

Tribhuvan University

Double Marginalization of a Black Female Character Morrison's

*The Bluest Eye*

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Approval Letter

This thesis entitled “Double Marginalization of a Black Female Character in Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*” submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University by Sandhya Sharma has been approved by the undersigned members of the Research Committee.

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Letter of Recommendation

Sandhya Sharma has completed her thesis entitled “Double Marginalization of a Black Female Characters in Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*” under my supervision. She carried out her research from December 2016 to March 2017 A.D. I hereby recommend her thesis be submitted for viva voice.

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Jiblal Sapkota  
Supervisor

Date: -----

## Abstract

This explores double marginalization of black females in racist society in Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*. The society where color is social marker, then black women have to be victimization of both race and gender. Toni Morrison is one of the master writers from America, majorly deals with both race and gender simultaneously. Even the novel deals racial and gender issue by showing social condition in American society. The novel projects a representative character Pecola who is affected by race and gender. Due to societal practice of gender and race, black women as Pecola undergoes double marginalization. The theoretical insights black feminism raises typically black racial women's' social identity as they have to face double marginalization. The research study shows the females' victimization in racist society wherein they are compelled to face severe exploitation due to double domination in terms of race and gender.

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## **I. Introduction to *The Bluest Eye* and Black Feminism**

The research observes Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eyes* through racial and feminism lenses. The novel depicts a typical condition in which a black woman is jeopardized by two layers of power. The layers of power race and gender always victimize to the black women. The novel projects the major character Pecola who is a black woman. The protagonist desires to be an independent as a white woman, but both race and gender always manipulate her freedom and personal life.

But the social structure suppresses Pecola's desire and ambition. She wants to be a white woman when she sees blue eyes. For this reason, she assumes that having bluest eye she can get equality in society. On the other hand she is sexually molested and raped by father time and again. Pecola encounters both racial and gender discrimination in her society.

The protagonist of this novel experiences both racial and gender discrimination. Pecola belongs to a black family. She realizes when her friends insult at her physical appearance. It is her common and everyday experience she feels everyday life. She has to be neglected by her friends and other. Moreover, she is not free from gender discrimination. Even the black community practices patriarchal behaviours, and then being a member of the same community.

The research emphatically examines both racial and sexual discrimination that is practiced by the society in this novel. This study in Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eyes* shows the double marginalization of a black female character. The black colour is culturally and socially stigmatized in white dominated society. The racist society treats black as other and women as inferior. Females are dominated within black community in terms of gender. This idea of double marginalization is meticulously

discussed in this research which portrays society in which racial discrimination is discussed.

The social structure makes hierarchy and on the basis of the hierarchy exploitation is practiced. Black females are victim of double exploitation. For this reason black women's voices are not heard because gender discrimination resist their voice then they cannot raise voice against racism. Physical embodiment of race and is social stigma for black women who are exploited because of having black colour. 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 cause of suffering social injustices.

Morrison unfolds unfolding the oppression of black women. In other words, Morrison's works depict the emotional, spiritual and physical devastation that occurs when family trust is betrayed. Her focus is on black women who grow to reside in a larger world and struggle to achieve independent identity beyond male domination. Walker examines the black women's quest for selfhood through individual relationship to the community.

The study shows the condition of the black women in white society wherein they have to face exploitation, manipulation and physical violence. Therefore black women have double domination due to racial discrimination and patriarchal concept in the society. The racial discrimination makes them slave of the white and patriarchal ideology also victimizes black women. The research work studies black women have conditions of victimization of racist and patriarchal society. They are not free from exploitation in their community and outside the community. Because of patriarchy and race, black females are victimized.



Pecola, a woman character feels dominated in patriarchal society, where she is employed as a slave or just a silent machine. She suffers from ongoing slavery system. She is a black girl; therefore she has to face racial segregation. Therefore, she wants to be free from slavery as well as patriarchal domination. Black female has very lower position. The society where racism is very prevalent therefore, the white 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. 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 the white and black male. In patriarchal society female are explicated and they have to face white domination as well. The title of the novel itself calls attention to the presence of whiteness and how that presence can affect not only a collective group, but also an individual.

*The Bluest Eye* further illustrates the way society has affected to the black women. These minority characters struggle to succeed in society because they are not

white, male, young, heterosexual, Christian, and financially secure. The novel focuses on the Pauline, and Pocola who have been oppressed by race and gender. They are affected by racism and sexism in their childhoods, they later fail to express themselves and become sexist and racist oppressed.

The study shows the condition of black women in the 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.

Toni Morrison works are noted for their insightful treatment of African American issues in which black and white racial conflict and black miserable condition in white society. Her writings portray the black women's tragic experiences in a racist and sexist society and their struggle for survival and wholeness. Her focus is on black women who grow to reside in a larger world and struggle to achieve independent identities beyond male dominion.

Morrison emphasizes on 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 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 victim of race and gender. The research goes along with black female existence in white society where they have to be victim of exploitation. The novel talks about black slavery where female go with racial gender exploitation. Davis Boyas writes:

*The Bluest Eye* is also history, sociology, folklore, nightmare and music. It is one thing to state that we have institutionalized waste that children suffocate under mountains of merchandised lies. It is another thing to demonstrate that waste, to re-create those children, to live and die by it. Miss Morrison's angry sadness overwhelms. (21)

Though the afore-mentioned critics have observed and interpreted the text from different critical perspectives, none of the critics has interpreted it from the perspective of oppression faced by the women, especially the black women. Without a proper study of this text from the perspective of oppression faced by the black female character, it will be incomplete. The present researcher, therefore, tries to bring oppression into light as one of the most dominant aspects in the novel and tries to show how oppression hinders in fulfilling the dream female character in *The Bluest Eye*. The book contributes to the knowledge of the inner life of Southern blacks. While race has been a ground for contention in the treatment of violence, greater victimization has been taking place from time immemorial on the basis of gender. Traditional definitions of sex roles assigned to men and women have been profoundly influenced. In patriarchal culture woman is defined by reference to the body and

sexual reproduction. However, sexual relationships are often problematic for women and give rise to oppression and struggle as they are constrained under patriarchy. As such, 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 the employment of power. Power, which is the source of every person's self-esteem and the root of the conviction that the person is interpersonally significant, is the birthright of every human being. However, in practice, this is never the case. 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:

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:

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.

The researcher intends to read the novel as double domination over black female because of prevalent racism. Racism involves the belief in racial differences.

The term is commonly used negatively and is usually associated with race based prejudice, violence, dislike, discrimination, oppression; the term can also have varying and contested definitions. Race is socially constructed concept that generalizes humankind in major divisions in term of distinctive characteristics.

Therefore, Paul Gilroy says here:

Racism argues that racism is a form of extreme prejudice and is a manifestation of the psychological process of social perception. A prejudice is from of extreme stereotype and a stereotype is an attitude of the one person towards another individual or group. Prejudice is forms of group stereotypes and the formation of group stereotypes is a product of the formation of attitudes. Prejudices are linked to ego defense- the doption of attitude that serves to bolster the self-esteem of the individual holds them. (1)

Racism is generally understood as either belief that different racial group characterize by intrinsic characteristics or abilities and that some such groups are therefore naturally superior to others. Similarly, the charge of ideology again, likes the charge of racism can be directed at symbolic representations that are embodied, not in the consciousness of individuals.

The concept of colour politically represented and presented as discourse in society. Alain De Benoist defines racism as; "It can be a smear designed to disqualify those at whom the term is addressed. To call someone a racist, even if the charge is intellectually dishonest, can be useful tactic tails credibility. Such an approach is commonplace in everyday controversies" (1). He claims that racism is discourse to disqualify those people.

The racial discrimination reinforces racial conflict and racial politics in society. White people have still sense of superiority by taking position in society because of ego-centric feeling of white people. It leads a kind of internal conflict between them. As a result, the inner hostility has existed between black and white people though it is believed that it is no more in the society. All people have felt social equality and no more any racial differences.

Racism is a form of extreme prejudice and is a manifestation of the psychological process of social perception. A prejudice is a form of extreme stereotype which consist an attitude of one person towards another or group. Prejudices are forms of group stereotypes, and the formation of group stereotypes is a product of the formation of attitudes. Prejudices are linked to ego-defences – the adoption of attitudes that serve to bolster the self-esteem of the individual that holds them. The societal beliefs of racism do not pacify the society whereas it provokes racial antagonism because of sense of revenge in both black and white race. Black people have sense of revenge at the same way white people let it continue their age long domination. The continue practices of racism in the society creates disharmonies between black and white race.

Gender is significant in the description of the self. It is the condition of being man and a woman. The term may be mystified with the term sex. In a social context, sex is different from gender. Sex refers to the difference between anatomy and sexual organs. It may also refer to those biological traits with which man and woman are born. Gender refers to the socially constructed concepts of masculinity and femininity as well as the socially accepted relations between man and woman. 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). As Kate Millet discusses the relations between men and women have always been a matter of politics or manipulation of power and the position of women is the result of such as symmetrical power relations. Of all the forms of violence, male violence against women in personal relationships is most overtly condoned and accepted because of the acceptance of this dominant-submissive relationship as normal.

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; "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). Woman's oppression is the social phenomena and it is found in the patriarchal society. It is acknowledged that there is a patriarchal social which has created a discourse for oppressing women.

The patriarchal society creates discourses which make women invulnerable and inferior. Women are oppressed because men and most women too consider women as weak creatures. Basically, both white and black women receive the same oppression because of the image given to them. 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. 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.

In patriarchal social system, for the justification and maintenance of male monopoly of positions of economic, political, and social power, women are made powerless by denying them the educational and occupational means of acquiring economic, political and social power. Therefore, women have occupied the inferior position for a long time. As the women are undermined under the patriarchal restrictions for centuries then they identify themselves as recovered patriarchal women in the sense that they have internalized the norms and values of patriarchy which can be called as culture that privileges man by promoting traditional gender roles. These gender roles have been used very successfully to justify inequalities where women are excluded from equal access to leadership and decision making position. In this way, women have been victim of gender discrimination of patriarchy and male ideology which ultimately cause them to suffer from repression, suppression and mental torture. Sheila Ruth notes:

Masculine is not only the cause of misinterpretations of women's nature, it is also the reflection, the expression of an almost universal abhorrence for women themselves and for a whole set of characteristics historically ascribed to women in western culture," sensitivity, acquiescence, compassion, compromise aesthetic sensibility. These qualities, though officially regarded with respect are actually considered appropriate only in women" (10).

Masculine value system considers women as passive, submissive, intuitive and brainwashed creatures; and accordingly, women's images are distorted by the suppressed ideology of patriarchy. Such distorted images about women are deeply embedded in the society, as a result, women have to face many inequalities and gender discrimination throughout the history. In this sense patriarchal ideology is biased masculine value system which is one-sided and creates false assumptions about women's nature. It is an assumptions designed to dominate women, and it always assigns to them subordinate and peripheral position in the society. In this regard, women for centuries have been mistreated, repressed, deprived and tortured by the males.

This research aims to find out double marginalization of women in Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eyes* in which both race and gender are discussed side by side. The research is divided into three chapters. First chapter is given in introduction along with the some critics view on the text. The second chapter merges both theoretical aspects and textual aspects. In fact, it is main chapter of this research. It explores the textual evidence along with theoretical point. It finds out theoretical aspects through text. It searches those theoretical aspects along with textual evidence. Finally, conclusion is summary of whole work. It gives overview of the entire work.

## **II. Double Marginalization of Female Character in *The Bluest Eye***

The study examines black women's social condition in white dominated society in which black women are under than two layers of domination in Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*. Therefore black women have double domination due to racial discrimination and patriarchal concept in the society. The racial discrimination makes them slave of the white people and patriarchal ideology also victimizes black women. All black women are victimized within house and outside house. Morrison tries to make clear that black women have similar experiences under white patriarchal society. Even women have to be victim of the black male under patriarchal structure. The present study explores the oppression of women in terms of race and gender in the society.

The research studies black women's conditions who are victimized under both racist and patriarchal social structure. They are not free from exploitation in their community and outside the 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 the white and black male. In patriarchal society female are explicated and they have to face white domination as well.

The study shows the condition of black women in the 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.

Black feminism addresses black women experiences in society. It mainly shows how black women are victimized by both race and gender. Black women have double victimization because of racial and gender inferiority. Alice Walker claims; “it is the black woman’s words that have the most meaning for us, her daughters, because she, like us, has experienced life not only as a black person, but as a woman” (275). Walker portrays black women in relation to the influence they suffer from the white ones and from society in their search for their own selves, clearly recognizes the bipartite identity of black women. She, what in general the writers in the African-American literary tradition do, creates special strategies to deal with the American Negro’s double-consciousness, associating the Negro womanish and its conceptual and practical implications. She defines womanish as the way black women draw attention to their racial selfhood, identity and energies, explaining that womanish has to do with the black woman.

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 identity. This social condition reveals a certain inequality in the society that triggers a form of oppression. The issue of race and gender are evil aspect for black female which are causes of the suffering social injustices. 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 novel discusses about both racial and gender domination. The first one is racial domination and second one is gender inequality. Both issues are shown in the novel. The racial domination is equal for men and women but gender domination is for women by both white men and black men. Therefore, black women are victimized by racial and gender domination.

The events in *The Bluest Eye* are not presented chronologically linked by the voices and memories of the narrator. Retrospective narration as an adult contains fragmented suffering and her past lives childhood memories about what happened to Pecola. The representative character Pecola undergoes with stormy past experiences. Being a black and women, her suffering is doubled. She never experiences any more happiness. She indicates that her first suffering starts within home. She explains:

My mother's anger humiliates me; her words chafe my cheeks, and I am crying. I do not know that she is angry at me, but at my sickness. I believe despises my weakness for letting the sickness take bolt. By and by I will not get sick; I will refuse to. But for now I am crying, I know I am making more snot, but I cannot stop. (10)

She explains about her torturous life in her house because of patriarchal social structure. She does not feel comfortable even within house because she finds her family members unsupportive.

The black society is patriarchal therefore; she is harassed by father and brother. The patriarchal tradition exploits her even home. She suffocates after she gets torture by family members. Her voice is not heard before cruelty of the dominant patriarchal power. Pecola experiences it in her life. Her ultimate aim of her life is to be a white girl. She is expected to be loved by others. In this way, she directly experiences and feels suppression, oppression and exploitation of the white and patriarchal society. She realizes:

My sister comes in. Her eyes are full of sorrow. She sings to me: When the deep purple falls over sleepy garden walls, someone thinks of me....I doze thinking of plums, walls and someone. But, was it reality like that? As painful as I remember? Only mildly. Or rather, it was a productive fructifying pain. Love, thick and dark as Alaga syrup, eased up into that cracked window. (10)

It is properly shown in the novel that Pecola is grinded under several societal power. At first, the racial concept hits her therefore all white people despises her from racial perspective. Furthermore, even black people also dominate her because she is a female of the patriarchal society. The society creates a discourse for female and black people therefore under which she has been victim.

The novel projects the American society where black women have been suffocated because of the double domination. Pecola undergoes similar experiences. 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. Pecola feels no attachment and wanders aimlessly in the society.

Black female characters live is dominated by masculine power that deprived them from their true being and identity. She always sees Frieda's life because everyone loves her because she is from white society. Though, being a female character, she does not feel hatred as much as Pecola feels. It is because of the white origin. The following quote explains:

Frieda lowered her head, too pleased to answer, I reached penny disappeared. Or shock was laced with delight. We searched all over him, poking our fingers into his socks, looking up the inside back of his coat. If happiness is anticipation with certainty, we were happy. And while we waited for the coin to reappear, we knew we were amusing Mama and Daddy. Daddy was smiling eyes went soft as they followed our hands wandering over Mr. Henry's body. (14)

White people have powerful social status. It is seen through Frieda's life when she feels joy though she is female of the same society. It presents exploration of the black condition moreover it focuses on women condition who have under the two way domination. At the same time, she also claims that black and white female have different existence though both of them are female. Even black people have to learn how to serve white. The following line explains:

They go to land grant colleges, normal schools, and learn how to do the white man's work with refinements home economics to prepare his food, teacher educational to instruct black children in obedience, music to soothe the wary master and entertain his blunted should. Here they learn the rest of the lesson begun in those soft houses with porch swings and pots of bleeding hear: how to behave. The careful development of thrift patience, high morals and good manners. In short

, how to get rid of the funkiness. The dreadful funkiness of passion, the funkiness of nature, the funkiness of the wide range of human emotion.

(81)

The racial issue also matters in it. Because of the white superiority, black have to be slave in the society. Therefore, Pecola experiences both racial and gender discrimination when she was in school. Similarly, even experiences same in the society too.

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.

Alice Walker discusses about racial injustice and oppression suffered by black women. She reveals an acutely serious theme if we go beyond the controversial layer of the sexual description on the surface, and dig into the core issue regarding black feminism and black women position in the society. It serves as the manifesto of black women's struggle in the highly complicated situation of the post-colonial world. Alice Walker presents her deep observation and analysis of the plight of black women in the postcolonial setting in terms of race issues, gender issues cultural issues. Alice Walker also suggests the possible ways to change the situation of black women, based on her observation and analysis. She utters the strongest voice demanding black women to fight for equality and reconciliation in the real sense. Alice Walker mainly reflects the



cruel living situation and sufferings of the black women of the lowest class in the society. Walker discusses:

Sometimes their violent choices negatively affect other members of the African American community in which these female characters reside; however, it reflects the often racially motivated violence of the world around them. In other words, while the violence may be wasteful or even damaging to individual psyches and broader communities, it is also a reprojection of the white oppression that has been forced on their very souls. By taking the violence forced on them and redirecting it, these characters redefine themselves as compellingly dominant women. (26)

Walker further 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. She further writes:

Realizing their own worth is in question, young black girls attempt to upset white oppression by redefining the limits of their power and powerlessness. Young black girls reacting to the oppressiveness of white dominance or to the stringency of traditional female-behavior expectations counter with physical violence to find strength within what often are positions of weakness. Likewise, other black female children react verbally to withstand the force of ever-present white-societal beauty standards that could otherwise crush their self-identity. (52)

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. 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.

Walker defines a womanish as a black feminist or feminist or 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. To make it clear, she explains:

At times enslaved but always oppressed, these adult women characters are abused frequently by multiple sources: spouses, parents, employers, slave-owners, and community members. Consequently, the women's mistreatment is then redirected toward others—often children—within the family. While painful to absorb, this redirection can also be seen as an additional mothering lesson—an instinctive message teaching black children coping mechanisms within a world that denies and exploits their self-worth. (62)

Walker deals with the female issues like pornography, abortion and rape from blatantly womanish perspectives. Walker's faith in black women's strength and creative powers is further revealed in the story. Thus, Walker demonstrates that black women were free to peruse their selfhood in a society permeated by sexism and racism. She writes:

The violence sometimes verbal, but more frequently physical is often an attempt to create unique solutions to avoid further victimization.

Thus, violence itself becomes an act of rebellion, a form of resistance to oppressive power. The choice of violence often rendered upon those within their own community and family redirects powerlessness and transforms these characters, re-defining them as compellingly dominant women. However, their transformation often has multidimensional repercussions for them and those with whom they have chosen to be violent. (18)

She projects African American women celebrate black culture, tradition and their-gensis 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. It is shown;" Ranging in age from children to adolescents and adults, these female characters choose violence to find an escape—a disruption of the multifaceted oppression they have suffered within a white patriarchal society where black women are tormented and subjugated by social and racial domination" (43).

The White men as well as black man oppress 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. Walker discusses:

Their choices of violence often rendered on those within their own community or family redirects that powerlessness and transforms it.

Wreaking havoc on societal expectations for their behavior and thoughts, these violent actions establish a new vision of African American femininity and femaleness. Black women are not powerless or without options; instead, they can create new patterns and refuse socialized gender and racial identities that attempt to constrain them.

(62)

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. Black feminism raises these issues of victimization and they resist to the bias society. The novel has portrayed the black women bitter experiences.

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.

Black women have to endure the domination in terms of race and gender in the society. Their common experience of black women is oppression in the society. Even if black women have sense of resistance of white, they are unable to fight against severe suppression because of the vulnerable position of them in the society. They cannot be free from the chain of domination. The novel depicts a social structure under which black women are deprived from each and every kind of rights whereas they experience unfair domination and unkindly treatment of white dominated society.

In addition, they are victimized two ways. Even black society women have been victimized from males therefore; black women have been exploited in terms of gender and race. Walker puts her ideas:

Violence and black females naturally embodies two aspects, of race and gender. Violence is without doubt most central to African American experience. The history of blacks in America has invariably been one of victimization and oppression with the interracial violence manifested in whipping, lynching, branding and various other tortures, pogroms, race riots, and the brutality of white police. (17)

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.

All of the characters set down in the patriarchal society where race and gender are prevalent. Pecola works in white man where she gets unfair treatment but she has to face silently because of her lower status. She further reveals:

Every possibility of excess was curtailed with it. If somebody ate too much, he could end up outdoors. If somebody used too much coal, he could end up outdoors. People could gamble themselves outdoors, drink themselves outdoors. Sometimes mothers put their sons outdoors, and when that happened, regardless of what the son had done, all sympathy was with him. He was outdoors an own flesh had done it. To be put outdoors by a landlord was one thing – unfortunate, but an

aspect of life over which you had no control, since you could control your income. (15)

It clearly shows the difference between white woman social position and black woman social position. The same woman character Pecola is more contracted in the society where as Maureen from white society feels comparatively more freedom. However both of these women characters are not free from domination of the patriarchal society. But, white women have comparatively free only because of the racial discrimination.

Therefore, the perspective as double domination is one of the studies of the novel. Among many critics, Erin Miller reads the novel as an 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. The difference between black and white is explained here:

Being a minority in both caste and class, we moved about anyway on the hem of life, struggling to consolidate our weakness and hand on or

to creep singly up into the major folds of the garment. Our peripheral existence, however, was something we had learned to deal with—probably because it was abstract. (15)

The society treats for black and white differently. Because of the social way of thinking as well as treating them creates discrimination on the basis of race. 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.

Pecola becomes a victim of the white society. She is only eleven years old however she gets pain and suffering. Black women are extremely exploited in both outside and inside the society. Moreover, black women are victimized from double domination in the society. The adverse effects of racism affect them.

Pecola is a black girl therefore; she has to suffer from both racial and patriarchal domination. She is not free from chain of exploitation. Because of her blackness, she is poor as well. This description shows her poverty; "dirty torn dress, the plaits sticking out on her head, hair matted where the plaits had some undone, the muddy shoes with the wad of gum peeping out from between the cheap soles, the soiled socks, one of which had been walked down into the heel of the shoe" (89).

Race is a prior thing in American society for social discrimination. On the basis of color, black people have to face social injustices. Pecola has known it since she wants to have life like Maureen. It is her inner desires for having the bluest eyes. Being a black, it is impossible to get social justices in the society. The novel explains:

Black people spend all their energies, all their love, on their nests, like frenzied, desperate birds, they over decorated everything; fussed and fidgeted over their hard-won homes; canned, jellied, and preserved all summer to fill the cupboards and shelves; they painted, picked, and

poked at every corner of their houses. And these houses looked like hot house sunflowers among the rows of weeds that were rented houses. Renting blacks cast furtive glances at these owned yards and porches, and made firmer commitments to buy themselves. (16)

The above explanation shows a black condition in American society. The racial stigma causes their suffering. The black color dehumanizes them because of it they have to be excluded in the society. Pecola's father Cholly is explained that he faced challenges in the society because of the color complex. The novel explains; "Cholly Breedlove, then a renting black, having put his family outdoors, had catapulted himself beyond the reaches of human consideration" (16). It depicts the suffering of black either male or female whereas there is deeper discrimination in patriarchal society for female.

The black women have both racial and patriarchal exploitation. This is social practices therefore black women are victim of the society. It is discussed in the novel:

The Breedloves did not live in a storefront because they were having temporary difficulty adjusting to the cutbacks at the plant. They lived there because they were poor and black, and they stayed there because they believed they were ugly. Although their poverty was traditional and stultifying, it was not unique. But their ugliness was unique. No one could have convinced them that they were not relentlessly and aggressively ugly. (30)

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 females have sense of resistance however, the social structure does not come out. 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. 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 Pecola 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. Morrison explores a past white and black conflict in the America where and when slavery was prevalent. The novel presents a Pecola is central character who represents a suffering of black woman in the American society.

Morrison projects social evil associated with race and gender. Regarding it, the black are exploited by giving them disgusting jobs in the society. Moreover, females have been source of pleasure for males. Pecola lives in an old and worn house where a prostitute house is. As many women are exploited inside the house. Such condition of the social justice provides an unsafe place for women.

Claudia and she tell us that she and Frieda learned from gossip that Pecola was pregnant by her father. She remembers the mix of emotions she felt for Pecola; shame, embarrassment, and finally sorrow. It is shown here:

They were old enough to be irritable when and where they chose, tired enough to look forward to death, disinterested enough to accept the idea of pain while ignoring the presence of pain. They were in fact and at last, free. And the lives of these old black women were synthesized in their eyes a puree of tragedy and humor, wickedness and serenity, truth and fantasy. (137)

She can no longer go to school, so she wraps herself in a cloak of madness. Claudia says that she remembers seeing Pecola after the baby was born prematurely and died. Pecola's brother, Sammy, left town, and Cholly died in a workhouse. Pauline still continues housework for white folks. She and Pecola live in a little brown house on the edge of town.

Even male characters are victims of the racist society whereas women have double oppression because of race and gender. In this regard, the novel accounts for suppression, oppression and exploitation of black and black women. Cholly has been a victim of racism and emotional abuse since his childhood; it makes him someone who cannot show love or express his feelings. He suffers from racism when he is caught having sex with his friend Darlene. Two white men catch her in the act and

scream; "Get on with it, nigger. An' make it good, nigger, make it good" (148). He in turn responds to their command and rapes Darlene. He expresses his anger by raping Darlene and hating her for what happened because she created the situation. It would have been rare for any African American to speak out against a white male.

More importantly, the novel exposes women suffering because of the racial society and patriarchal family structure. White people take black inferior therefore; white community exploits and uses them. Likewise, even black males also exploit them. Consequently, black women are victimized by two ways. One of the main reasons of women suffering in the black society is to symbolize of the white anger. Black males have dominating position who have to undergo with unfair treatment therefore, it also help them to misbehave to their female family members and even in the society as well. Feminist Lorde expects Cholly first to realize the harm he is causing and then make an effort to treat his family better emotionally and physically.

If oppression and racism never stop, then anger will only persist, causing rape to continue. Cholly's daughter Pecola is also a victim of the racist society in which she lives. It is explained here:

Everybody in the world was in a position to give them orders. White children said, Give me that. White men said, come here. Black men said, Lay down. The only people they need not take orders from were black children and each other. But they took all of that and recreated it in their own images. They ran the houses of white people, and knew it. When white men beat their men, they cleaned up the blood and went home to receive abuse from the victim. (136)

Patriarchy oppresses and suppresses the female characters especially Pecola and Pauline who live a very difficult and miserable life. Their identity and freedom

comes under crisis. The society is racially and sexually biased. Therefore, Pecola like slaves have suffering in 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 Pecola are under the same experiences where they have to live very coercive suffering from white domination. Therefore, Pecola 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.

The hatred would not let him pick her up, the tenderness forced him to cover her. So when the child regained consciousness, she was lying on the kitchen floor under a heavy quit, trying to connect the pain between her legs with the face of her mother looming over her. (161)

Throughout the interaction of race and gender, female bonding is at risk because gender suffers from the influence of the first elements. All the female characters in the novel are very much explicated therefore they have sense of unity against white male dominated society. When Pecola is going to sell then all slaves raise their voices.

Pecola is both a victim and an oppressor of sexism. Pecola speaks to an unknown character at the end of the novel, who tells her that, her eyes, “are the

prettiest I've ever seen, and bluer too" (201). Unable to be satisfied even after she has blue eyes, Pecola becomes paranoid that her eyes.

The American society is enmeshed with racism therefore Afro-American people face hardship for living in the society. 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 discusses about the black women suffering by showing causes of sufferings. 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 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.

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 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.

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. 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. 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. She makes clear about violence of black women:

Violence is exertion of force so as to deal injury or abuse. It entails inflicting physical, material, emotional, sexual, and intellectual damage. It can be the exercise of force or constraint, perpetrated by individuals on their own behalf, or for a collective or state-sanctioned purpose. In its most obvious form violence is physical which includes battering, assault, murder, and rape. Though violence is largely physical, it occurs in a psychological context and invariably produces mental and spiritual anguish. Isolation, deprivation, imprisonment, and badgering are also factors that cause great agony. (69)

Walker 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. 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.



### **III. Black Females' Experience in Morrison's *The Bluest Eye***

Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* projects a representative black woman, Pecola who is oppressed in society. Race is prevalent social evil which causes discrimination between the black and the white. Pecola belongs to the black community therefore she has to be victim of white. Being a black racial identity, she has to suffer partial behaviors in society where black color is mistreated and misbehaved. A black woman is always bitten by social discrimination. Pecola feels a different experience outside the society where she does not have torture free life because she has to endure whites' insult, harassment, and violence. Her physical color is racial identity and cause to be discrimination.

As Pecola experiences sense of inferiority outside her home, she has to be victim of males inside her home. Even black community is responsible for patriarchal discrimination. She undergoes domestic violence, torture and sexual attack even her house. The patriarchal society does not understand her feelings, wants and desires but makes her sexual object to fulfill males sexual desires. She is not free from exploitation of patriarchal society.

Her identity black and female infers double domination that race is one cause of her suffering and female is vulnerability. The novel depicts the American society in which black women are suppressed and oppressed by the racial and patriarchal notion of society. The novel explains the black women experiences in American society. The social structure creates black women's suffering.

Toni Morrison exposes women are not merely as victim of the patriarchal society, but also victim of racism. *The Bluest Eye* reveals that black women are exploited under the American society. Black women are not free from exploitation in terms of the racial and gender biasness.

Morrison projects Pecola as a representative character of the novel who is victimized by both the racial and patriarchal society. She is victimized by whites in the society and victimized by male inside house. Black women have social condition has to be victim because of social concept. Pecola is frequently attacked by white for sexual motive and she feels helpless and hopeless when no one resists against attack. Likewise, she is raped by her father. She does not feel safe under the society therefore; she has to accept such unfair treatment.

Morrison uses her characters as examples of them who are affected by both race and gender discrimination. She tries to project an actual problem of marginalization of black women in the American society and portrays their double discrimination. Race is one of the stigmas for discrimination which enables them to make difference with black in society. At the same time, patriarchal society allows to male to dominate female. The research intends to show black women have repressive lives because of the race and gender. Black women have to be scapegoat in terms of race and patriarchy.

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