

## Chapter One

### 1.1. Obama as a Writer

Barack Hussein Obama, a black writer born in 4 August 1961 at Honolulu, Hawaii, USA, is originally from Kenya, the country of dark Continent. He was elected as the 44<sup>th</sup> president of the United States on 4 November 2008. He has swept away the last barrier in American politics with ease as the country has chosen him as its first black chief executive. Voters came out in record numbers of Election Day about 130 to 140 million people exercised their franchise.

The very presidential election and its consequences have shown the right path into American politics. The victory of Obama is a message for the whole world too. Formerly slave black peoples' involvement in national politics and their integration in mainstream is the very noteworthy watershed in the direction of equality. It was just as much as strikingly symbolic moments in the evolution of the nation's fraught racial history. The victory of Obama is a breakthrough that world has seemed unthinkable just two years ago. The recent reputation of Barack Obama has counted with the prize of Nobel Peace Prize which has made him an international hero.

He is president in terms of his political career and he is also a well-known writer too. His writings are characterized by his personal feelings and personal dilemma. Being the black writer in USA, his whole life is full of dilemmas. He always wants to search his way to be out from those dilemmas. To find the ways to be out he follows the writings as a medium.

*Dreams From My Father: A Story of Race and Inheritance* (1995) and *The Audacity of Hope: Thoughts on Reclaiming The American Dreams* (2004) are two famous books by Obama. *The Audacity of Hope* is the 2<sup>nd</sup> book written by Obama. It was the number three best seller on the

*New York Times* of October 2006. The book is counted as a nonfiction. Somehow his books deal with the pure politics of America. In *Audacity of Hope* Obama writes:

A government that truly represents these Americans that truly serves these Americans will require a different kind of politics. That politics will need to reflect our lives as they are actually lived. It should be prepackaged, ready to pull of the self. It will have to be constructed from the best of our traditions and will have to account for the darker aspects of our past we will need to understand just how we got to this place, this warring factions and tribal hatreds. And we'll need to remind ourselves, despite all our differences, just how much we share: common hopes, common dreams a bond that will not break. (75)

In *Audacity of Hope*, Obama calls for a different brand of politics for those weary of bitter partnership and alienated by the endless clash of armies. In this book Obama has expressed hopes of equality in the mainstream culture as well as politics. He has a fear of disparity within the hope. At the heart of the book *The Audacity of Hope*, Obama expresses his vision of how Americans can move beyond their division to tackle concrete problems. He examines the growing economic insecurity of American families, the racial and religious tensions within the body politics. The very inherent racism has heightened Obama's vision that is to say he calls every American to come over and unite to fight against the world burning problem known as terrorism. He further grapples with the role that faith plays in a democracy. He is in search of connection of all Americans where there is no racial discrimination and hopeful political consensus.

The book *Audacity of Hope* depicts Obama's hope in national and international politics as well, he says, "It is a book written about of transforming power only by returning to the principles that gave birth to our constitution" (87). When we read it time and again we can see

his worries about whether American can repair a political process that is broken and restore to working. *Dreams From My Father: A Story of Race and Inheritance* (1995) is a memoir. The book is memoir in surface level but in underlying level the book has a quest for identity and it has succeeded significantly to raise about racial barriers. Furthermore the book concentrates on African American identity, racially mixed people in America, race relation and racism. *Dreams From My Father* is also a book of dilemmas. Writer has a sort of journey to come out from those worries and dilemmas. The book is written in a classical memoir style. He has used such style because he says in the preface of the book, "race is a classified by people thus if I have to come out from it I must follow classicism"(2). The book was written after his graduation from Harvard Law School where he had been the first black editor of the *Harvard Law Review*. The book recounts Obama's journey from happy, raceless boy running bare foot through the muddy black streets of Jakarta of perplexed adolescent student in Honolulu, Los Angeles and New York.

Obama's writing is characterized by a graceful eloquence, a generosity of perception and spirits in young man of gifts and charisma. He admits that most of related conversations are related to the present American political matter. His writings are influenced by many black and white writers like Shakespeare, Toni Morrison and Ralph Waldo Emerson. It is said, "Richards Wright and Langston Hughes writings are much influential as well as Obama has read most of their writings which impresses him and some characteristics can be found in his book like the ethos of racial segregation and mainly the search for identity in white world." ( Ellis 12)

Nine years before the senate campaign that made him one of the most influential and compelling voices in American politics, Barack Obama published *Dreams From My Father* powerfully affecting memoir, which became *New York Times* bestseller when it was reissued in 2004. *Dreams From My Father* tells the story of Obama's struggle to understand the forces

that shaped him as a son of a black African father and white American mother and a struggle that takes him from the American heartland to the ancestral home of his great aunt in the tiny African village of Alego. Obama opens his story in New York, where he hears that his father, "a figure he [Obama] knows more as a myth than as a man has died in a car accident" (19).

The news triggers a chain of memories as Barack retraces his family's unusual history: the migration of his mother's family from small-town Kansas to the Hawaiian island; the love that develops between his mother and a promising young Kenyan student, a love nurtured by youthful innocence and the integrationist spirit of the early sixties; his father's departure from Hawaii when Barack was two, as the realities of race and power reassert themselves; and Barack's own awakening to the fears and doubts that exist not just between the larger black and white worlds but within himself.

Propelled by a desire to understand both the forces that shaped him and his father's legacy, Barack moves to Chicago to work as a community organizer. There, against the backdrop of tumultuous political and racial conflict, he works to turn back the mounting despair of the inner city. His story becomes one with those of the people he works with as he learns about the value of community, the necessity of healing old wounds, and the possibility of faith in the midst of adversity.

Barack's journey comes full circle in Kenya. Arnold Goldman writes in his article "A Remnant to Escape: The American Writer and the Minority Group" published in the book *American Literature Since 1900*;

In Kenya where he finally meets the African side of his family and confronts the bitter truth of his father's life. Travelling through a country racked by brutal poverty and tribal conflict, but whose people are sustained by a spirit of endurance and hope, Barack discovers that he is inescapably bound to brothers and sisters

living an ocean away- and that by embracing their common struggles he can finally reconcile his divided inheritance. (7)

*Dreams From My Father* might be the most revealing portrait of a reaching meditation on the meaning of identity in America. The vivid portrait of quest is highlighted in book . His quest is a history of his black father, critic Arnold Goldman writes in his review of *Dreams From My Father*, included in article “A Remnant to Escape: The American Writer and the Minority Group” published in the book *American Literature Since 1900*;

Barack Obama has somehow managed to live an uncommonly interesting life, and writes about it frankly and well, his account moves from Kansas to Hawaii to Kenya, with an emphasis on the father who died when Mr. Obama was very young. If he could rewrite it now, he would break the mold of most memoir, where his father and identity will play the vital role. (12)

Obama argues with himself in *Dreams From My Father* on almost every page of this lively autobiographical conversation. He gets reader to agree with him, and then he brings in a counter narrative that seems just as convincing. Son of a white American mother and of a black Kenyan father whom he never knew, Obama grew up mainly in Hawaii. After college, he worked for three years as a community organizer on Chicago's South Side. Then, finally, he went to Kenya, to find the world of his dead father, his authentic self. Obama in his book *Dreams From My Father* asks, "Will there the truth set you free? or will it disappoint ?" (21). Here, it seems that Obama is in search of himself as a black American rooted in the particulars of his daily life; it reads like a commentary about all of us. He discovers that "Kenya has 400 tribes" (23), each of them with stereotypes of the others. Obama is candid about racism, poverty and corruption, in Chicago and Kenya. Yet he does find community and authenticity, not in any romantic cliché, but with "honest, decent men and women who have

attainable ambitions and the determination to see them throughout the spot light of equality" (24).

While *Dreams From my Father* traces Obama's path through many exotic and foreign locales, the most touching chapters are set in the inner city neighborhoods of Chicago a location that is sadly about as foreign to many Americans as the countries Obama describes. Barack joined Chicago as a community organizer and tried his best to galvanize the communities into instruments for change. Successes were few and far between. Obama describes the huge inner city projects Altgeld Gardens and others with heartbreaking clarity. In one of many memorable scenes, he interacts with two women who kept an album full of clippings from *Better Homes and Gardens*. "They pointed to the bright white kitchens and hardwood floors, and told me they would have such a home one day" (25). Eventually Obama left to study law at Harvard but returned to set up practice in Chicago—the one city that gave him a sense of community that he sorely lacked growing up.

Just before he joined law school, Obama traveled to Kenya for the first time to find out more about a father that remained an enigmatic presence in his life. "At the time of his death, my father remained a myth to me, both more and less than a man (25)," Obama writes. Here too Obama's journey to discover his roots is described beautifully "No one here in Kenya would ask how to spell my name, or mangle it with an unfamiliar tongue. My name belonged and so I belonged, drawn into a web of relationships, alliances, and grudges that I did not yet understand" (27). Barack Obama's ample intelligence and grace shine through in his moving memoir. *Dreams From My Father* is an extremely inspiring read. During a recent interview with Jon Stewart, Obama said he understood that people wanted to "check him out, look under the hood, kick the tires make sure he's sincere and honest" (28). This memoir certainly gives the reader a precise look into the special mix of circumstances that shaped the young politician.

The book *Dreams From My Father* was originally intended a very different book. The opportunity to write it first arose while he was still in law school, after his election as the first black president of the *Harvard Law Review*, a legal periodical largely unknown outside the profession. A boost of publicity followed that election including several news paper articles that testified less to his modest accomplishments than to Harvard Law School peculiar place in America. In last year of law school, he began to organize in his mind, with a frightening confidence, just how the book would proceed. There would be an early on the limits of civil rights. His deep thoughts arised in his mind taken place as a shape of book which later on becomes the book of race and inheritance. It is impossible to read Barack Obama's book *Dreams from My Father* without thinking about the fact of his presidency the entire way through. Everything takes on a different meaning knowing that one big event is on the way, eventually. The uncertainties about his future he describes we now know are unwarranted, everything is going to work out. But other kinds of uncertainties, about his identity, about what it means to be biracial, about how to address racial conflict in America, about how to respond to white and black people both — these uncertainties take on a new meaning, since the person who felt so much doubt and experienced so much conflict is now president and in a position where he has to locate himself as a national man that is why he may not speak about his feelings with the same honesty. There is a degree of self-awareness and honesty in the book that no American president could get away with expressing while in office. The book is framed as a quest — Obama's quest to find himself, ultimately, which means an attempt to come to terms with an absent father and to find a place or a way of being or a state of mind he can call home.

*Dreams from My Father* has three sections, the first one describing his childhood up through his college years, the second part describing his years in Chicago as a community organizer, and the third part telling about his trip to Kenya to meet his father's family. In each

of these sections, he is searching for clues as to find his identity. Obama tells of his introduction to racism, what is uneasy response to the other black students around him, his rebellion and anger that stem from his self-doubts, and his search for an identity that will help him cope with so much uncertainty. When Obama gets to Chicago, tells of the poverty and hopelessness. Obama sees around him and of his struggles to figure out the best way to make some kind of lasting change — a monumental task. And when Obama gets to Kenya, tells about his initial relief at being in a place where blackness is the norm and his disappointment. Obama finds a resolution of sorts which seems a partial acknowledgement of his quest.



## **Chapter Two: Race, Racism and Racial Discrimination**

### **2.1. Introduction**

Race refers to a socially constructed concept that divides human kind into major division in terms of distinctive characteristics; " In its original use, race itself referred to origins in common stock. This could be family, religion or nation, but it applied equally to plant and animal life" (Gerzina 129). Generally, categorization of a group of race resulted from the biological basis. In this sense, hereditary transmission of physical characteristics became the authentic base for the definition of race. Thus, genetically a race may be defined as a group with gene frequencies differing from those of the other groups in the human species. But even hereditary differences turn out to be quite minimum when it is compared to a vast number of genes common to all human beings regardless of the race to which they belong. Bill Ashcroft defines race as:

A term for the classification of human beings into physically, biologically and genetically distinct groups. The notion of race assumes, firstly, that humanity is divided into unchanging natural types, recognizable by physical features that are transmitted 'through the blood' and permit distinctions to be made between 'pure' and 'mixed' races. (198 )

The usage of the category of race to classify various types of human beings is relatively recent, and indeed that the widespread usage of the language of race is a phenomenon of the post Enlightenment period. A clear statement of this periodization is provided by George Mosse. He writes:

Racism has its foundations both in the Enlightenment and in the religious revival of the eighteenth century. It was a product of the preoccupation with a

rational universe, nature and aesthetics, as well as with the emphasis upon the eternal force of religious emotion and man's upon the eternal force of religious emotion and man's soul. It was part, too, of the drive to define man's place in nature and of the hope for an ordered, healthy, and happy world. (41)

Whatever the long-term history of images of the "other" in various societies and historical periods it does seem clear that only in the late eighteenth century and early nineteenth century does the term 'race' come to refer to supposedly discrete categories of people defined according to their physical characteristics. This is, of course, not to say that the category of race was not used in earlier times.

We have found some traces of the usage of the term "race" in some of the earliest European languages. In the earliest human writings:

We can find more or less well articulated views about the differences between 'our own kind' and the people of other cultures. These doctrines, like modern theories of race, have often placed a central emphasis on physical appearance in defining the 'other' and on common ancestry in explaining why groups of people display differences in their attributes and aptitudes. (Appiah 274)

The study and practice of race was also prevalent in the writing of the classical Greek and ancient, Hebrew societies. They distinguished themselves with "others" on the basis of appearances, customs, traditions, language, attitude, religion, physical surrounding or location. During the 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C., the Greek writer Hypocrites tried to establish the superiority of the people of his own race arguing that "barren soils of Greece had forced the Greek to become tougher and more independent" (Appiah 275). In the Hellenic world, the black "Ethiopians" and blonde "Scythians" were regarded inferior to the Greeks. But, in the writing of pre-Socratic sophists and Homer, racial characteristics was defined on the basis of an individual quality of a person instead of colour.

The discovery of New World i.e., America by Christopher Columbus brought lots of changes in the perception of the people of the new land; "This accident of the history of the perception of human differences produced the race concept as it is now generally held" (Brace 116). During the Elizabethan period, negro was defined as "black, ugly, cruel, sexual, rampant and barely human" (Gerzina 15). In the Victorian era many racialists were of the opinion that:

We could divide human beings into smaller number of groups, called 'races', in such a way that all the member of these races shared certain fundamental, biologically heritable, moral and intellectual characteristics with each other that they did not share with members of any other race. (Appiah 276)

It is certainly from the eighteenth century that we can trace the flowering in a number of European societies of writings about race, and the emergence of what we now call racism. During the eighteenth and nineteenth century lots of social, economic, intellectual and political change took place in the global scenario. The growth of invasions, conquests and migrations gave birth to a heterogeneous world population. The term "race" became much more poignant during the colonial period when the people of different places came into contact with each other. The division of human society in the name of race is inextricable from the need of colonialist powers to establish a dominance over subject people, and hence justify the imperial enterprise. It provides impetus to draw a binary distinction between "civilized" and "primitive" and the same necessity for the hierarchization of human types. It quickly became one of imperialism's most supportive ideas to fulfill their imperial mission: dominance and enlightenment. Thus, the study of racial doctrines and ideologies took new mode during post-enlightenment-period and reached its high point during the nineteenth and early twentieth century's and it was defined according to the idea that "races embodied a package of fixed physical and mental traits" (Bulmer and Solomos 8).

The twentieth century has brought a significant, change in the theoretical attitude to race. The 1911 Universal Races Congress Organized in London demonstrated liberal thought and focused on 'monogenism' the idea that there is only one species of man living on earth today. Modern scientists, according to Kwame Anthony Appiah, "believe that such classification as Negro, Caucasian, and Mongoloid are of no importance for biological purposes" (277). Modern science does not believe in racial difference. The 1951 UNESCO statement of the Nature of Race and Racial Difference pointed out that:

Race, even from a strict biological standpoint, could *at most* refer to a group with certain distinctive gene concentrations. The statement asserts that mental characteristics should never be included in such classifications and that environment is far more important than inherited genetic factors in shaping behavior. (Ashcroft et. al 204)

However, in the 1960s, there was a sudden rise in biological thinking about human behavior. The writers such as Lorenz, Morris and Andry asserted that " personal behavior was chiefly controlled by ancient instincts that could be modified and culture. This gave the way for a sudden increase in race thinking in popular science" ( qtd. in Gerzina 250). The continuing debates about the origins, evolution, and consequences of ideas about race show no sign of disappearing. On the contrary, a new wave of scholarship has started to explore the same broad terrain as earlier generations of scholars, albeit within new terms of discourse.

Race is the mental concept that divides the human beings into categorizes where as racism is an ideology of racial domination based on beliefs which is designed culturally and biologically. Race and racism are correlated ideas, race is concept where is racism is mind set which intensifies the race. Race and racism overlap with each other. Racism is a social position too, race is created atmosphere where as racism takes its birth in the lap of race.

## **2.2. Racism and its Politico-Cultural Implications**

Racism is an ideology of racial domination based on beliefs that a designated racial group is either biologically or culturally inferior and the use of such beliefs to rationalize or prescribe the racial group's treatment in society, as well as to explain its social position and accomplishment. Bill Ashcroft defines it as, "a way of thinking that considers a group's unchangeable physical characteristics to be linked in a direct, causal way to psychological or intellectual characteristics, and which on this basis distinguishes between 'superior' and 'inferior' racial groups" (199). In short, it is a belief system or a set of implicit assumption about the superiority of one's own race or ethnic group other than that of one's own. Thus, it is a discrimination made by a group of people on the of basis of race, colour, religion or culture and the discrimination itself is the product of prejudice and stereotypical mode of thoughts or assumptions that "attempts to classify humanity according to the idea that 'races ' embodied a package of diced physical and mental traits" (Bulmer and Solomos 8).

Racism is a broader term which encompasses the elements of history, culture and ethnicity. It involves the superiority of one group, ethnicity or its cultural practices over the other because the entitled inferior group lacks the set of criteria as prescribed by the privileged group. In course of social dealings, racism exists both in conscious and unconscious level. Forming an instant fixed idea of a group and to associate the genetic traits to social characteristics is a false notion, usually based on false or incomplete information. Therefore, Gerzina has rightly said that "racism at individual level involves a misguided personal belief that an entire racial group is deficient or superior because of a set of moral, intellectual, or a cultural traits that are thought to be indicated by the group's biological origin" (126).

Racism as a concept is much more closely tied to race, a concept confused with ethnicity and culture. Race refers to social groups which differ in terms of physical attributes accorded social significance. Ethnicity on the other hand, is a classification which is based in

terms of language, culture, place of origin, or common membership of a descent group without distinguishing physical characteristics. Whereas, culture is a broader category that extends beyond race and ethnicity to include any group of people who share common lifestyle, which are passed on to members of the particular group, e.g., socio-economic status, sexual orientation, geographic location.

Racism basically has two forms: individual racism and institutional racism. Racism at individual level includes, an individual's belief that an entire racial group is inferior or superior on the basis of physical features linked with intellectual and moral characteristics. If these personal characteristics get connected with cultural institutions like religion, education and military institutions in order to exclude or include not a person but also an entire group, it takes the form of institutionalized racism. Idea of indoctrination, i.e., Afro-Americans are inferior and the discrimination or the feeling of superiority over "the other" on the basis of colour and shape of skin, eye, hair, lips etc. are the dominant tendency of racism. When an Afro-American family moves into a home in the white neighborhood and is stoned, burned or routed out, they are the victims of the act of individual racism. But when hundreds of babies die each year because of lack of proper food, shelter and medical facilities and thousands more are destroyed and maimed physically, emotionally and intellectually because of poverty and discrimination in the Afro-American community, they are the victims of the act of institutional racism. Racism, after all, begins at personal level. This individual racism takes the form of institutional racism which ultimately culminates into the cultural racism. A National Council of Churches work group has summarized this institutionalized racism as:

Both consciously and unconsciously, racism is enforced and maintained by the legal, cultural, religious, educational, economic, political, environmental and military institutions of societies. Racism is more than just a personal attitude; it is the institutionalized form of that attitude. (qtd. in Feagin and Sikes 3)

In the context of the resistance and riots of the 1960s, Carmichael and Hamilton published *Black Power* (1968) which presented what became an influential political analysis and strategy. They define racism as "the prediction of decisions and policies on considerations of race for the purpose of *subordinating* a racial group and maintaining control over that group" (qtd. in Miles 352). They distinguish between overt and individual racism on the one hand and covert and institutional racism on the other. The former is defined as explicit actions by individuals and the latter as those actions and inactions which maintain 'black' people in a disadvantaged situation and which rely on "the active and pervasive operation of anti-black attitudes and practices" (qtd. in Miles 352). Thus, the concept of racism is expanded in the meaning to include not only beliefs but, more important, all actions, individual and institutional, which had the consequence of sustaining or increasing the subordination of 'black' people.

The concept of "Negro race" as inferior and European civilization as superior is based on the belief that 'Negroes' lack certain qualities such as lack of good social organization and social actions, lack of fellow feeling, lack of originality of thought, and lack of artistic qualities especially "deficient on the side of mechanical arts", and in general, "show [ing] no tendency toward higher development" (Gilroy 3). Both in the past and at present, Afro-Americans are discriminated and declared as an inferior race on the basis of colour. Ever since the pre-Christian era to the present the very black colour is associated with ugliness, despair, evil and death, whereas, the whiteness is associated with beauty, goodness, virtue and innocence. The white racists try their best to dehumanize Afro-American by labeling them as a link between monkeys and men, i.e., white people and their approval goes something like the notion of New Testament that "we are the chosen people look at the colour of our skins. The others are black or yellow: that is because of their sins" (Fanon 30). "Racist assumptions of white superiority have been so deeply engrained into the fiber of the society that they

infuse the entire functioning of the national subconscious ..." (Carmichael and Hamilton 31). Thus, racism is ubiquitous and it informs every level of discourse in our society.

In America racism is analyzed for political purpose so that it would be easy to rule over the oppressed groups. C.Loring Brace in his article "Race" argues, "The truth is that though waged with scientific weapons, the goal in this has always been political, indeed the debate has no strictly scientific purpose or value" (380). Thus, making science as an authority to propound and perpetuate the existing racial prejudices, scientists modified the subject matter to suit their agenda. It is the strategy to rule over the Afro-American by silencing their voices. Therefore, the study of racism in twentieth century is the study of political racism because genetic difference between the Afro-American and white is studied under the scientific criteria giving the political colour. Brace further says:

The question of genetic difference between races has arisen not out of purely scientific curiosity or the desire to find some important scientific truth or to solve some significant scientific problem but only because of the belief, explicit or unstated that the answer has political consequences. (382)

Likewise, they also taught that the Afro-American is less human because he has "an oval skull, flat forehead, snout-like jaws, swollen lips, board, flat feet" (Ellis 13). Thus, exaggerating the deformities as set by the white standard, they tried to give permanence and stability to the false doctrine of natural Afro-American inferiority.

The experience of the Second World War and the knowledge of the consequences of Hitler's 'final solution to the 'Jewish question' led to new initiatives after 1945 to try to prevent the discourse of 'race' from being used for similar political purpose in the future. The most significant is undertaken by UNESCO in 1950s. The fourth UNESCO statement defines racism as a falsification of the scientific knowledge about human biology: "Racism falsely



claims that there is a scientific basis for arranging group hierarchically in terms of psychological and cultural characteristics that are immutable and innate" (qtd. in Miles 348). Thus, this statement on race, took the lead in arguing that biologists should abandon the race concept in dealing with human variation because the assumptions embedded in common social usage made it unsuitable for scientific discourse.

Racism takes new shape due to interference of different social, political and cultural institution in course of time and instead of following a notion of singularity, it encompasses diverse scholarly ideas which has been shaped and determined by several power politics. The contemporary form of racism is defined in terms of culture and identity which is shaped by the discourses like nationalism or patriotism, xenophobia, gender differences etc. The social and political upheaval of the '60 and '70s paved way to the post modern liberal and multicultural society. The traditional mode of racism has been replaced by 'new racism'. New racism sees the race not as biological issue or heredity but as culture product. At the surface level, it doesn't believe in the superiority of one race of people over the others but 'only' harmfulness of abolishing frontiers. But its main ethos is to segregate the other than the people of one's own race; "The new racism is primarily concerned with the mechanism of exclusion or inclusion" (Gilroy 250). It has not diminished the gap between the meanings used in the past centuries to the present century. Thus, "Racist ideologies and practice have distinct meanings bounded by historical circumstances and determined in struggle" (Gilroy 248).

### **2.3 Racism in American Society**

The history of America began with the grabbing of the land from Native Americans and enforcing the Afro-Americans to cultivate the land. It consequently created hierarchies in colour and division of land. The whites established a system of privilege in terms of oppression and exploitation. American geographical and cultural space has provided limitless

potential to the whites since its settlement, but the Afro-Americans have been denied such spaces. Their African heritage and later the southernness are repudiated by the larger culture. Over the different historical events-slavery, emancipation, migration and integration, they tried to negotiate their relationship with their cultural traditions. But white race and its cultural heritage consistently marginalized them. Therefore, it is not hyperbolic to state that American history itself is a practice of racism. Thus, the American society was clearly based on exploitation. Previously rich white people and later on the whites in general excessively exploited Indians and especially Afro-Americans and marginalized them. Harris and Ordonez say:

The social division along the color line crossed class, nationality, language, and religious barriers. The simple fact of whiteness meant the overall life, fortune, and destiny of white people . . . white people were exempt from slavery, land grab, and genocide the first from of white privilege. White enjoyed wide latitude of opportunities, personal freedom, and democratic rights protected by state. Even through poor American-born and immigrant whites were viciously exploited by rich white people, they were not on the bottom. The bottom was reserved for Indians, black, and other people of color.

(27-28)

The African American lived in a state of constant humiliation. His dignity as an individual was not admitted and he got no respect from the white and even non-white people of the world. The African American was segregated from school, was deprived of public facilities and had to suffer excessive police brutality. The African American's true identity was only that of a wage earner and professional man in American society. African Americans were never privileged for more skilled jobs. Rather they continued to be concentrated on the less skilled jobs and most of them remained unemployed. They were living with both socially and

economically depressed status. It is due to the discrimination against them in training and employment opportunities offered by the armed services, discrimination against them in vocational and academic training, discrimination against them in referral services rendered by state employment services, the African Americans were forced to live under the depressed status. Moreover, the African American students had been denied admission to the white school. Even if given admission, the student was not given equal treatment; he was required to sit at a separate table in the library and had a specific seat in the classroom.

The racial segregation is started from the time the Africans were first brought to America, the social body and mind of the white race had been acting against the Afro-American. It was believed that many Afro-Americans were poor, uneducated and deficient in health, morals, and manners and thus, were not very agreeable as social companions. It was also pointed out that Afro-Americans were different in physical appearance even if they had the same basic mental capacity and moral propensities. Beside these beliefs centering on Afro-American inferiority, there are a great number of other popular thoughts arranged to justify social segregation, the thought that Afro-Americans liked to be separated, that they were happy in their humble status and would not like to be treated as equals. Another idea with the same function is that the separation was necessary in order to prevent friction between the two groups.

Whenever one talks about racism and its practices in the United States of America, civil war takes forefront position in such discussion. Both the south and northern regions appear as the dominant playground of racial discrimination. Regional economic differences helped bring about the outbreak of the civil war in 1861. In the south, enslaved African Americans provided the labour needed for an agricultural economy based on raising and selling cotton. In the north, free people both white and Afro-American worked for wages in the mines, factories, and trading companies of a growing industrial economy. As the nation

expanded westward, many southerners wanted slavery to expand with it, but most northerners did not. It was during the presidential year of Abraham Lincoln that Afro-Americans were declared free from slavery and equal level of opportunities were pronounced even to them.

After the declaration of emancipation, Afro-Americans moved to North for better opportunities and freedom but they felt themselves alienated and isolated in new urban life. Again in North they faced the problem of identity crisis, sense of dispossession and fragmentation. So in order to gain new identity they started to internalize white norms because it was the only alternative available to them, but it caused the split in Afro-American self. This very tragic state is explained in DuBois *The Soul of Black Folk*. He says that Afro-American people were "born with a veil, and gifted with second sight in the American world- a world which yields him no true self-consciousness, but lets him see himself through the revelation of the other world" (364). Thus, emancipation only brought the sense of regional displacement and elevated African Americans to the position of a semi-independent being. The slave trade indeed, disappeared during the first second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century but the master slave relationship between whites and Afro-Americans was replaced by "other forms of unfree labour such as indentures, share cropping, debt- bondage" (Bulmer and Solomos 10).

The life of Afro-American during the slavery is characterized by extreme pain and misery. Sexual exploitation and inhuman treatment became rampant. The separation of father and mother slaves on the one hand, and their separation with their children on the other, was a common phenomenon. The slave holder held the total power as a result the victim, was helpless. Frederick Douglass, who was himself an American slave, explains in his work *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglas*, a sensational and heart- breaking account of physical torture and mental agony which was indeed the day to day experiences in the lives of Afro-American slaves. He writes:

I have often been awakened at the dawn of the day by the most heart rendering shrieks of an own aunt of mine, whom he used to tie up to a joist and whip upon her naked back till she was literally covered with blood. He would whip her to make scream and whip her to make her hush, and not until overcome by fatigue, would he cease to swing the blood-dotted cow skin. (15)

It was the experiences of Afro-American slaves in the southern plantation land where oppression, exploitation and severe punishment were common. During the post-bellum period, the ex-slaves of the south moved to the North as an industrial labour so that they may attain the freedom and material success. But North, too, could not fulfil their wishes, In fact, Afro-American's journey from south to North is nothing more than "out of the fire into the melting pot" (Ellison 150). Everywhere Afro-Americans suffered from the loss of identity and social recognition and, thus they were dehumanized.

During the latter part of the nineteenth century and the first couple of decades of the twentieth, the Afro-American appears to have started uttering the voice of deep hurt and bitter disappointment against white mainstream culture. In 1920's the New York city community of Harlem developed into the cultural centre for Afro-Americans. They glorified the attainments of Afro-Americans in music, literature, painting, athletics, business, or other professions. They promoted Afro-American fraternal orders, civic association, churches, commercial establishment and other groups and institutions. In doing so, they expressed their displeasure concerning their overall condition and articulated their cultural heritage.

The event which brought about a significant change in the image and status of Afro-American was World War II. During World War I American Afro-Americans had fought in segregated regiments, but in world war II many more Afro-Americans were involved, and no longer were they separated from other American soldiers. This was the first time that the Afro-American on a large scale had been officially treated as equal to the white man. Also

during the 1930's and 1940's the Afro-Americans economic status vastly improved, their sporting achievements were universally acclaimed, and their music was recognized as a significant art form. Nevertheless, though the Afro-American was no longer ignored, his situation in society was not essentially different from what it had been during the earlier years. This gave rise to considerable frustration, and the Afro-American's search for identity moved into a more assertive phase. No longer did the Afro-American aspire to be like the white man, no longer did he feel impelled to adopt an identity created for him by other. On one level this new phase in the Afro-American's search for identity manifested itself in various negative ways, being motivated by a simple desire to be as different from the white man as possible. The police, being made up almost exclusively of white Americans was associated with the white establishment. Therefore, to be on the wrong side of the law tended to become a way of asserting one's identity as a Afro-American. If the dominant religion in America were Christian, than one should assert one's identity by adopting to Islam. A more positive approach however, was an attempt to renew ties with black Africa.

Centuries of slavery and decades of legal segregation finally came to an end with the civil rights revolution of the 1950s and 1960s. This is the moment in which James Baldwin's powerful indictment was issued. His eloquent voice became one of the protests and social outrages against racial inequality. With the germination of the sense of revolt, organization such as the National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People (NAACP), the Committee on Racial Equality (CORE), and the Urban League accelerated movements for African-American rights pointing to the doctrine of human equality and of the natural or divine rights of man. "Freedom Riders" ranged through the south demanding desegregation and implementation of the US Supreme Court decision on educational desegregation. The year 1963 marked, of course, the hundredth anniversary of the Emancipation, and it was a year made notable by many vast demonstrations mounted by Afro-American groups in the

streets of cities in the north, as well as in the south, as they passed forward their demands for the desegregation of public facilities and for the extension of fair employment opportunities. This activity was brought to a kind of climax of the twenty -eighth of August by the march on Washington for jobs and freedom, when more than two hundred thousands people, Afro-American and white, from all over the land gathered on the mall extending from the Washington monument to the Lincoln memorial, in the largest outdoor mass meeting in the history of the nation's capital.

Less than a year after the march on Washington in 1964, the congress under president Lyndon Johnson, enacted the most comprehensive civil rights legislation in the country's history, the Act giving to the Attorney General effective power to defend all citizens against any deprivation of their free access to public educational resources. Thus, widespread societal changes came in the 1960s as African Americans moved into areas of society formerly off limits to them. Federal and state governments began the task of dismantling the legal foundations of a segregated society and granted Afro-Americans formal equality. Some government and private employees implemented programs to overcome the consequences of past discrimination. Between the mid-1970s, and the early 1990s, however, many white decision makers in the private and public sectors abandoned aggressive programs to redress racial discrimination and retreated to a rhetoric of formal equality. As a result, in the twenty-first century also racial discrimination remains at the heart of U.S. society. Therefore, Bulmer and Solomos remark, "the problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the color line" which he prophetically observed in 1903 is , still, equally apt for the twenty-first century (Bulmer and Solomos 3).

## **2.4 Black Consciousness in Literature**

The history of the Afro-Americans in America has been a series of protests. Proclamations of dignity, selfhood, equality, freedom, and justice have always been the Afro-

American man's most personal confrontation with the speaking platform. The numbers and varieties of the Afro-American writers and spokesmen suggest the energy expended in the effort of Afro-American liberation. The Afro-American writer's voice concern over the presence in today's society of the same racist tendencies that have existed in the nation since 1619. While they are ware of some change, they see the need for and even grater commitment on the part of the American society for liberty and justice for the Blackman. There has never been significant movement by Afro-Americans to overthrow the American government, to the contrary, Afro-Americans have sought to bring about more authentic changes in the American political, social and economic system through black consciousness movement. On the other hand, they also sought to redress the negative self-image created in many Afro-American people by their long history of enslavement and discriminatory treatment, treatment made inescapable by the visibility of their perceived difference.

Unlike the writers most frequently studied in literature courses, Afro-American writers are created mostly by need rather than by desire. There are obvious reasons for the more utilitarian motives of Afro-American writers. First, the literated Afro-American man who could write effectively assumed the responsibility of speaking for Afro-Americans, individually or as group. Second, publishers-whether nineteenth century abolitionists or twentieth century editors-most often have been interested in publicizing the works of a Afro-American writer if he addressed himself to "The Negro Problem". Through the centuries, the specific issues have varied: protests against slavery; biographical or historical presentations of the cultural achievements of Afro-American man, protests against lynching, arguments about education, job opportunities, voting rights, civil rights, housing. Despite the seeming variety, always three is " The Causes" developed in two dominant themes; protests against unjust treatment of Afro-Amecicans and defences of Afro-Americans based on their contributions to America. Because of this sustained emphasis upon purpose, the literary writings of Afro-



Americans have been judged more frequently according to the popular appeal of the subject matter rather than the literary skill of the writer.

Although usages of the term "race" to classify various types of human being have been traced somewhat earlier in a number of European languages, the development of racial doctrines and ideologies begins to take shape in the late eighteenth century, and reaches its high point during the nineteenth and early twentieth century's. This is, of course, not to say that the category of race was not used in earlier times.

It is, from the turn of the nineteenth century that race formed an important body of literary writing. Appiah writes:

For literary purposes, the developments that begin at the turn of nineteenth century have another immediate consequence: race becomes important at the theme of great body of writing in Europe and North America -and, indeed, in the rest of the world under the influence of 'western' cultures-and the concept often plays a crucial role in structuring plot. (279)

During the exuberant 1920s, Harlem became the national centre of African American culture, including the arts of theatre, dance and music. the African American jazz became widely praised as beautiful music. Langston Hughes was one of the important poets of Harlem Renaissance of the 1920s in the company of James Weldon Johnson, Claude Mc Kay and Countee Cullen who popularized African American jazz rhythms. The second half of the twentieth century brought a renaissance to multiethnic literature. Ethnic studies initiated during the 1970s. In 1980s, a number of academic journals, professional organizations and literary magazine concerned about ethnic groups were begun.

In a nutshell, racial issues have become the constant themes of literature especially, in the United States of America. American culture projects a hierarchy of white and Afro-

Americans culture. The differences among people play a vital role in forming our values and identities. So long as the racial difference lasts, the literary study and production will rest upon the theme of race. Appiah writes:

Differences among peoples, like differences among communities within a single society, play a central role in our thinking about "who" we are, in structuring our values, and in determining the identities through which we live . . . and so long as it continues it is likely that race will continue to be a preoccupation, not only of the literary history of nineteenth century and twentieth century's, but also of future literary production and literary study.

(287)

So, racial differences, prejudice, and inequality have helped enrich the creative potentialities of the authors.

## **Chapter Three : Racial Consciousness and Afro-Americans Identity in *Dreams From My Father***

### **3.1 Racial Consciousness**

Racial consciousness is to be regarded as a phenomenon, like class or caste consciousness, that enforces social distances. Thus, anything that intensifies race consciousness; anything, particularly if it is a permanent physical trait, that increases an individual's visibility and by so doing makes more obvious his identity with a particular ethnic unit or genetic group. Which tends to create and maintain the conditions under which race relations are sided to exist. In this sense, race relations are not so much the relations that exist between individuals of different races as between individual's conscious of these differences.

The relationship between whites and Afro-Americans as a member of two distinct races is shaped by the power relation on the one hand and the wide economic gaps on the other. In this regard, their relationships appear like that of master and slave. The whites as members of privileged class are inclined to oppress the Afro-Americans on the basis of colour, caste and socio economic status so that they can impose their own ideology and rule upon them. But Afro-Americans in spite of their poor socio-economic status are not ready to accept such inhuman treatment. As a result ego of respective community members get into clash and consequently, it invites racial hostility.

Whites as members of privileged class have valorized the colour of their own caste, i.e., whiteness. In this regard, whiteness is associated to beauty and happiness by contrasting blackness to ugliness and despair. As a member of distinct race Afro-American becomes "the other" in white men's eyes. And when economic status and the colour of skin is labeled as a measuring rod of social acceptance the Afro-Americans get systematically deranged. The social structure has become so complex that the members of both communities feel devoid of

love and co-operation. As a result, a deep rooted hatred is born in their heart that ultimately helps to build up the uncongenial and hostile situation.

When whites started to enslave Afro-American by instigating racial violence, the relationship became the bitter one. But counter racism by the Afro-Americans made the situation rather worse. It is disbelief and distrust that occupies the heart of both community members. As a result, racial hostility has brought tragedy in their lives. Whites do not see Afro-Americans as an individual, simply, because they are in power and position. They discriminate the Afro-Americans on the basis of colour, caste and class. As a result, they are systematically deranged. Obama writes, “The pronouncement of social equality, freedom and pursuit of happiness to all member of American citizen could not materialize on behalf of Afro-Americans. Whites enjoyed the power and position, whereas, poverty and social inequality became the permanent lot of the Afro-Americans” (25). In fact, Afro-Americans, too, equally took part in the building of nation but their contributions were never paid attention. In such state, the relationship between Afro-Americans and whites turned out to be quite hostile or problematic. The position of Afro-Americans as circus animal and whites as the master created a deep gulf in the relationship between whites and Afro-Americans.

Thus, Obama has raised the Afro-Americans' voice for equal rights, opportunity and identity in his prominent work, *Dreams From My Father*. This book portrays the struggle that one Black American man faces while trying to live in a racially segregated society. It develops through the many levels of conflict. Personal conflicts arise on superficial level but conflicts about race, social status, and political viewpoints drive these superficial conflicts.

Obama writes:

When I was alone, I would try to untangle these difficult thoughts. It was obvious that certain whites could be exempted from the general category of our distrust. The term white was simply a short hand for me, I decided, a tag for

what my sense would call a bigot, there are white folks, and then there are ignorant mother fuckers like many whites. (81)

The characters act out in rage due to stress caused by social circumstances. It is a powerful intensely gripping story of an unhappy Afro-American who is driven to take help of drugs and compelled to search his own identity throughout the physical and mental journey towards protagonist's home land and father originated place. Whereas in metropolitan location the protagonist cannot fit himself and goes to Kenya in despair and desolate situation due to the effects of racial suppression.

### **3.2 Obama: A Victim of Institutionalized Racism**

Obama himself is a protagonist of *Dreams From My Father*. Here in the memoir, Obama has been oppressed and controlled by whites throughout his life. He grows in a society where two worlds, white and Afro-American, are apparent, these two worlds are physically separated. Obama writes:

There are White schools and Afro-American schools, White churches and Afro-American churches, White business and Afro-American business, White graveyards and Afro-American graveyards and White god and Afro-American god. Thus, Afro-American and his family are the oppressed victims of racism which is systematically institutionalized by the white racist society. Because of their colour, their poverty, and white myth of bad nigger, they are confined to the black belt of New York city and Chicago. They are prevented from developing their human potential for growth. (325)

The full consciousness of shame and misery has forced Obama to live life in fear and disparity. Moreover, Obama's father had faced the bitter suppressed life in metropolitan location. Because of suppression his father had faced much problem which gave him (father) stressed life and died in car accident.

The idea of indoctrination, i.e., Afro-Americans are inferior and the discrimination or the feeling of superiority over "the other" on the basis of colour and shape of skin, eye, hair, lips, etc are the dominant tendency of racism. Racism after all, begins at personal level. This individual racism, in course of time, ultimately culminates into institutional racism. Actually discrimination of personal level flows at the collective level. It provides stamp of legality. At social level it becomes mind set, but when it becomes the system or institutionalized it is very much difficult to change. Thus, it can be defined as those activities and practices which are intended to protect the advantages of a dominant group and/ or to maintain or widen the unequal position of a subordinate group.

Obama, the protagonist and writer of the text, is a victim of institutionalized racism. His life is fully characterized by his father's dream to him. The very racism which is internalized by his father thus his father who becomes the dominant motif of the text, who comes frequently in Obama's mind and the very father symbolizes the racism. Father also signifies the Blackman in racially segregated white world. Here, we see Obama's father in a metropolitan white location, It has forced his father to adopt the life of frustration and despair. Because he has realized "about this world and its power to hate and destroy"(27).

Obama's father and his mother, these two people are completely from different worlds; One (father) is from the black world and another (mother) is from the white world. Obama writes, "My mother is milk white and my father is black as pitch"(85), That is to say mother and father both are from different background. The institutionalized racism has great impact upon their life that is why their relation does not go long. Some kind of dissatisfaction has implanted in their conjugal life. Obama's father and mother are not happy in their relationship. This line of institutionalized racism has great impact upon Obama too. Obama writes:

That was all, the line cut off, and I sat down on the couch, smelling eggs burn is the kitchen, staring at cracks in the plaster, trying to measure my loss. At the

time of my father's death, he remained a myth to me, both more and less than a man. He had left Hawaii back in 1963, when I was only two years old, so that as a child I know him only through the stories that my mother and grandparents told. (5)

These lines make us clear that his father and Obama himself are the two products of same racial culture where there is a lack of truth, his belief as a myth to his father, this is the very embeddedness of racism. These lines make us clear about the victimization of racism where a black child has no such opportunity or atmosphere to understand his own father. Because his father was a man who lived in frustration and life of suppressed in white world, thus it can be said that the relation of child and father is also gaped. The racial society does not give or provide the suitable opportunity for child and father as white child and father have.

His father married a white woman but his father knew that blacks are inferior to whites because this was the implantation of created discourses which was institutionalized and racism was vivid in the blood of Americans. Thus it resulted in his father's death because of frustration and heavy mental stress, later it is rooted in Obama's life too. Here, the separation of father and mother is also a great aspect of institutionalized racism. Because racism always wants to separate two worlds, White and Black. Mother who represents a white world whereas father represents a black world and after two years of Obama's birth there lies the separation of two people which is very much noteworthy in the eyes of racism. Thus racism always maintains its perspective and its situation and provides whites to look upon the world and "monitor" the social, economic and cultural activities of Afro-Americans.

One very important thing of Afro-Americans is that despite being incapable of making up side down the institutionalized racism, they try to make counter-thought only in the time when Afro-Americans can realize the vast difference between two worlds. This is the 'confidence' which is the way to start their protest and balance their cultural life in white

world, Obama writes, "My grandfather would shake his head and get out of his chair to flip on the T.V. set. "Now there's something you can learn from your dad". He would tell me.

"Confidence, the secret to a man's success." (8)

Because of institutionalized racism the blacks are forced to believe as inferior to the whites. This focal point leads ultimately towards the identity crisis. The very identity crisis plays the vital role in the life of blacks. Obama's father always wanted to search his identity and the mission of his father becomes incomplete because of his accident in white world. This accident has a great implication here, that is to say Obama's father's fighting to get his identify became weaker in the discourses of white world where nobody listened to him, thus this problem transfers to his son Obama. Obama writes:

Where did I belong? . . . If I had come to understand myself as a black American, and was understood as such, that understanding remained unanchored to place. What I needed was a community, I realized, a community that cut deeper than the common despair that black friends and I shared when reading the latest crime statistics or the high fives that I might exchange on a basketball court. (10)

The very blackness of Obama's father has great impact upon the whole life of Obama. Obama wants to associate himself with his father rather than to his mother because he is colourly black and blackness is psychologically internalized by himself. That is why for Obama the white world is so mysterious and finds himself very much orthodox and radical in the white world. The very orthodoxy is not bestowed within himself rather it is the white world which has implanted it to him throughout many mediums. His association of himself to his father is just the result of institutionalized racism even though his father is just like illusion for himself. Obama writes:



That my father looked nothing like the people around me, that he was black as pitch, my mother white as milk, barely registered in my mind. In fact I can recall only one story that dealt explicitly with the subject of race; as I got older, it would be repeated more often, as if it captured the essence of the morality tall that my father's life had become. (11)

The next most important thing is that the discourses are created to control and to give information about the existing rules and these discourses are very playful too, in course of time they are modified as well as some changes are made to occur which also help to maintain institutionalized racism. This sort of mother we can find in Obama too, in *Dreams From My Father* he writes:

I suppose that's what all the stories of my father were really about. They said less about the man himself than about the changes that had taken place in the people around him, the halting process by which my grandparents' racial attitudes had changed. The stories gave voice to a spirit that would grip the nation for that heating period. I rather say the stories are useful fiction for me to understand the world outside my father, where my father used to believe and had had illusions as truths. (26)

Because of institutionalized racism new generation are also pre-occupied with the tradition and are acknowledged by using discourses created for racism, "My life is hell in the shadow of the race ,which I know only when I lost my father"(34). Here in the book *Dreams From My Father* has same incident, because of victimization of racism. Obama's father, who suffered a lot before and now to know himself as the Obama; he has to internalize the same occupation as internalized by Obama's father. Obama writes:

I would not have known at the time, for I was too young to realize that I was supposed to have a live- in father, just as I was too young to know that I

needed a race. For an improbably short span it seems that my father fell under the same spell as my mother and her parents; and for the first six years of my life, even as that spell was broken and the world that they thought they'd left behind reclaimed each of them, I occupied the place where their dreams had been. (27)

Furthermore institutionalized racism tries to separate an individual from his potentiality that is to say racism does not give a single chance to tackle with group for an individual because if an individual grasp the power of unity than there is the threats for the racism which will disturb the maintained routine. Which makes an individual completely unknown to his own potentiality. Here, Obama also says same thing:

I don't know who am I rather? I am confined to my own potentiality am. My potentiality becomes dull in my own lap I am scared because I am individual of my own. I keep on not recognizing my own fault and strength. I ground my shame on the bases created above me. I don't know who am I? I am individual for myself too? and for society too. (29)

The important thing is that because of institutionalized racism people those who are black living in a segregated white world, suffered from nostalgia and because of very nostalgia they are completely occupied by the things related to their ancestors. Critic Baldwin states:

Not only that but also some blacks are being pendulum who swing between two poles belonging neither one. Because their own culture is so far that they are physically not in their original place but where they are physically located that is not their culture. They find the new culture completely unbearable to them but unfortunately they are very far from their society and norms which was their own origination and where they can find their own taste of soil. (36)

Instead of that their present geo-politico location has no taste of their own self rather the new occupation, taste and norms are loaded to them which fragment them and the very fragmentation is the wanted and created situation by white mythology where blacks are separated, this kind of effect can be seen in the book *Dreams From My Father* too. To find his own heritage Obama travels to Kenya from white world; Obama does this to find his own smell of soil, taste of motherland where he can have his own heritage and ethos as well as ethics. Obama writes:

I flew out of Heathrow Airport under stormy skies. A group of young British men dressed in ill-fitting blazers filled the back of the plane, and one of them—a pale, gangly youth, still troubled with acne took the seat beside me. He read over the emergency instructions twice with great concentration, and once we were airborne, he turned to ask where I was headed. (33)

Because of institutionalized racism blacks are muddled in the white world and they are imposed with many stereotype myths which is the production of white world. In order to come out from this racism many writers have followed the writing as medium, whereas Obama too, wants to come out and follows the same tradition of writing to get away from victimization and institutionalized racism.

### **3.3. Alienation of Blacks in White World**

African Americans in a racist society are categorized, defined, and dehumanized but their desire of being "white" is the product of their wish to attain social recognition and nothing more than that. Due to this one black develops the wish for the white skin. He wants to be a part of white culture, white beauty, white's whiteness. His restless hands want to caress that white breast, to grasp white civilization and dignity and make them his own. The love hate dichotomy characterizes Obama's own life, he struggles to set himself in white world but

he is very near to his father who is for him the Africa itself because his father is the real product of love hate relationship in white world. Obama's father cannot fit himself in white world which later results into the separation. Obama's father becomes pendulum who swings between two poles belonging neither side. Obama's father expresses intense hatred for white people:

How I hate them - all those white sons of bitches out there. They are trying to kill me. You think I don't know? They got the world on a string man the miserable white cock suckers, and they trying that string around my neck, they killing me because I am black as pitch and I am unwilling to follow their duties in accordance to their will. I think I am a bull for them. Where they compare me with the shadow. That's why they shunned me out. (220)

Later on it is proved that Obama's father killed himself in a car accident because of his intense hatred for white world. The rope (or string), which characterized whiteness, is associated with death for Obama's father. Obama uses the metaphor of lynching to capture the intensity of Obama's father's feeling about racism. The link here between lynching and the violence enacted by Obama's father to his penis is a painful reminder of the history of racial and sexual oppression represented by lynching. Obama says about his father , " He put his hand on his sex, brutally, as though he would tear it out" (212). Lynching is a sexual and racial crime, perpetuated on Afro-American bodies and frequently included mutilation and post mortem violation of the body. In this way Obama forcefully reminds us his father's separation from white world.

Racism, specifically, the history of violence it embodies and the continued threat of it mention of 'string' is a bold allusions to one of the injustices Afro- American man suffered under slavery and Jim Crow. The love expressed by Obama's father is the result of his self-hatred. His "Love" for Obama's mother is negated by the history of, and his experience with

American racism. Racial awareness of Obama's father gradually moves him into the state of alienation, double consciousness and depression. This depthless alienation from oneself and one's people is, in sum, the American experience for Obama's father. Having recognized the pain of alienation figured in the expatriate experience, one must recognize that the problem is differently coded for the Afro-American and the white. Writer Obama's peculiarity in African American sense of alienation was double and is some ways parallel to the concept of "Double-consciousness" expressed in W.E.B. DuBois's *Souls Of Black Folk*, for the latter the American world yields the Negro:

No true self-consciousness, but only lets him see himself through the revelation of the other world. It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at oneself through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his twoness—an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two irreconciled strivings. (215)

Of course, DuBois's alienation is less metaphysical than Obama's. The earlier writer is describing the Afro-American's exclusion from equal opportunity, and his yearning to merge his double self in a war which would not require him to deny his blackness. Nevertheless, a more radical sense of alienation is implicit in the pained cry of Black childhood friends recorded by DuBois: "Why did God make an outcast and a stranger in mine house?" (214). And while DuBois rejects the futility of this bitterness, he does not deny that Africa is no longer the Afro-Americans house "or that he is a stranger in his new homeland" (215).

Obama, the young black American, is also estranged from his own culture in the text. This experience in New York, which is described with ambiguous irony as "that city, where the people from heaven had made their home" (366). This expatriate experience situated on the frontier between two cultures, be it that of the American in Kenya or of the Kenyan in

New York, would then represent that of the African American subject irremediably exiled from his/her African part, yet denied access to the new American culture.

Trapped in a similar dilemma, the expatriate subject in America, especially Afro-Americans, are distanced physically and emotionally from Africa, yet not fully integrated into American society. Such was the case with Obama's father. He is fed up with "the great buildings, unlit, blunt like the phallus or sharp like the spear, guarded the city which never slept" (34). Beneath them he walks as, "One of the fallen for the weight of this city was murderous-one of those who had been crushed on the day, which was everyday, these towers fall, entirely alone, and dying of it. He was a part of an unprecedented multitude" (34). Thus, expatriate or exile may be the result of banishment by superior powers or self exile due to hostile circumstances and the later, in fact, does not require physical displacement as witnessed by Obama in the despairing vision of New York, "It was a city without oases, run entirely, insofar at least, as human perception could tell, for money; and its citizens seemed to have lost any sense of their right to renew themselves. Whoever, in New York, clung to this right, lived in New York in exile" (267). For the African American subject in particular, the voyage to a foreign land is an exile that restages the original historical and cultural alienation at "home". In one sense, then the fact of geographic exile can be seen as the symbolic extension of a radical existential exile, and the knot of internal and external in such a perception is difficult to undo.

To dismiss the accidental moments in *Dreams From My Father* as counterproductive articulations of victim ideology means to ignore or misread the political function of death in literature. The book invites our centripetal preoccupation with Obama's father, his life and, importantly, his death by mapping all the racial tension that follows through his character. The text's syntactical re-enactments of Obama's father's death point to his central, traumatic place in the characters and the narrative itself. For the characters, Obama's father seems

melancholically undead; he returns over and over to haunt them, asserting his presence through the re-enactments that commemorate him.

The first section of the book follows Obama's movement and memories through the murderous streets, Obama writes;

He was an African, I would learn, a Kenyan of the Luo tribe, born on the shores of Lake Victoria in a place called Alego. The village was poor, but his father-my grandfather, Hussein Onyango Obama-had been a prominent farmer, an elder of the tribe, a medicine man with healing powers. My father grew up herding his father's goats and attending the local school, set up by the British colonial administration, where he had shown great promise. (9)

The memories are very great things for Obama which he can recollect from his childhood he further writes:

My father was aware of every inch of himself. He was flesh: flesh, bone, muscle, fluid, orifices, hair, and skin. His body was controlled by laws he did not understand. Nor did he understand what force within this body had driven him into such a desolate place, where no rules are made for him every soil smells black and every street is black as my father, as well as black as my father's death where rules are undefined and unturned related to nowhere and nobody rather concerned whitish blackness. (13)

This shows Obama's father's constant search for love and affection and an African American identity which is perpetually denied by white racist society made Obama's father live a miserable life, he lived in his young age by not letting him to become "somebody", but a social misfit, they led him to frustration and despair and, of course, violence which is implicit in text. Over all these mentioned matters intensify the alienation state of black people in white world.

In same manner Baldwin's *Another Country* states as following, which helps to categorize many writers', who are black, view to the alienation:

Many white people and many black people, chained together in time and in space, and by history, and all of them in a hurry. In a hurry to get away from each other, one white thought but we ain't heaver going to make it. We been fucked for fair. Because, the root of the American Negro problem is the necessity of the American white man to find a way of living with the Negro. ( 86)

Even Obama's father himself, on his self-exile from the hostile environment of Hawaii, realized that he wants to go someplace "where a man could be treated like a man (68)". Thus, his father's entire existence is a sort of prison. He is imprisoned in his own consciousness. His entire life is filled by a sense of unyielding, inadequacy, failure and very importantly his life is filled by a sense of alienation where there is no location to locate his flesh and blood that is to say because of sense of alienation he finds himself in the state of sense of dislocation, which further hints for the identity crisis. The very crisis leads him to the state of a complete alienation where he does not like to follow regular job and lows as well as responsibility which is created for him by white world. That is to say he is mentally not fit and well. He finds himself mentally and socially misfit in society thus he starts to drink much and drives car very roughly which ultimately "takes his live in the state of solidarity alienation with no segregation and state of complete and absolute alienation, where he knows nothing and struggle nothing for nothing " (78). When Obama hears the news of his father's death he says:

I know a lot of people done took their own lives and they're walking up and down the streets today and some of them are preaching the gospel and some are sitting in the seats of mighty. Now, remember that it the world wasn't so



full of dead folks may be those of us that's trying to live would not have to suffer so bad. (121)

Obama's father's Japanese friend who is the witness of his death extends the definition of the dead to the living and calls on mourners to witness the connection between Obama's father's suffering and a lethal social climate. He further says, "the world already bitter enough, we got to try to be better than the world" (122).

Unlike Reverend Foster, a prominent Afro-American critic James Baldwin sees the death of Obama's father in *Dreams From My Father* as consummate example of extensive alienation and depression. Obama sees his father a complete failure man in white world what is traced in Obama's live too. But for Obama he is a failure, the more he is idealized man for Obama who stands for the Afro-American inequality. Obama's obsession with the father, who dies at the beginning of the book, frames the whole book's narrative. For Obama the father is only the history about Africa which is just as a myth for him who fights and tries to understand the existence of life and death. To be angry and frustrate is the power of African American masculinity because this is the only way to be out from racial prejudices which ultimately ends in state of alienation.

*Dreams From My Father*, starts with the tortured mourning news of death and ends in same trace where Obama visits Kenya and tries to return again the black street of white world. When he is returning from Kenya he writes:

And so the three of us made our way over the widening dirt road, picking at leaves that grew along the way, watching the rain blow down across the several valleys. We dribbled our drinks on to the chekered -tile floor . And for that moment, at least, I felt like the luckiest man alive. (442)

Obama here says himself the luckiest man alive because when he travels throughout Kenya he knows the tradition, culture and norms of his own history where there is no two world and he

witnesses all the things related to his father who is just a myth for himself before but after his sojourn he concludes himself with the acknowledgement of history as well as the dreams imparted to him from his father. There is nothing however, to suggest that the relationship of Obama & Kenya, where his father grown up gives us emphasis on the significance of understanding gaps between Americans and Kenyan. This further suggests that his movement from one emotional state of reluctance and fear to another of joy and certainty represents a literal and emotional emigration from one country to another. It is significant that the book called *Dreams From My Father* ends with a African (Kenyan) young man arriving in Hawaii. His voyage across the Atlantic is met by many white people whose hair "spinning and flaming" (441), mimics the statue of liberty whose halo of spikes might be described as "spinning and flaming". The sight of Obama inspires within all black American, the same hope of the statue of liberty is said to inspire in immigrants. But ironically, the book has taught us to be skeptical, as skeptical as we are of the "American Dream" and we know that if Obama and other blacks are lucky then they might achieve "a maximum of relief with a minimum of hostility" (430).

Therefore, the racial consciousness that comes in Obama, because of the ill treatment he receives in an environment which is essentially hostile toward Afro-American, is the sole reason of his father's frustration, despair, alienation and desolate situation. And in the state of mental depression, Obama's father disappeared from his friends and family. At last, he arrives, awares that the pain will never stop at the end the very suffering become true in his car accident thus, Obama parodies the notion of democracy, liberty and justice around which united states and its founding documents, especially, the us constitution stand, by having his anti-hero death from the same location (street) which was "built to give the taste of happiness and to provide the luxuriocity to all people of country" (97).

Obama's father's death is a "murder", enacted upon him by the effects of racism. His death suggests that there is no black utopia, no place where he can escape from the iniquities of racism. More importantly, *Dreams From My Father* suggests that we have not yet found a model for discussion of interraciality. It suggests, more importantly, that eliminating racial difference will not solve the problems of difference either. The title of the book suggests the wishes for the equality which is dream of Obama's father for his son and USA. Moreover "Dreams" are wishes for another nation, in which the racial selves are imagined and defined differently or perhaps where they are not defined at all.

It is this dynamic of internalized racism that catalyzes the only genuinely well-drawn relationship in *Dreams From My Father*, the one between Obama's father and his mother. In the book the white woman seems to occupy a place squarely at the centre of Afro-American man, Obama's father's consciousness. She occupies it, however, not as woman but simply as an instrument, as the catalyst that sets into motion a socio-sexual dynamic that seemingly involves not just this particular Afro-American man and white woman, but this man, this woman, and all of the men, Afro-American and white to whom the relationship supposedly represent the ultimate act of social transgression. Just as, after a while; to think of Obama's father is to think of father and mother, all of the culturally specific aspects of Obama's father's experience that would have to be represented if Obama's father was to have some force as an individual are reduced to peripheral elements which are subordinated, if not completely invalidated by his desperate need, as a deindividualized Afro-American man, to acquire an equally deindividualized white woman. "you'd never even have looked at that girl, friend if she'd been black" (28). The imagined voice of his Japanese friend says to Obama's father, "But you'll pick up any white trash just because she is white" (28). Correspondingly, throughout their time together, Obama's father almost never refers to Obama's mother by her real name. She is among other things "Honey child"(9), "Miss Anne" (10), "Little Eva"(17),

"a funny little cracker"(22), and "a splendid specimen of southern woman hood" (25), but rarely simply by her own name.

Obama's mother, on the other hand, can scapegoat herself by " loving" and then allowing herself to be destroyed by the dangerous "other" that Obama's father represents, just as another part of her had loved and been destroyed by the equally abusive relationship that her marriage to a hyper-racist southern " Cracker"(22) had been. In fact, it is exactly Obama's father's otherness, his blackness, that his mother must deny in order to perform her role in the drama that they are enacting . At one point Obama's father asks," Didn't they warn you down home about the darkies you'd find up north?" (13) and she answers, "They didn't never worry one none. People's just people as far as I'm concerned" (13). This response reveals her denial of both racial and sexual difference and, thereby, her repression of the distinctly sexual nature of her interest in Obama's father. Being a product of the particular racial and sexual hierarchies which organize southern society, Obama's mother could in fact never be unaware of the transgressive nature of her involvement with Obama's father. She perhaps more than any character in *Dreams From My Father*, would know that people are not just people and that there are real and potentially dangerous racial implications in the sexual choices people make. just as Obama's father's self- hatred stems from his inability either to enact or reject the roles that have been socially validated for white men and made inaccessible for Afro-Americans, his mother's self-hatred is the result of a similar failure to fulfill internalized social expectations. She has "failed" (29) as a wife and as a mother and because of this failure has marked herself as someone deserving of destruction.

Despite all limitations, Obama's father is the most complex and important character in the book. This is because he is the only who actually seems to grow not only in self-awareness, but in the awareness of himself as specific self in the specific world in which Obama has placed him. His death, functions as an over wrought but existentially respectable

manifestation of his desire to live and die in accordance with the one "truth" that his history has taught him. This truth is that, appearances to the contrary, writer Obama's world at this point just did not have enough room for everyone.

Thus, in *Dreams From My Father* this dystopianism is enacted by, or one could say projected into, the figure of Obama's father. At best, Obama's father is the depiction of a pathology that is explicitly acknowledged, a case of internalized racism. Contextualized by his unlikely group of middle class white friends, Obama's father's life and death can best be read as the acts of tragically self-aware Afro-American man destroyed by the inescapable forces of white racism and finally a product of institutionalized racism which has vividly internalized the racism and victimizes the blacks.

## Chapter Four: Conclusion

Race is a concept that divides human beings physically, biologically and genetically into different groups. Race relations include all the relations that ordinarily exist between members of different ethnic and genetic groups which are capable of provoking race conflict and race consciousness, which determines the relative status of the racial groups by which a community is composed. It includes relations which are not new conscious or personal, relations which are fixed, they are enforced by the custom, convention and the routine. Race is the terminology which is the imposed idea from the stake holder. When it becomes knowledge to the lay people this comes in existence and discourse works by shaping the mind set of the people. Thus, racial consciousness is a phenomenon that enforces social distances. It, however, implies not a bridge, but a mirror, and in American context it demands analysis not only of the professed principles of American Democracy, but also of the very terms in which political inquiry into those principles are conducted.

The elements of racial consciousness play a vital role in shaping the attitudes of the characters in Obama's *Dreams From My Father*. Obama and his father are main Afro-American characters in the book, present a continuing struggle for their social, political and economic freedom. The main character Obama's father from the very beginning of life undergoes a great conflict with his white racist society. His main concern is to emphasize the idea of racial autonomy so that in the white racist society the African Americans can affirm their identity and freedom in its entirety but the white racist society not only jeopardizes their identity but also denies their presence. As a result, they are compelled to live in the slums where they are deprived of all rights.

Obama's father, living in a white society originally from Kenya, a dark continent, lives a miserable life. He always wants to be "somebody" and get identity of his own but a man in racist society becomes "nobody" and "other" is the tag for himself. He is social misfit. He is

very much tired from his location in metropolitan city that leads him to the state of frustration, alienation and he starts to alienate himself from his white wife. He becomes drunkard and drives car wildly as it seems pouring out his anger in black street which becomes the news of death to his son Barack Obama, which is implicit in the text.

So, the book invites its reader's centripetal preoccupation with Obama and his father, their life and, importantly, Obama's father's death by mapping all the racial tension that follows through his character. Writer Obama, artistically, portrays his father's hatred and discomfort towards whites, and his father's mental agony. He certainly shows that racial segregation and oppression will only forster race consciousness that ultimately enforces social distances between Afro-Americans and whites.

Thus, Obama's father's accident and his death in the book suggests that there is no black utopia found yet, no place where they can escape the racial injustice. Obama's father's wish or "Dreams" of equality, a place where relationships are not fractured by racial differences remains an imaginary and mythic one. Even though the book *Dreams From My Father* provides actual map line and the book is proved as a milestone in terms of consequences for racism, which is very noteworthy for its discussion and shows the way of equality in near future with the smiles of writer Obama, a moment of returning from Kenya to America.

The very consciousness is a key term in terms of understanding the racial scenario of USA. In the book *Dreams From My Father*, we see two types of consciousness; one only black consciousness which is felt by Obama's father Hussein Obama and the other is raw black consciousness in white world which transforms to the writer Obama. But we see vast difference in these types of consciousness. Obama's father grows up with the black consciousness which is more worse and suppressive than the consciousness that writer Obama

is having which is very much near to the practical ending of racism but still it takes more time. Writer Obama sees the consciousness from new perspective which enables him to grow up with some optimism whereas Obama's father has a pessimism in terms of his black consciousness.

The main cause of black consciousness is the discourse created by racial society and implanted ideologies in the society. Which are practiced in different levels of society; social, economic and political level. Ideologies give mind set to the people and they (black) start to believe themselves as other, inferior, earthly, object and natural. These synonyms are internalized by blacks but when it is rampant and vivid it gives a sort of consciousness to black and as a protest blacks do abnormal behavior as well as some fight against segregation to gain equality.

In conclusion the book *Dreams Froms My Father* is a book of discussion that really emphasis on the practical ending of the very racial segregation. Obama returns from the Kenya with the hope of new change. The very change can be seen in his victory on the presidential election. Even though it is not predicted in the book we saw by our naked eyes. Thus, it can be said that the book if we study from different perspectives we can find it as the work heralding the new dawn of liberal world, where black and white world becomes one that produces the new society which is free from the racial segregation though it takes time, we can say that the book is a great work in the field of black empowerment.



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