the tyranny of masculinity when male maintains their role in the society and they have dominant role because the society is patriarchal. Women do not have an active role in society which often leads to the undermining of their own social rank and self-subjugation.

Toni Morrison represents women not merely as victims of a patriarchal and masculine-based society, but they have been victimized within their community being a black female. *A Mercy* reveals the female existence in the society where female are victim of racial and gender issue and causes the female exploitation.

Morrison uses Florens to show black women's social condition who have to be victim because of racial and gender-based issue. She is a woman who does not satisfy with dependent women. Florens is lost and has no direction therefore she quarrels with the Blacksmith and it becomes evident that Florens break away from the oppression she had been a part of her whole life.

Rebekka Vaark is white women however she is affected from patriarchal domination however she resists to another possession in a masculine society. She does not accept this dismal mindset outside of a male influence. All the female characters in the novel want to be free from such kind of domination or exploitation but the social structure and prevalent racial discrimination victimize them and they are under manipulation.

Throughout the novel Morrison uses her characters as examples of different paths that women might take when faced with the choice of dependence on masculinity. She tries to find out a solution about the problem of marginalization and

liminality of black women in the Western society and portrays the struggle and desire of black women for having their identity. She deconstructs the standardized norms of white community. African-American women suffer in the racial white patriarchal society. Race is one of the stigmas for decimation which enables them to make difference with black in the society.

At the same time, patriarchal society allows to male to dominate female. The research intends to show black female characters have very miserable life because of the victimization from race and gender. On the one hand female characters have to be victim of society, moreover black female characters have to be scapegoat in terms of race because of patriarchal social system wherein female are treated as lower and inferior being.

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