

## Chapter One

### 1. Introduction to Toni Morrison and Her Works

#### I. Toni Morrison: An Introduction

Toni Morrison, a black writer and a renowned novelist, was born in Lorain, Ohio on February 18, 1931. She was the daughter of George and Rahmah Willis Wofford. She studied at Lorain High School. Her original name was Chloe Anthony. When she joined Howard University, she changed her name to Toni. She received her B.A. degree in English in 1953 and an M.A. degree from Cornell University.

Morrison then became an instructor in English at Texas Southern University. In 1957, she became an instructor at Howard University. She also became a senior editor and published fictions by black writer. In 1970, she published her first novel *The Bluest Eye* which was based on the victimization of an eleven - year - old black girl. She published her second novel *Sula* in 1973. Her third novel *Song of Solomon* published in 1977 was based on the search for identity. This novel also received Fiction Award of the National Book Critics Circles and American Academy Institute of Arts and Letter Award. Her other works are *Tar Baby* (1981), *Beloved* (1987), *Jazz* (1992), *Paradise* (1998) and *Love* (2003) the latest one.

Morrison became a famous woman novelist. President Jimmy Carter appointed her to the National Council of the Arts in 1980. She was also elected to the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters. This was the year when she published her fourth novel *Tar Baby*. She then received the New York State Governor's Art and Letters Award in 1987. The same year *Beloved* was published. This novel won the Pulitzer Prize and Robert F. Kennedy Award in 1988. From 1984, Morrison became a Schweitzer Professor of Humanities at State University of New York at Albany. She became the Robert F. Goheen Professor of Humanities at Princeton University in 1989. Besides the novels, she has published a play *Dream Emmett* (1985) and a

critical work *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination* (1992). In 1993, she became the first black novelist to win the Nobel Prize in Literature.

## **II. Black History and Black Literature:**

Black history in North America began in August 1619 after a Dutch frigate sold twenty black captives to Jamestown settlers. They required workers for clearing fields, planting crops, making roads and building houses. So, they accepted blacks as a source of free labour. Those twenty blacks were treated as indentured servants. As time passed, black servants were not treated as white ones. They were exploited and indentured for life. In this way, the slavery system was established in America.

Gradually, the demand of white servants decreased because blacks could be owned for life. The demand of black labour increased on the large plantations of Maryland, Virginia and Carolinas. Their large scale production was based on the use of these cheap black labours. However, during 1770's and 80's, the American colonists revolted against the British rule. Leaders like George Washington, Thomas Jefferson and Patrick Henry advocated for self determination, democracy, equality and natural rights of man. But these eminent leaders could not abolish the slavery system. Whites now started to develop the concept that blacks were inferiors. The conflict between the black and white thus arose. Some educated blacks like Benjamin Banneker, Frederic Douglass and Paul Cuffe who were aware of slavery system fought for the freedom of all blacks.

The slavery system was first abolished in 1780 in Pennsylvania. Many other northern states abolished slavery. The runaway slaves started to take refuge in free states. The Congress passed the Fugitive Slave Law to stop the flow of the slaves to these free states. A tougher Fugitive Slave Law was issued by Congress in 1850. The process of the end of slavery started in

April 1861 with the outbreak of the American Civil War, which took place between the free states of the North and slave states of the South. President Abraham Lincoln declared the complete emancipation of black slaves on January 1, 1863. Later in 1865, Congress passed the 13<sup>th</sup> and the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendments to the constitution which completely abolished slavery.

During 1930's, it was a quite difficult time for every American because a great economic crisis took place in America. This economic depression ended with the outbreak of Second World War. In the spring of 1963, a non-violent civil rights movement under the leadership of Martin Luther King, Jr., started. More than 250,000 people marched in Washington D.C. demanding "justice for all". King delivered a heart-touching speech.

I have a dream that one day on the red hill of Georgia, the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slaveholders will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood..... I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin, but by the content of their characters.(4)

The focus of civil rights movement centered on the abolishment of segregation and finally to "affirmative actions". This program focused on expanding opportunities for women, minorities and the disabled. Morrison is always in favor of integration and she has never denied privately and publicly if any expedition comes to integrate the races in the U.S. But Morrison is worried that desegregation would collapse the black cultural unity and their attachment with the African roots.

Black literature in American began in early 19<sup>th</sup> century. Harriet Beecher Stowe (1811 - 1896) appeared as a prominent black woman novelist. Her *Uncle Tom's Cabin* became impetus for civil war (1861 - 65). In this regard, Abraham Lincoln advocated that she was the little

woman who made the book that led the Great War. This novel united Northern feelings against slavery. After the Civil War, local color writers emerged in literature. They focused on local materials in their novels. Joel Chandler Harris (1848 - 1908), a Southern, white writer exploited Negro Folklore. His *Uncle Ramus Tales* employed animal characters.

Around the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, large number of blacks began moving from the South cities to the North. Young artists and writers began their struggle for social justice. In literature, this struggle began with *The Soul of Black Folk* (1903) by W. E. B. Du Bois. In this, he described the effect of white American racial prejudice on the minds of blacks. For the first time, he explained the special black American culture. He employed the theme of "black cultural nationalism" in his writings. For him Africa was the spiritual and cultural home of all blacks. He remarked:

"This is not a country, it is a world, a universe of itself and for it self a thing different, immense ... .. It is a great black bosom where the spirit longs to die. It is life, so burning, so fire encircled that one bursts with terrible soul inflaming life" (211)

The era of 1920s was known as the Jazz Age. Jazz was a musical form created by Southern blacks. Black talent in the arts and music flowered during 1920s, '30s and '40s. This awakening began in Harlem, a mostly black section of New York City- It was known as "the Harlem Renaissance". The leading figures of this time are Zora Neale Hurston (1903 - 1960), Richard Wright (1908 - 1946), Langston Hughes (1902 - 1967), James Weldson Johnson (1871 - 1938), Chade McKay (1890 - 1948) and Sterling Brown (1901 - 1984).

The writers in this movement were influenced by the experimental styles of European and American literature. They wrote about the experience of black people in American Society. Langston Hughes (1902 - 1967) one of the leading figures of Harlem Renaissance experimented

with the jazz and blues rhythms of black music. Initially, Hughes did not attack white society but later, his poetry began to express intense anger against the white government. In his poem "Harlem" (1951), he warned whites that there might be an explosion of black violence if blacks could not get social justice for themselves. He asks:

What happened to a dream deferred?

Does it dry up?

Like a raisin in the sun?

Or fester like a sore

And then run?

... ..

Or does it explode? (214)

Another leading figure of Harlem Renaissance was Countee Cullen (1903 - 1946). He focused on love, beauty and the shortness of life. He expressed the pain of being black in America:

The next step in black literature was the exploitation of realistic technique. Richard Wright (1908 - 1960) used the powerful realistic technique in a number of his works. His *Uncle Tom's Children* (1938) gave a detailed description of the violence used by Southern White Society against blacks. He used a new metaphor for the blacks were invisible in American Society.

In the fifties, the Beats Movement emerged calling for a revolution in consciousness. This movement began among college students. They were the "Hippies", who were angry with the policy of white government. By the middle of the sixties, the streets were filled with angry, young people demanding equal rights for blacks and the end of Vietnam War. In 1964, Black Arts Movement started with the aim of radical reordering of the western cultural aesthetic. Le

Roi Jones' play *Dutchman* stunned the theatre world. He openly stated that blacks were better than whites. The civil rights and black power movements fired the women's right movement of the 1960s. Women writers focused on the liberation of the race and the improvement of black community. Black women writers were M. Walker, Rosa Guy, Alice Walker, Toni Morrison, Paule Marshall, Goyl Jones and Tomi Cade Barnbara. They rejected Eurocentric models and interpretation of manhood and womanhood. Further, they turned to non - western, non - white communities and Afro centric models. They searched for the roots of Afro-American culture and institution - black music, speech, religion, land and family. They also reconstructed ancient myths and rituals.

Toni Morrison found that history, culture and literary works of black writers were simply negated at Howard University. But art, culture and literature of Anglo- Americans were taught in the classrooms. This was common practice in the 1940's. Unfortunately, her fellow students at Howard had little interest in authentic African- American culture. Morrison was particularly interested in the common life of southern African- Americans and contributions of blacks. African- American studies became popular in most schools and colleges after the Civil Rights Movement twenty years later.

### **III. A brief discussion of Morrison's Writings:**

Toni Morrison's life began in a small Mid - Western town in Lorain, Ohio. She grew up in a society where African - Americans were terribly discriminated. This might be the reason she believed that the primary function of the black history and art should be the reinterpretation, re - discovery and re - evaluation of people and black cultural practices as lived by black people.

In a sense, Morrison's novels are historical novels that explore the history of American slavery, their emancipation and integration. Morrison in almost all of her novels deals with the

issue of individual identity of her characters. Her characters suffer intra - racial conflict within them and cannot escape the chain of social rejection imposed upon them. In her works, she also attacks the slave trade in America.

Morrison brings her plot from social history in her novels. She is able to collapse the gap between fact and fiction through her use of memory in her writings. She not only depends on black folk for the themes of her writings but also relies on the myth of world literature. Her focus on personality and character is indisputably universal so her stories get multiplicity of meaning. She explores the black community alone as if it were isolated from white world. She believes that consciousness means first personal understanding only then community.

Morrison includes a number of places and people in her writings and slightly enters to the culture and tradition, and explores their rites and rituals. In this context David M. Heaton says:

Her stories translate a multiplicity of places, often superficially tawdry, into a rich cultural matrix. Likewise, the times of her forebears and herself in Ohio are duration, not a Chronology. She thus makes the legendry altogether new, and discovers in colloquial habit and naming the altogether legendry. Legend includes not only the tales of her black folk but the myths of world literature. (661)

Heaton here has emphasized on her colloquial style of writing. It has made her practical, relevant and appropriate. She is conscious about myth and its impact on the lifestyle of people. That is why she makes her efforts to grasp the sensitive part of mythical vision to attract the people towards their very origin.

Morrison does not limit her writing in a particular area of human life. She shows keen interest to the cultural history of African - Americans. Colonialism, which is still working in the post - colonial period casts permanent influence in her writing. In fact, its 'discourse' constantly

repeats white as a superior race and tries to humiliate other race as inferior. Toni Morrison subverts such practice through her writing.

Morrison, in almost all of her works, explores the history of her ancestors who suffered extreme hardships in their lives. She always yearns to give tribute to her ancestors through her writing. Regarding the impact of 20<sup>th</sup> century culture, in Morrison, Linger Leonard writes:

Whether as novelist, critic, professor, editor or mentor to other writers, Toni Morrison has had a profound impact upon the literature and culture of the twentieth century, both in the United States and around the world. Her narrative of loss and rediscovery, longing and renewal, make visible stories that might otherwise have been lost, and eloquently represent the complex workings of oppression resistance and enchantment in African - American communities past and present. (379)

Morrison's greatness lies on her power to record the things occurred in both black and white communities. She perceives the events first and associates its implication to the people of her community in her writings. In this context, we can observe her as a reflector of social history. Morrison in her novels focuses on Afro - American culture from the beginning to the present. She exploited myth in her every novel in order to project her longing for the past.

Morrison's novels blur the line between reality and fantasy. Thus her work is labeled as 'magic realism'. The complexities of blacks' lives are portrayed beautifully and skillfully in her novel. Her novels can also be termed as 'historical novels' as history plays dominant role in her novels.

The suffering of the ordinary blacks in Morrison's world is the result of racism and sexism. Myths and legends are connected while depicting the psychic violence of racism and sexism. Despite the vivid mythical exploration of place, her novel attempts to capture the reality.



While narrating, she brings the historical facts and connects it to the present. While doing so, she explores the Black Cultural heritage which is rich in tradition. James P. Draper regarding Morrison's issues in her novel, states:

Using unconventional narrative structures, poetic language, myth and folklore, Morrison addresses such issues as black victimization, the emotional and social effects of racial and sexual oppression and the difficulties the African Americans face in trying to achieve a sense of identity in a society dominated by white cultural values. (215)

Morrison's novels cover a wide range of subject matter: beauty and ugliness, goodness and evil, joy and sorrow, family and friends, relationship between Black and White, Afro-American cultural heritage and politics of racism. Her works are characterized with precise, highly controlled use of metaphor, clear visual images and an almost baroque allusiveness. Her novels deal with the complex state of black's lives who are forced to live according to the norms constructed by the whites. Her novels also attempt to cover the cultural span of Afro-American experience and the cultural ethos from the past to the present. In this regard, she reconstructs history by capturing the incidents of slavery which became wide spread by the first quarter of the seventeenth century in the U.S.A.

Cynthia A. Davis in her essay, 'Self, Society and Myth' states: "All of Morrison's characters exist in a world defined by its blackness and by the surrounding white society that both violates and denies it" (27). Whites are always in the background in her novels and usually torture the blacks both physically and psychologically. However, it is the blacks that dominate the scene. She avoids the picture of the blacks as invisible in white man's society.

Morrison is more concerned about black literary space. She wants the free play of all category of literary practice. She opines that blackness as "other" provides the material of writing

even to the canonical writer and the existence of white literature depends on the existence of black literature and vice-versa. Morrison depicts the difficulties in black male and female relationship as a result of white intervention in their private lives. Abusive tendency of males are simply stated but she blames the institutionalized form of racism for this entire situation which results in emotional and psychological breakdown.

The sense of internalization in black characters regarding the white norms is shown in her writings. This very situation creates the psychological problems in black characters such as Pecola, Mrs. Breedlove etc. Her writings lack integrated self because African- American experiences are characterized by sense of division and fragmentation. Pastoral nostalgia is another element that we find in her novels. Her novels are mostly structured in a cyclical and repetitive frame. She is more concerned with the inter-relatedness of race, gender and class. Her works present the situation of oppressed class under the mythic structure at the background.

Morrison in her writings beautifully blends the novelistic technique as well as the black folklore. Her works are deeply guided to promote black consciousness by countering the negative representation of black people. The first and foremost issue in her novel is the quest for identity. Her novels capture the complexity and diversity of American life that is purely the “American” experience and to capture that point, black folklore becomes the richest source for a black writer.

#### **IV. Morrison as an African - American female Writer:**

Toni Morrison, being a black female writer has been able to bring the attention of the world to African - American women writers and their contribution in literature. Till 1970s, the black women in the literary circles were in shadow. Very few African American female writers received notice for their work from the mainstream literary circles. Though poet Gwendolyn

Brooks and Lorraine Hansberry a playwright and the winner of Pulitzer Prize worked vigorously in the field of literature, their literary works were not included in the course book.

Toni Morrison, at the age of 62, received the Nobel Prize for literature. By then, she had written six novels, all telling the triumphs and tragedies of African - American in the 1800s and 1900s. Her novels had captured the attention of critics and readers all over the world. The Nobel Committee of the Swedish Academy, which awards the prize, praised Morrison for her literary efforts in its announcement. The academy called Morrison "a literary artist of finest work", who "gives life to an essential aspect of American reality".

Alfred Bernhard Nobel, a Swedish scientist, founded the Nobel Prize. It is given each year since 1901. The prizes are given in six different fields of study to the person who has made a significant contribution to the “good of humanity”. The prizes are awarded in physics, chemistry, medicine, international peace, economics and literature.

The Nobel Prize in literature is given to a person who has created the most distinguished work of an idealistic nature. The award is given usually for lifetime of literary efforts. The award is given on December 10, the death anniversary of Alfred Nobel. No one doubted that Morrison deserved the Nobel Prize. She was presented with the award at a lavish ceremony. Her mother was delighted but not surprised with Morrison’s achievement. When Morrison arrived in Sweden in December 10 to receive the prize, her fans greeted her enthusiastically. An audience of 400 well-wishers at the Swedish Academy heard her Nobel Prize lecture about the importance of literature in forming a humane society. Morrison emphasizing on language said that oppressive language does more than representing violence. It itself is violence, it also limits knowledge. She further said that whether it is obscuring state language of faux-language of mindless media; the proud but calcified language of the academy or the commodity- driven language of science, whether it is malign language of law without ethics, or language designed for the estrangement or

minorities, hiding its racist plunder in its literary check, it must be rejected, altered and exposed. She believed that language plays an important role in the happiness of human life. It is the language through which she finds American society engaged in hatred, segregation, marginalization and the outcome of which is the alienation of marginalized community.

Toni Morrison believed the voice of the African - American female was missing from American literature. In her literary works, she brings the issue that even the black male writers like James Baldwin, Richard Wright, and Ralph Ellison had missed to examine the complex and rich life style of black women and had simply ignored them. Morrison's positive attitude towards women can be observed in what she expresses in her collection of essays, *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and Literary imagination*. She writes about her primary responsibility and promises to fulfill it as an African- American woman writer.

My work required me to think about how free I can be as an African - American woman writer in my genderized, sexualized, wholly racialized world. To think about (and wrestle with) the full implications of my situation leads me to consider what happens when other writers work in a highly historically racialized society. For them, as for me, imagining is not merely looking or looking at; nor is it taking oneself intact into the other. (4)

Morrison refuses to display her African American women character in a degrading way. For instance in her novel *Sula* she portrays a female character named Sula, the protagonist whom the society outcasts, yet she moves forward encouraging herself with the individual will power and even struggles successfully. She shows her concern towards the black women and determines to work for them. Morrison is well aware of her duty towards the black women community. She shows her concern towards the black women and determines to work for them. She shares her experience of being a black woman writer in this racialized society and still feels

restricted in her genderized and sexualized society. Morrison's primary focus has always been the portrayal of black cultural traditions. She believes it helps to create a distinctively black literature as important as canonical literature. She always chooses her protagonist from black community. The strong longing for the unachievable, leads her protagonist to downfall. Her black female characters suffer more than her black male characters. They become the victims of white society as well as they have to tolerate the domination of black male characters. For example her novel *The Bluest Eye* ends with Pecola's death. Morrison does not only reflect the pain of blacks but she also portrays the suffering of human beings in her novels. Morrison in *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and Literary Imagination* further remarks:

Silence from and about the subject was the order of the day. Some of the silences were broken, and some were maintained by authors who lived with and within the policing narrative. What I am interested in are the strategies for maintaining the silence and the strategies for breaking it. How did the founding writers of young America engage, imagine, employ and create an Africanist presence and persona? In what ways do these strategies explicate a vital part of American literature? (51).

Morrison targets silence and likes to break it. She thinks that silencing women itself is the great injustice, which is knowingly or unknowingly, directly or indirectly being practiced in the black communities.

For almost twenty years, Morrison has created memorable African - American characters who struggle to live their lives as full individual and memories of the African - American community. Her characters must often overcome the brutality of slavery, racial and economic oppression, and sexism but they rely on their own inner strength, the bond of the African - American community, spirituality, and their love of African - American culture to shape their

lives. "It's true my characters go through difficult circumstances," Morrison once told an interviewer. But by the end of her novels," people always know something profound and wonderful."

## **V. Review of Literature**

Toni Morrison being an ethnic writer has a complex identity. This complexity is also reflected in her writings. Critics have evaluated her writings from different perspectives such as racist, feminist, mythological, spiritual etc. But we can observe her essence of writing as glue that joins past and present. Linger Leonard thus claims:

Morrison reveals the interconnectedness of past and present and the myriad ways in which human beings are implicated in each others circumstances. (365).

According to Leonard, Morrison observes past as the base of present. She keeps keen interest to the past events and acknowledges its consequences in the present. Leonard claims that one of the dominant aspects of Morrison's writings is her profound attachment with the past through different devices.

In her first novel, *The Bluest Eye*, Morrison has portrayed Pecola Breedlove as a typical black girl and a victim of poverty and uneducation. She believes that the crux of her problem is her lack of blue eyes. She has a false understanding that until she possesses a pair of blue eyes, the suffering in her family will prolong for years. Her awareness of the blue eyes emerges through her vision of past and at present she longs for them. Donald Gibson writes:

The text is what we read of Pecola's experience: the counter text is the central mythology of the dominant culture, a mythology demystified and therefore disempowered by Morrison's analysis of the relation of the experience of specific individuals to the myth (164).

The white people around Pecola create a myth of blue eyes as the symbol of richness and prosperity. Possession of the blue eyes is supposed to have a power to make life free from all sorts of anxieties.

Her second novel *Sula* published in 1973 shows the story of a very close friendship between two women who live completely different lives and have different points of views about what makes life worth living. The novel begins with a brief account of The Bottom, the community in which the novel is set. The town was lively in the past but in the course of time, the prosperity of the place is gone leaving only nostalgia of the past. Sula feels uncomfortable with the traditional lifestyle of the past and decides to make a drastic change in the present. Both Sula and Nel are the protagonists of the novel, influenced by traditional and modern paths of life. Nel is more restrained and conservative whereas Sula is adventurous and pragmatic. They enjoyed an intense closeness, early in their friendship but the environment in which they live cannot sustain their friendship. Nel gets married to Jude and remains in The Bottom. Sula however leaves The Bottom to make her own way. When she returns ten years later, she has a chain of affairs with several men, including Jude. Jude's infidelity with Sula destroys her friendship with Nel. Sula becomes the social outcast. Though she tries to defend herself, she fails and dies. It is years later that Nel realizes she was partly guilty for Sula's death. Morrison here explores the creative possibilities of women's friendship in this novel by showing the complexity of the two women's identities.

Morrison's third novel *Song of Solomon* was published in 1977 which is a crucial journey of Milkman, the protagonist who is only guided by the memory. He goes to different places and recognizes them as the shrines of black devotees. He escapes tactfully from the people who try to outsmart him. His engagement in domestic affairs of material world is a part of the novel, but his

journey along with the instruction of some mythical figures is a pure sense of memory.

Regarding the actions and thoughts of the protagonist, Valerie Smith remarks:

During a trip to his ancestral home, however, Milkman discovers his own capacity for emotional expansiveness and learns to perceive the passage of time as a cyclic process. When he incorporates both his familial and his personal history into his sense of the present, he repairs his feelings of fragmentation and comprehends for the first time the coherence of his own life. (278).

Milkman exists in the present considering the past as its base. Milkman's sense of identity emerges when he allows himself to accept his personal and ancestral history. The whole novel tells the story of Milkman Deed's reaching to the present world by manipulating the past for his total identity.

Morrison's fourth novel *Tar Baby* published in 1981 measures the sense of blackness hidden in every black folk. This novel invoked the African-American folktale that was told and retold in black communities. The title is taken from African-American folktale associated with the goodness of tar from where blackness flows, which is explored by the very dynamic character Jadine. Morrison has employed tar lady myth to reveal the sacred power of tar and to prophesy the significance of Afro centric understanding of sacredness of community for the present. *Tar Baby* is the first novel where Morrison includes white central characters- Valerine and Margaret Street. Jadine here represents tar baby, a figure created by white men's institutions to trap black men. Marilyn Sanders Mobley emphasizes upon the motive of the Tar Baby and considers it as Morrison's visual expression of past and present images. She states:

*Tar Baby* appears to be simply the story of a failed love affair between a man and a woman with diametrically opposed values and lifestyles. On a deeper level, the



novel is about the disparity Morrison sees between the women of her remembered past and the women of the present epitomized in the character of Jadine. (285)

*Beloved* published in 1987 which explores the horrifying situation of slavery is Morrison's most acclaimed work. This novel won the Pulitzer Prize and Robert F Kennedy Award in 1988. It is based on the true story of Margaret Garner: a slave woman who killed her own child rather than to sell the infant to slavery. Through this novel, Morrison not only tells the story of Sethe but also tells the story of millions of Africans who died during slavery. Morrison makes her people aware of future. Regarding this technique implemented by Morrison, Mobley writes:

In another words, Morrison questioned what she perceived to be a romanticization of both the African past and the American past that threatened to devalue 300 years of black life on American soil before it was fully recorded. (356)

Toni Morrison's latest novel *Love* published in 2003 is based on the past history of the Afro-Americans permanently settled in the United States. The novel shows the life style of a black community during 1940s and 1950s. She has used memory as the basic element of her writing and connects it with the present. Sometimes she also uses the flashback technique which is unique in the whole American literature. Bill Cosey, the protagonist around whom the whole story evolves has been dead for twenty five years. Even though, his influence can not be ignored and he is still a real presence to a number of women who shared his life in the past. In the whole novel, Toni Morrison has used memory as narration that speaks of a longer history of black community and influences the present order of life. Morrison has used narrative technique to reveal and interpret her ideas by some characters as her own mouthpiece or spokesman. Regarding her technique of employing narrator, Barbara Rigney remarks:

As the author has no self that is manifested in her fiction, so also Morrison's narrators are most often unidentifiable, anonymous vehicles to transmit information and convey emotion rather than to provide moral interpretation or represent a personality. Often these narrators disappear completely as one character or other steps forward to tell the story from a different point of view. But even these speaking characters reflect multiple and fragmented selves, which are sometimes undefined, inevitably amorphous, always merging with the identity of a community as a whole or with the very concept of blackness. (54)

In her interview with Elissa Schappel, Morrison talks about her characters as "I take control of them. They are carefully imagined. They are like ghosts. They have nothing on their minds but themselves and aren't interested in anything but themselves." (85) Morrison in her novel *Love* has given more priority to the women characters and their relationships beside the race and class. The women are influenced by the past which has affected their present. Toni Morrison's *Love* is thus a story of the complexity of love. Sometimes the love is so complex that the characters themselves don't even realize when they are acting out of love and sometimes love is a word never spoken. What emerges in this book is a beautiful story of fascinating people learning to live with and love another. The plot is very simple but the people are not.

#### **V. Critics on *The Bluest Eye*:**

*The Bluest Eye* was published in 1970. Critical reviews were positive, though the sales were modest by publishing standards. Several reputable newspapers and book review journals, like 'The New York Times book Review,' 'The Chicago Tribune,' 'The New Yorker' and 'Newsweek,' reviewed *The Bluest Eye* and complimented Morrison for her writing style. Other

reviews praised her for daring to take an honest look at American racism and its damaging effects on the mental health and spiritual development of African – American children, particularly girls. Morrison was one of the first writers, black or white to ask what happens to the mind, heart and soul of a young Afro- American girl who is raised in a society that values beauty standards that are not her own.

*The Bluest Eye* is Toni Morrison's first novel that has faced much criticism for and against. Critics have analyzed this novel from various points of views but its racial issue is at the centre of analysis. The novel has widely attracted the attention of critics and readers. Some of the critics blamed her novel as a product of her prejudiced racial issue. But Morrison believes that America is badly in need of a healthy competitive racial environment. She opines that the conflict that goes between the blacks and whites should have the free play of respective ideas and opportunity as it is the fundamental foundation of America's progress.

Henry Louis Gates remarks that African- American experiences are at the heart of Morrison's writing. He further says:

Her novels are never 'about' the black community of Lorain, Ohio, in the thirties and forties, even when they are apparently set there. Morrison's work is always symbolic of the shaved human condition both engaging with and transcending lines of gender, race and class. (9)

Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* though is set in Lorain, Ohio to depict the harsh realities of African- American life but its effect is larger in its power and intensity as its issue is universal in its scope.

Susan Willis remarks that Morrison's major concern is to preserve the Afro- American folk culture after the dispersion of the rural, southern, Pre- war black communities. Willis narrates:

“The problem at the center of Morrison’s writing is how to maintain an African-American cultural heritage once the relationship to the black rural south has been stretched thin over distance and generations.” (309)

Willis further says:

“The ultimate honor of bourgeois society against which Morrison writes and the end results of both alienation and repression in reification. None of Morrison’s black characters actually accedes to the upper reaches of bourgeois reification, but there are some who come close.”(312)

Willis is of opinion that in Morrison’s writing she equates bourgeois values with the white’s cultural standard. In the north, black remained in a marginal position and imperfectly assimilated to bourgeois values.

Barbara Christian examines Morrison’s work as fantastic earthy realism. Morrison’s work resonates with mixtures of pleasure and pain, wonder and horror as it is deeply rooted in history and mythology. Morrison believes that the false notion of beauty has brought disaster in the lives of black. Presenting the story of a black girl Pecola who is in the search of the blue eyes which she thinks will bring her beauty, goodness and happiness, Morrison shows how the conflict between two cultures affects the psyche of people involved. She states:

“This simple theme, the desire of a black girl for blue eyes, is a real and symbolic statement about the conflict between the good and the beauty of two cultures and how it affects the psyche of people within those cultures. The theme is at the base of the conflict of artistic and societal values between the Anglo-American cultures complicated by the psycho political dominance of one culture over another. As such this novel is a book about mythic, political and cultural mutilation as much as it is a book about race and sex hatred. (60)

Barbara Christian agrees that blue eyes, blond hair and fair skin are the symbols of beauty valued in the west “as proclaimed by romantic novels, movies, billboards, dolls and the reaction of the people to golden objects.” (60). Christian clarifies that such kind of symbol only affects the psyche of the people within those cultures.

Michael Awkward states:

In a white- dominated America, she (Pecola) represents a perfect target of scorn for the blacks who are armed with this knowledge. These Afro- Americans, in fact, use Pecola as ritual object in their ceremonies designed to exhibit to the master their “rejection of the master.” (189)

According to Michael Awkward, the one feature that distinguishes Pecola and her family from other Afro- Americans in the novel is the authenticity of her adoption of western standards Pecola never learns of the political benefits of masking and self- division.

*The Bluest Eye* seems to be concentrated on the factors which provoke Pecola’s victimization in her own community. Michael Awkward further states:

Only by understanding the specific provocations for the sacrifice of Pecola Breedlove can we comprehend the role of masking and double consciousness in the tragedy of the novel. Such an understanding will enable us to grasp the reasons that Morrison presents the (divided) Afro- American psyche as unhealed in the text’s narrative events. (189)

Barbara Regney in “Hagar’s Mirror: Self and Identity in Morrison’s fiction” views choosing one’s own name in certain tragic cases represents a rejection of race and culture. Pauline Breedlove in *The Bluest Eye* provides, “yet another example of Morrison’s concern with the significance of naming” (60). On the name of Pauline Breedlove as ‘Poly’ nick named by the whites, Regney comments:

‘Mrs. Breedlove’ even to her husband and children, she is ‘Polly’ to the white family for whom she works, and the diminutive name is totally appropriate in this case, for Pauline has diminished herself through her obsequious dedication to whiteness just as surely as little Pecola is diminished by her desire for blue eyes.(60-61)

Regeny further expresses that nick names are appropriate in Morrison’s novel, “..... denoting truths about character, revealing secretes, determining how a person is viewed by a particular community” (61).

Keith E. Byerman is conscious about the black hostility due to the result of oppression made by the dominant culture. He focuses on intra racial hostility along with the inter- racial hostility. Byerman says:

More than the melancholy story of a little girl driven mad by the world’s hostility, *The Bluest Eye* tells the story of the community and society that persecutes her. Pecola may be the central character, but she is far from the only victim of the blue eyes. “We” individually and collectively are both victimizer and victim; and, while the roles vary with each character, it is also the case that the role of victimizer results from that character’s own victimization by a larger society. (101)

He after analyzing the complex state of blacks’ existence comes to the conclusion that individual freedom and full humanity is some what impossible in an objectifying and manipulative society even though it is the main goal of one’s lives. He says that to refuse that state of tension and negation is to accept self hatred, illusion and even madness. (106)

## Chapter Two

### 2. Race and Racism

#### I. Introduction and Historical Background

Race is a socially constructed concept which divides the human kind in major division in terms of distinctive characteristics. It refers to a group of population constituting humanity. The categorization of a group of race resulted from the biological basis. The authentic base for the definition of race was the hereditary transmission of physical characteristics. Thus, race may be defined as a group with gene frequencies differing from those of the other groups in the human species.

The concept of race developed long back when invasions, conquests and migration gave birth to a heterogeneous world population. But the term 'race' became much more poignant during the colonial period when the people of different places came into contact with each other. Lots of attempts have been made by the scholars to classify humans since the seventeenth century. J.F. Blumenbach was the first anthropologist to divide mankind into five human races on the basis of skin colour: Caucasian or white, Mongolian or yellow, Ethiopian or black, American or red and Malayan or brown. Later during the nineteenth and early twentieth century writers like J.A. Gobineau and H.S. Chamberlain gave cultural and psychological values to race by stressing or attributing the so-called superiority of their own kind of culture or nationality. (Dobzhansky).

The study and practice of race is not the present phenomenon. It 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 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 Greeks to become

tougher and more independent” (Appiah 2750). Similarly, in the Hellenic world, the black “Ethiopians” and blonde “Scythians” were regarded inferior to the Greeks. But, in the writing of Pre- Socratic sophist and Homer, racial characteristics were defined on the basis of individual quality of a person instead of colour.

The discovery of New World by Christopher Columbus brought lots of changes in the perception of people of the new land. “This accident of the history of perception of human differences produced the race concept as it is now generally held” (Brace). The race took a new perception out of the artificial circumstances as created by colonization. During the Elizabethan period, Negro was defined as “black, ugly, cruel, sexual, rampant and barely human.” Likewise, during the Victorian era, many racialists were of opinion that human being can be divided into several “races” on the basis of biological, moral and intellectual characteristics. Appiah states this notion of the racialists like this:

We could divide human beings into smaller number of groups called ‘races,’ in such a way that all the members 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.’ (276).

During the eighteenth and nineteenth century, lots of social, economic, intellectual and political change took place in the global scenario. The term “race” was used to define the people on the basis of their physical characteristics. The study of racial doctrines and ideologies took new form during post- enlightenment period and reached its high point during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.



## **II. Racism and its consequences:**

Racism is a belief system or a set of implicit assumption about the superiority of one's own race or ethnic group. It can be defined as discrimination made by a group on the basis of race, colour and religion where discrimination is the product of prejudice. It is even defined focusing on the genetically transmitted traits and its connection to the social characteristics. It encompasses the beliefs, attitudes, behavior and practices that define people on racial divisions. It assumes the fact that the differences are the product of biological traits and, therefore, not changeable. Racism in short, is the belief system and discrimination its practices.

Racism is a broader term which consist 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. Racism exists both in conscious and unconscious level. Its effect is very much disastrous or damaging both to the victims and the perpetrators if it is practiced in an unhealthy manner. In fact, it is a false concept to associate the genetic traits to social characteristics. Therefore Gerzina has rightly said:

Racism at individual level involves a misguided personal belief that an ethnic racial group is deficient or superior because of a set of moral, intellectual or cultural traits that are thought to be indicated by the group's biological origin.”  
(126).

These beliefs in practice result in more complicated racial practice that is cultural racism. Domination of one culture over the other by imposing cultural values or by restricting the possible improvisation of cultural behaviors of the latter one leaves psychological disintegration. Racial issues aroused by the whites were considered to be unquestionable because the white race and its cultural products were considered to be superior to the black ones.

Due to the interference of different social, political and cultural institution in course of time, racism takes new shape. Instead of following the notion of singularity, it encompasses diverse scholarly ideas which has been shaped and determined by several power policies. The idea that the blacks are inferior and the discrimination, the feeling of superiority over “the other” on the basis of colour are the dominant tendency of racism. Racism begins at personal level. This individual racism takes the form of institutional racism which ultimately culminates into the cultural racism. Discrimination at personal level forms at the collective level. It then provides stamp of legality. At social level, it is set in mind but when it becomes a system, it is very difficult to change.

Racial characteristics, at present, are taken as defining features of certain group of peoples. But such mode of definition lacks scientific ground for its justification. Ever since the Pre- Christian era to the present, the very black colour is associated with ugliness, despair, evil whereas whiteness is associated with beauty, goodness, virtue and innocence. Both in the past and present blacks are discriminated on the basis of colour and hence declared as inferior. The contemporary form of racism is defined in terms of culture and identity which is shaped by the discoveries like nationalism or patriotism, xenophobia, gender differences etc. The social and political upheaval of the 60s and 70s made way to the post modern liberal and multicultural society. The traditional mode of racism has been replaced by ‘New-racism’. The new racism sees the race not as biological issue or heredity but as cultural product. At the surface level, it doesn’t believe in the superiority of one race or group 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. Racism takes place both in explicit and implicit level. The discrimination made on a direct mode of behavior is the explicit or overt racism whereas the implied or hidden mode of

discriminatory acts takes place in implicit or covert racism. No one is a born racist rather it is learned or acquired through social process.

In United States, racism was analyzed for political purposes so that it would be easy to rule over the oppressed groups. W.H. Tucker in his article 'The Science and Politics of Racial Research' argues, "The truth is that though waged with scientific purpose or value" (380). The study of racism in 20<sup>th</sup> century is thus the study of political racism because genetic differences between the black and white is studied under the scientific criteria giving the political colour. Tucker further says:

The question of genetic differences 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).

Scientists tried to establish the superiority of whites over the blacks declaring that blacks have smaller shape and size of skull than the whites. They even associated blacks with the apes for their longer arm and smaller skull size and shape to justify the practices of slavery. They taught the world that true Negro was less human because he possesses an oval skull, flat forehead, snout-like jaws, swollen lips, broad, flat nose, crammed hair, calf less legs, highly elongated heels and flat feet. Thus, exaggerating the deformities as set by the white standard, they tried to give permanence and stability to the false doctrine of natural Negro inferiority.

The whites chose a group of Negro from the community in order to rule over the mass black. These groups of Negro acted as mediators between themselves and the blacks. Giving greater significance to the colour of skin they created sharp division between the light- skinned and dark- skinned blacks. The blacks then started to compete within themselves. Thus, following the same path of whites they perpetuated the chain of oppression. This very notion of mimicry

can be seen in Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*. The "sugar brown mobile girls" who "are as sweet and plain as butter- cake" try to train themselves in accordance with the white standard so that their imitation of the white standard may provide new social recognition. They are too much conscious of their beauty and possible sexual perversion; seem to have better attachment with the white colour and the dominant culture rather than black. They study so that they may work with refinement for the white family. It is an irony that not only they love serving the white family with their college knowledge; they also take interest in imitating the white norms. They hate the black things and black people as well.

They go to land- grant colleges, normal schools and learn how to do white man's work with refinement: home economics to prepare his food; teacher education to instruct black children in obedience; music to soothe the weary master and entertain his blunted Soul [.....], in short, how to get rid of the funkiness, the dreadful funkiness of passion, the funkiness of nature, the funkiness of the wide range of human emotions. (Morrison, *The Bluest Eye* 64).

Blacks suffer from the inferiority complex, alienation among the dominant white cultural norms. So, in order to get rid from mental agony, they try to adopt the mainstream cultural norms and values. But in this process, they get split between African heritage and European cultural tradition. Blacks in a racist society are categorized, defined and dehumanized but their desire of being 'white' is the product of their wish to gain recognition in the society. Due to this, they develop the wish for white skin.

The tendency of exploitation or domination done by the privileged to the underprivileged group is the historical fact. The Greeks categorized the 'low- born' people as lacking capacities to be the rulers and therefore their place were associated with the slaves. In the same way, Bible describes Jesus Christ as white thus blacks are marginalized and their skin colour interpreted as a

product of sin. Racism during 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> century became more dominant. The minorities were oppressed in the name of religion, colour, and pseudo- scientific facts or under the threat of guns. The discovery of America by Christopher Columbus and its results such as migration of coloured population from the west coast of Africa and that of white settlers from the European continents to America mark the historical roots of racism in the United States of America. But during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the inter-racial conflict between the whites and the blacks inclined to the level of intra- racial conflict especially within black communities.

### **III. Racism in America:**

The history of America began with the grabbing of the land from Native Americans and enforcing the blacks to cultivate the land. It consequently created hierarchies in colour and division of land. The whites established the system of privilege in terms of oppression and exploitation. Harris and Ordonia say:

This social division along the colour 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 form of white privilege. Whites enjoyed wide latitude of opportunities, personal freedom, and democratic rights protected by the State. Even though 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, blacks, and other people of colour. (27- 28)

Within the cultural hegemony, racial discrimination has been a vital tool for the American whites for making a binary opposition between black and white. In America the practice of racism that is one race is superior to another is deep- rooted. Though the American

society is itself multiracial, only the binary projection of whiteness and blackness is much practiced.

Race is socially constructed rather than an inherently meaningful category. It divides mankind in major divisions in terms of distinctive characteristics. Superiority of one group or its cultural practice exclusively defines another as the inferior because of the presence or absence of the characteristics the former has. Racism always involves the notion of exclusion or inclusion.

Racial oppression in the United States has become part and parcel of the daily lives of Blacks. With the arrival of the European settlers in America, they brought with them some menial laborers from the west coast of Africa. Later this population increased so swiftly that the whole northern and southern parts of America became full of black population. As a result, the relationship between the whites and the blacks developed as that of master and slave.

The South had more demands of the black labourer for cultivation. South, in a sense, became the real home of the blacks as they worked hard in making it a beautiful place. They made South a good home with their blood, sweat and tears. The American South originally belonged to the African Americans, who gave a new shape to the landscape by building the houses, clearing the forests and planting and harvesting crops. It was shaped by their labour so they still have sentimental attachment with the South. But the cultivated land was never their own. Not only that, they became slaves and received second class treatment. The whites invented the myth to oppress the black on the basis of so-called natural inferiority. Though their labour was valued but they were dehumanized. They became foreigner in their own land.

The life of blacks during the slavery is characterized by extreme pain and misery. Sexual exploitation and inhuman treatment became rampant. The separation of father and mother slaves and their separation with their children was a common thing. Physical as well as mental torture was day to day experience in their lives. In the southern plantation land, oppression, exploitation

and severe punishment were common. Douglass narrates the severe punishments that the blacks received during the slavery. The masters would beat slaves as if they had no life.

Master, however, was not a human slave- holder. It required extraordinary barbarity on the part of an overseer to affect him. He was a cruel man, hardened by a long life of slave holding. He would at times seem to take great pleasure on whipping a slave. I have often been awakened at the dawn of the day by the most heart- rending shrieks of an 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. No words, no tears, no prayers from his gory victim, seemed to move iron heart from its bloody purpose. The louder she screamed, the harder he whipped longest. 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)

During the post- bellum period, the ex- slaves of the South moved to the North as an industrial labour to attain freedom and success. But North, too, could not fulfill their wishes. Blacks suffered from the loss of identity and social recognition wherever they went. They felt the sense of alienation and frustration with their existence. They could not get equal level of opportunity, freedom and wages as the white labourer. The practice of racism was severe even in the North. The average black population not only suffered from the hands of whites but also from well-to-do blacks. This is what Morrison's character Pauline experiences after the migration to the North. "Northern coloured folk was different too. Dicty- like. No better than whites for meanness. They could make you feel just as no – count, 'cept I didn't expect it from them." (Morrison, *The Bluest Eye* 117). Though in the surface level, North appeared as a free land but freedom and equality were displaced by the practices of racial prejudice. Entrance into the public

place, voting rights, equal level of wages was not available to the blacks. Blacks were thus, forced to lead a miserable life.

During the presidential year of Abraham Lincoln, blacks were declared free from slavery and equal level of opportunities was promised to them. The slave trade disappeared during the first half of the nineteenth century but the master- slave relationship between the whites and blacks was replaced by “other forms of unfree labour such as indentures, share cropping, debt bondage.” Thus again slavery was continued in the form of unfree labourer. Blacks were still made dependent and subordinate to their masters.

After the declaration of emancipation, blacks moved to North for better opportunities and freedom but they faced the problem of identity crisis, sense of dispossession and fragmentation. 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 black self. They tried to see the black self through white glasses which brought only tragedy in their lives. They felt divided within themselves since they could not reconcile their divided selves into single self. The southern rural self and the new urban self couldn't find real adjustment. There was rather conflict and people felt regional displacement.

Racism had made their lives miserable. Blacks' journey from South to North was only the change in the form of labour. They changed to industrial labourer from plantation labourer. They became slave in both social systems. Their African- American norms, values and cultural heritage has been marginalized and dominated by the mainstream white culture. In course of different historical events, blacks started to internalize white cultural values so that they may be well accepted in the society. Herein, lies the root cause of their misery. It is because they could neither totally reject their own cultural roots nor were able to totally internalize white cultural norms. As a result they feel themselves divided into two selves.



#### **IV. Racial conflict in *The Bluest Eye*:**

The relationship between the whites and blacks has always been that of master and slave. Whites as a member of privileged class have valorized the colour of their skin i.e. whiteness. Whiteness has been associated to beauty and happiness whereas blackness with ugliness and despair. As a member of distinct race, black becomes 'the other' in white men's eyes. And when the economic status and the colour of skin are labeled as a measuring rod of social acceptance the blacks gets systematically deranged. The social structure has become so complex that the members of both communities feel lack of love and co-operation. As a result a deep rooted hatred is born in their heart.

In shaping the social interaction between black and white communities, colour, caste and social- economic status play the vital role. The racial hostility emerges not only in course of social dealing between the blacks and whites as a member of two distinct racial communities but it extends even to the level of intra racial hostility as the 'chain of oppression' always operates in course of social interaction. The practice of discrimination and oppression upon the weaker members of the community is the root cause behind racial hostility between blacks and whites.

In the lives of blacks, social marginality has become the permanent condition. They teach their children the middle class white standard as the ideal way of life which is beyond their reach both in terms of colour and family structure. This is the point from where the tragedy begins in their lives. In such unhealthy social environment, discrimination and prejudice are born. The very dominant background of primer text indoctrinated the children about the concept of beauty, colour and sophisticated middle class white life as an ideal one:

Here is the house. It is green and white. It has a red door. It is very pretty. Here is the family. Mother, Father, Dick and Jane live in the green and white house. They

are very happy. See Jane. Do you want to play with Jane? See the dog run. Run, dog, run- look, look. Here comes a friend. The friend will play with Jane. They will play a good game. Play, Jane, play. (Morrison, *The Bluest Eye*3).

This text forces them to fulfill such urges because problematic nature of their existence is juxtaposed by the ideal world of order and happiness that each member of the community cherishes. The wealthy and cheerful family described in this story seems to have been enjoying a luxurious life. Children, who are the most sensitive members of a society, begin to read this story at the school. After reading this story, the poor and black children of the society naturally become shocked and humiliated. The educational system becomes the tool to oppress the victim by defining the standard of beauty and thus forcing them to internalize these values. They impose whole scheme of values such as political, religious, moral, aesthetic that has little or nothing to do with blacks' actual lives. But they turn out to be the pathetic figure since they can not meet these imposed standards.

The simple to complex structural development of Jane and Dick implies how simple matter of colour consciousness develops into a very complex one in the mind of children. This very education to the innocent children turns out to be shocking experience in the life of black children. There is a wide socio- economic gap between the whites and the blacks. This gap can be noticed by comparing the life standard of Rosemary Vilanucci and Mac Teer sisters. Rosemary Vilanucci "live above the father's café, sits in a 1939 Buick eating bread and butter." Whereas Frieda and her sisters lives in " old, cold and green" house and had to go rail road tracks in order to "fill burlap sacks with the tiny pieces of coal lying about". (Morrison, *The Bluest Eye* 5). Rosemary rolls down the window to tell them that they cannot come in because she knows that they are blacks. Such situation naturally breeds the hostile atmosphere in the lives of respective partners. The privileged one naturally tries to dominate weak and poor whereas the

vanquished revolt against the existing situation. The colour makes the black as an outsider but along with this, their poor economic status makes them marginal: “Being a minority in both cast and class, we moved about anyway on the hem of life, struggling to consolidate our weakness and hand on or to rip singly up in to the major folds of the garment.” (Morrison, *The Bluest Eye* 11).

Pecola was fascinated by the desire of having blue eyes and white skin that she always drinks “milk in a blue- and- white Shirley temple cup”. (Morrison, *The Bluest Eye* 16). It was not only the children who considered Shirley Temple as symbol of whiteness and beauty but all the grown ups and conscious members of the society had the same idea: “Adults, older girls, shops, magazines, newspapers, window signs- all the world had agreed that a blue- eyed, yellow haired, pink skinned doll was what every girl treasured.” (Morrison, *The Bluest Eye* 14). This sort of institutionalized definition of beauty had brought tragedy in the lives of blacks. It is safe way to impose one’s cultural values over the other.

The Breedloves lived in a store front because “they were poor and black and they stayed there because they believed they were ugly” (Morrison, *The Bluest Eye* 28). They lack even common things such as furniture, musical instrument, and bathroom in their house. Such poverty ridden life further compelled them to internalize dominant social voice which defined them. The major problem with Breedlove family is that they believed they were ugly; they never had any type of self-confidence.

You looked at them and wondered why they were too ugly; you looked closely and could not find the source. Then you realized that it came from conviction, their conviction. It was as though some mysterious all knowing master had given each one cloak of ugliness to wear and they had each accepted it without a question. The master had said, “You are ugly people”. They had looked about

themselves and saw nothing to contradict the statement; saw, in fact, support for it leaning at them from every bill board, every movie, every glance. (Morrison, *The Bluest Eye* 28)

The problem in the life of Pecola emerges from the narrow definition of beauty that excludes the blacks in social interaction. She had to feel humiliation in front of her family, friends and teachers. All of them had either ignored or despised her. She was the only member of her class who sat alone at a double desk. If any girl in the school desired to insult or ridicule the boy she could simply say “Boby loves Pecola Breedloves! Boby loves Pecola Breedloves! (Morrison, *The Bluest Eye* 34). Such appalling state of inhuman situation inspired her to long the bluest eyes and reject her blackness so that she may have the same degree of social acceptance. As her white friends are adored by the classmates as well as teachers, so she too wants to gain social acceptance by being something difference than what she naturally is:

It had occurred to Pecola some time ago that if her eyes, those eyes that held the picture, and knew the sights – if those eyes of hers were different, that is to say beautiful, she herself would be different [.....]. Each night, without fail, she prayed for blue eyes. Fervently, for a year she had prayed. Although somewhat discouraged, she was not without hope. To have something as wonderful as that happen would take long, long time. (Morrison, *The Bluest Eye* 34)

Pecola likes to buy and the Mary Jane candies from the shop of Yacobowski because there is a blond, blue- eyed smiling white face on the wrapper. She prefers to eat because “to eat the candy is somehow to eat the eyes, eat Mary Jane. Love Mary Jane. Be Mary Jane” (Morrison, *The Bluest Eye* 38). In the eyes of many people she doesn’t exist. Mr. Yacobowski, a fifty- two- year old white immigrant storekeeper, does not see her, because for him there is nothing to see. The vacuity and total absence of human recognition in white’s eyes is Pecola’s common

experience that makes her feel the permanent loss. While offering money, “he hesitates, not wanting to touch her hand” (Morrison, *The Bluest Eye* 37). This is the extreme form of discrimination and humiliation.

Mac Teer sisters go to the Lake Shore Park in order to meet Pecola and ask for whiskey. But it was the park prohibited to black children. This very prohibition caused them to wander in the world of imagination. Curiosity is the basic human nature that forces human beings to explore the area that is forbidden. Due to this, black children fantasized the beautiful park where only the whites had access. Claudia narrates what black children feel when they are in front of the beautiful park as Lake Shore Park: “It was empty now, but sweetly expectant of clean, white, well behaved children and parents who would play there above the lake in summer before half running, half stumbling down the slope to the welcoming water. Black people were not allowed in the park, and so it filled out dreams” (Morrison, *The Bluest Eye* 81).

Pauline is working in fisher’s house. She is totally devoted in her work. One day when Cholly comes there drunk demanding some money, the white lady becomes very angry. She asks Pauline to abandon her husband if she is to continue her work. When Pauline disagrees with her she is even refused to provide her earlier salary. It shows that whites are inclined not only to exploit their labour but are even ready to bring disintegration in blacks’ lives.

Even in the hospital the doctor’s behavior toward a black woman is biased. Their treatment to a black patient is shaped by colour prejudiced. The mode of diagnosis gets changed on the basis of colour. At her second gestation, Pauline is admitted in a hospital. But the doctors treat her as if she were an animal and doesn’t feel any pain. “These here women out don’t have any trouble with. They deliver right away and with no pain. Just like horses” (Morrison, *The Bluest Eye* 97). Whether it is school or park, shop or hospital, blacks never get human recognition. They always receive the second class treatment. The whites never express their

sympathy and loving attitude towards the blacks. They never see the blacks as fellow human beings so the harmonious relationship can not exist.

The position of a black woman is more tragic in comparison to the male. She had to obey the order of both white master and her husband. She is the central passive figure upon whom the whole action revolves.

Everybody in the world was in a position to give them orders. White women said, “Do this”. White children said, “Give me that”. White men said, “Come here”. Black men said, “Lay down”. The only people they need not take orders from were black children and each other. (Morrison, *The Bluest Eye* 108).

A woman turns out to be a puppet in the hands of various people. It is not only the white master and her husband but even a small white child is in a position to order her. In such an oppressive state, her wish to attain social recognition can never materialize. This situation is further aggravated by her poor economic condition. The social discrimination between the blacks and the whites has been a bitter experience. The whites tend to discriminate and dominate the blacks simply because they are black. The cultural domination is the major factor in bringing tragedy in the lives of blacks. The blacks tend to internalize white norms simply because there is no way out for survival in a racist society.

Soaphead has the conviction of his superiority. Little girls are his sexual objects because they do not threaten his sterile masculinity. In order to escape from the matter of child abuse he has adopted his profession as reader, advisor and interpreter of dreams. His only aim in life is to maintain noble white blood in the society as cultivated by his forefathers. He is always guided by the hypothesis that “all civilization derive from the white race. None can exist without its help and that a society is great and brilliant only so far as it preserves the blood of the noble group that created it.” (Morrison, *The Bluest Eye* 133). For Soaphead whiteness is the only thing that one

should maintain and establish in one's life. Pecola too becomes the victim of Soaphead church. He not only tells her to kill the dog but also sends her to the world of insanity by giving her the false hope of blue eyes. He violates her spiritual innocence as her father had violated her physical innocence.

*The Bluest Eye* dramatizes the devastating effects of the persistent western standard of beauty on black people. Fair skin was the trademark of beauty in the white world. The whites legacy that beauty and happiness are possible only for whites rendered Pecola to wish for blue eyes. There is hostility in terms of relationship between blacks and whites. The question is who is responsible in creating such situation? The answer is difficult to find. After reading Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* we find that there is not only the presence of a single factor which is dominant in operating such situation. In the making of the United States of America, blacks also worked equally hard. But in return all they got was they were treated as second class citizen. The so-called American slogan of life, liberty and pursuit of happiness didn't materialize in the lives of blacks. Cast, colour and class became the measuring rod of social acceptance. Whiteness became a symbol of beauty, power and happiness whereas blackness became the source of ugliness and despair. The search for identity of the protagonist could not materialize due to the appalling state of racism. The whites were always inclined to oppress the blacks because they were considered as a member of privileged society. The tendency to internalize white norms among the blacks has become a common phenomenon. The stronger one tries to oppress the weak and the helpless. In fact, it is the product of the basic human tendency to oppress the weak and helpless.

Morrison presents the picture of the black, whose life has been shaped by formidable forces of racism and the cultural oppression resulting from the diverse issues like ethnic minority, gender, colour, cast and economic condition. In a society where the colour of the skin and the economic condition becomes the measuring rod for beauty and social acceptance, the

blacks like Breedlove family and MacTeer sisters get deranged. It is the institutionalized definition of beauty that brought tragedy in the lives of blacks. The black community members believe themselves ugly. This lack of self-esteem is responsible for creating tragedy in their lives. Characters like Cholly, Pauline, Pecola, Soaphead church are always interested to internalize white norms and values. In this process they internalize the white men's norms and values by developing a sense of self-hatred which destroys not only their cultural heritage but it also creates never healing wounds in their lives. It is the sense of negation to the self that has brought identity crisis in the lives of blacks.

The total absence of human recognition in white's eyes is the product of institutionalized form of racism. The blacks receive second class treatment. Mac Teer sisters can't enter into the park because they are black. White doctor thinks Pauline doesn't feel pain and can deliver child just like horses. Cholly can't react to the whites who make his first sexual intercourse as a matter of public pleasure because he thinks himself as weak and helpless black figure in front of "big, armed men".(Morrison, *The Bluest Eye* 116). Not only that, even small white children treat to the black in a very humiliating manner. It is the general experience of Pecola, Pauline and Mac Teer sisters.

The problem within the black community as depicted by Morrison is the product of white racism on the one hand and the internalization of white norms due to the inferiority complex on the other. Blacks can't directly confront the whites because such action would invite their own end. So in order to give outlet to their anger the weak and helpless members of their own community is chosen. Women and small children turn out to be victims. Cholly hurts Pauline and Pecola and Pauline in turn hurts Pecola. This 'chain of oppression' has brought tragedy in blacks' lives. Pecola is harassed not only by her own family members but even by her own friends. Beauty and economic condition plays vital role in matter of social acceptance. A black like



Maureen Peal is loved because she is beautiful in her facial structure and is rich whereas the poor and blacks like Pecola are systematically deranged. The practice of racism is so pervasive that the existence of poor and helpless black is always questioned. The acceptance of western ideas of beauty and cultural negation to one's own cultural roots had further added fuel to the complex situation.

## Chapter Three

### 3. Racism in *The Bluest Eye*:

During the time of First World War, the ex- slaves were encouraged to bring their labour and skills to the North. The blacks believed themselves as capable workers and were anxious to prove their worth. So, they intended to do whatever jobs were available to them until they got a better opportunity. People thought that the North would be a fortune enhancing place, and they could impose their presence. But unfortunately, the northern life was radically different from the southern life in various aspects. They had to recreate home that could provide them shelter, protection and which they could call as their own. But despite their hard effort, the blacks encountered racism everywhere in the North. They were barred from most of the public places. They were even denied the right to vote. In fact, the north was not the promised land for the black people. There were greater racial and cultural discriminations in the free states than that in the slave states. Even though they were free, they were isolated from every institution. They found disparity in terms of race, gender and class. This urban life in the new place was characterized by isolation, alienation and fragmentation.

The relationship between Cholly, Pauline and Pecola illustrates the fact that it is the head of the family who has to bear the whites' oppression at the initial stage. He can't confront the whites as they possess the power. So, in such traumatic state, he directs his anger upon the female member. Female turns out to be helpless. So, they too direct their anger upon the children who are the most vulnerable members. For instance once when Pecola accidentally drops the pan splattering blackish blueberries mostly on her legs Mrs. Breedlove knocks her to the floor instead of sympathizing. She yanks her up by the arm, slaps her again, and in a voice thin with anger, abuses Pecola directly.

“Crazy fool.... my floor, mess..... look what you....work.... get on out.....now that.....crazy....my floor, my floor....my floor.” Her words were hotter and darker than the smoking berries, and we backed away in dread. (Morrison, *The Bluest Eye* 84-85)

Near the beginning of world war first, Pauline’s parents discovered the possibility of better lives in another place. They migrated to Kentucky, where there were mines and millwork. The Williams found a five- room frame house for their family. They felt somewhat luxury; especially the relocation was comfortable to Pauline. Pauline’s mother got a job of cleaning and cooking for a white minister on the other side of the town. When Pauline was fifteen, she still kept the house but with less enthusiasm:

Fantasies about men and love and touching were drawing her mind and hands away from her work. Changes in weather began to affect her, as did certain sights and sounds. These feelings translated themselves to her in extreme melancholy. (Morrison, *The Bluest Eye* 88)

After Pauline met Cholly, they agreed to marry each other and go to the North, Lorain, Ohio. Cholly gets a job in the steel mill and Pauline starts house keeping. Pauline Breedlove narrates her new experience of new place in this way:

Me and Cholly was getting along good then. We came up north; supposed to be more jobs and all. We moved into two rooms up over a furniture store, and I set about housekeeping. Cholly was working at a steel plant, and everything was looking good. I don’t know what all happened. Everything changed. It was hard to get to know folks up here, and I missed my people. I weren’t used to so much white folks. The ones I seed before was something hateful, but they didn’t come around too much. I mean, we didn’t have too much truck with them. Just now and

then in the fields, or at the commissary. But they want all over us. Up north they was everywhere- next door, downstairs, all over the streets- and colored folks few and far between. Northern colored folk was different to. Dicty- like. No better than whites for meanness. They couldn't make you feel just as no- count, 'cept I didn't expect it from them. That was the loneliest time of my life. I 'member looking out them front windows just waiting for Cholly to come home at three o' clock. I didn't even have a cat to talk to. (Morrison, *The Bluest Eye* 91)

This is really a touching experience. On one hand, the migrating people have dreams of better life in the new place. But on the other hand, the new environment seems quite hostile to them. Pauline, here feels isolation and loneliness. In this situation, she had to turn to her husband for reassurance and entertainment. They had migrated to Lorain in the hope of getting better life but unfortunately they are self- humiliated and feel themselves ugly and poor:

The Breedloves did not live in a storefront because they were having temporary difficulty adjusting to the cutbacks at the plant. They lived there because they were poor and black, and they stayed there because they believed they were ugly. (Morrison, *The Bluest Eye* 28)

The Breedlove family, Mrs. Breedlove, Sammy Breedlove and Pecola Breedlove were compelled inwardly to accept their ugliness.

It was as though some mysterious all- knowing master had given each one a cloak of ugliness to wear, and they had each accepted it without question. The master had said, "You are ugly people." They had looked about themselves and saw nothing to contradict the statement. (Morrison, *The Bluest Eye* 28)

Rather their answer was, 'Yes..... You are right.' (28) Even the eleven- year- old Pecola Breedlove is terribly haunted by the sense of her ugliness in the white surrounding. Morrison clearly brings out the child's psychology:

Long hours she sat looking in the mirror, trying to discover the secret of the ugliness, the ugliness that made her ignored or despised at school, by teachers and classmates alike. She was the only member of her class who sat alone at a double desk. (Morrison, *The Bluest Eye* 34)

The above lines clearly show us the white cultural domination and its effect on the innocent black children. Pauline's life structure from the past to the present is shaped by her encounter with blackness and whiteness. Almost all the people she met in the town were new and unfamiliar 'white folks'. Even the few black women she met were different than her. Cholly's degradation in personal mannerism enforces her to do a simple job in a white family. This persuades her to abandon her husband to keep on her job. After giving birth to two children, she again goes to the same white family for a job. Her inclination towards whiteness and prosperity is inspired in her by movies that teach her "the romantic love and physical beauty" (93). She begins to imitate style of white and wealthy people presented in the movies. This is the good way to impose one's cultural values over another culture so that the latter seems disrespected. Black people who are led to be outdoors become too conscious of their condition

When Frieda and her sister go to visit Pecola in order to get some whiskey, they are astonished by Mrs. Breedlove's odd behaviour. Pecola has to bear not only the pain of accidental fall of hot blueberries on her legs but her mother's slap and abuse instead of care and love:

In one gallop she was on Pecola, and with the back of her hand knocked her to the floor. Pecola slid in the pie juice, one leg folding under her. Mrs. Breedlove yanked her up by the arm, slapped her again, and in a voice thin with anger,

abused Pecola directly. And Frieda and me by implications [...]. The little girl in pink started to cry. Mrs. Breedlove turned to her. "Hush, baby' hush, come here. Oh, Lord, look at your dress. Don't cry no more. Polly will change it. (Morrison *The Bluest Eye* 85)

Mrs. Breedlove has no concern for her own child's pain rather she is worried of her white master's child. She is Pauline Breedlove in her home but becomes Polly in fisher's house. But it doesn't make any difference. Rather she feels comfort over the new prescribed name by her master. She even doesn't like to introduce Frieda and Claudia to the white baby simply because they are black and, thus, have no significance even in the eyes of a small white baby.

The narrator Claudia Macteer knows very well the peripheral existence of poor black family in the wealthy white society. The unhealthy and unreasonable discrimination destroyed human beings. Pecola being a small girl of eleven thinks herself ugly and poor in the white society. She always desires to drink milk in a beautiful white Shirley Temple cup. The cup was so attractive to her that Claudia says, "We knew she was fond of the Shirley Temple cup and took every opportunity to drink milk out of it just to handle and see sweet Shirley's face. (Morrison *The Bluest Eye* 16). The white Shirley Temple cup stands for the symbol of whiteness and beauty which makes an impact on the black people.

It was not only a Shirley Temple cup which was supposed to be the standard of beauty. At Christmas, worthy children received a blue-eyed and white skinned doll as a present by the adults. The adults said, 'this is beautiful, and if you are on this day 'worthy' you may have it" (Morrison *The Bluest Eye* 14). These ideas were designed in order to impose one's cultural values over the others. This can thus be called cultural imposition on the blacks. Pecola was despised by her teachers and classmates at school. Poor Pecola was an example of hatred and

ugliness at school. We can easily guess the psychological condition as there was discrimination in terms of wealth and beauty.

They tried never to glance at her, and called on her only when everyone was required to respond. She also knew that when one of the girls at school wanted to be particularly insulting to a boy, or wanted to get an immediate response from him, she could say, “Bobby loves Pecola Breedlove! Bobby loves Pecola Breedlove!” (Morrison, *The Bluest Eye* 34)

The instance when Pecola goes with her three pennies to buy some candies, she tries with difficulty to give money to Mr. Yacobowski. But the shopkeeper “hesitates, not wanting to touch her hand”. (Morrison, *The Bluest Eye* 37) Later on, while walking on the way Pecola feels a kind of frustration and anger in her. Sometimes anger also plays a positive role in individual’s life. Claudia says, “Anger is better. There is a sense of being in anger. A reality and presence. An awareness of worth.” (Morrison, *The Bluest Eye* 37- 38)

Black women’s life was more miserable than that of men. They suffered badly throughout their lives by receiving orders and commands from everyone in the society. They ended their whole lives in slavery. Even the least powerful white children are authorized to give order and displace black women. They were dominated by two powers; white people of the society and black males in the same community. In this condition, they naturally wish for whiteness and power so that they would be loved by both. The three women who take care of Aunt Jimmy when she is near to death discuss:

Then they had grown. Edging into life from the back door. Becoming. Everybody in the world was in a position to give them orders. White women said, “Do this”. White children said, “Give me that”. White men said, “Come here”. Black men

said, “Lay down”. The only people they need not take orders from were black children and each other. (Morrison, *The Bluest Eye* 108)

The black women also had to face poverty. They sometimes used to beat their own children becoming annoyed with the hungry and weeping children. Claudia says, “They beat their children with one hand and stole for them with the other.” (Morrison, *The Bluest Eye* 108). Cholly too had to face hardships of life. His life was so fragmented that his “life could become coherent only in the head of a musician” (Morrison, *The Bluest Eye* 125). According to Claudia, Cholly was “Dangerously free. Free to feel whatever he felt- fear, guilt, shame, love, grief, pity. Free to be tender or violent, to whistle or weep. Free to sleep in doorways or between the white sheets of a singing woman”. (Morrison, *The Bluest Eye* 125) This type of freedom is actually not a freedom but a deprivation in the lives of black people. Abandoned by his parents and brought up by Aunt Jimmy, Cholly grows up with a belief that whiteness means good and god and relates blackness with evil and sin. His first love- making with Darlene is disturbed by two white men. But Cholly feels helpless at that moment as “They were big, white, armed men. He was small, black, helpless”. (Morrison, *The Bluest Eye* 118) As a result he directs his hatred towards the girl instead of the white men. Cholly’s present life therefore is the result of his curiosity, limitless freedom, white hostility and ultimate despair.

In the extra- social relationship, the poor blacks find discrimination everywhere. They always feel humiliated and find themselves lacking in beauty, power and wealth which are the social standards of the whites. They think that they were different from the mainstream culture so they were excluded and had to undergo humiliation and white domination. The colonized people suffered from inferiority complex- the feeling that they lack something which the colonizers have- i.e. the civilization. This is the reason the colonized people tend to imitate the culture and



civilization of the colonizers. They think that the colonizers are superior to them. They tend to mimic the colonizer's culture, language, values and norms. In this context, Frantz Fanon quotes,

Every colonized people- in other words, every people in whose soul an inferiority complex has been created by the death and burial of its local cultural originality- finds itself face to face with the language of the civilizing nation; that is, with the culture of the mother country. The colonized is elevated above his jungle status in proportion to his adoption of the mother country's cultural standards. He becomes whiter as he renounces his blackness, his jungle. (*Black Skin White Masks* 18)

In the intra- social relationship also, there is no peace and harmony among the blacks. There is greater discrimination and the community divides itself on the basis of older generation and younger generation, male and female, light- skinned and deep- skinned colour. There is deadly competition among the blacks in order to imitate the white cultural values and norms. In this competition, they lose their self- identity and become confused. The consequence is they direct their frustration, anger and hatred to the weaker member of their own community. Claudia is well aware of the condition of the lives of poor blacks. She feels there is lack of love, peace and harmony in the black families. She says:

Adults do not talk to us- they give directions. They issue orders without providing information. When we trip and fall down they glance at us; if we cut or bruise ourselves, they ask us are we crazy. When we catch colds, they shake their heads in disgust at our lack of consideration. How, they ask us, do you expect anybody to get anything done if you all are sick? We cannot answer them. Our illness is treated with contempt, foul Black Draught, and castor oil that blunt our minds. (Morrison, *The Bluest Eye* 5-6)

Pecola Breedlove comes to stay at MacTeers' home when she is isolated from her parents. She is fond of drinking milk in the Shirley Temple cup as the cup is very attractive to her. But Mrs. MacTeer shouts at Pecola when she drinks three quarts of milk and uses the words like 'folks' and 'devil' although she too belongs to the same community:

“Three quarts of milk. That’s what was *in* that icebox yesterday. Three whole quarts. Now they ain’t none. Not a drop. I don’t mind folks coming in and getting what they want, but three quarts of milk! What the devil does *anybody* need with *three* quarts of milk?” (Morrison, *The Bluest Eye* 16)

Mrs. MacTeer is troubled by her own circumstances. So the presence of Pecola has been a quite trouble to her. She says:

Folks just spend their time trying to figure out ways to send me to the poorhouse. I got about as much business with another mouth to feed as a cat has with side pockets. As if I don’t have trouble enough trying to feed my own and keep out the poorhouse, now I got something else in here that’s just going to drink me on in there. (Morrison, *The Bluest Eye* 17)

Pecola, even at her home, could not find peace of mind. The family environment was very pathetic. Her parents Pauline and Cholly always fought with each other. Cholly and Mrs. Breedlove fought each other with a darkly brutal formalism that was paralleled only by their lovemaking (Morrison, *The Bluest Eye* 32). Cholly needed Pauline because she was the only one whom he could touch and therefore hurt. Unlike her brother Sammy, Pecola could not run away from home because her youth and sex restricted her from doing so. So she experimented different methods of endurance. She is so frustrated by the fighting that she prays the god to make her disappear. She even wished that she herself could die:

Pecola, on the other hand, restricted by her youth and sex, experimented with various methods of endurance. Though the methods varied, the pain was as consistent as it was deep. She struggled between an overwhelming desire that one would kill the other, and a profound wish that she herself could die. (Morrison, *The Bluest Eye* 32)

When she analyzes the situation, she comes to the conclusion that perhaps if she had been beautiful, if her eyes had been beautiful then her family environment would have been peaceful and her parents would not have fought with each other. It seems that the racially divided society, her family and its prejudice are the main factors that inspire Pecola to desire for blue eyes and beauty:

..... if those eyes of hers were different, that is to say, beautiful, she herself would be different. Her teeth were good, and at least her nose was not big and flat like some of those who were thought so cute. If she looked different, beautiful, maybe Cholly would be different, and Mrs. Breedlove too. Maybe they'd say, "Why, look at pretty-eyed Pecola. We mustn't do bad things in front of those pretty eyes". (Morrison, *The Bluest Eye* 34)

When there is vast gap between the rich and the poor, the poor may not always be fascinated by the living standards of the rich. They may sometimes be jealous of the rich. It usually happens in the case of small children. Claudia and Frieda feel the same when they meet Maureen Peal at school. Maureen Peal according to Claudia "was rich, at least by our standards, as rich as the richest of the white girls, swaddled in comfort and care". (Morrison, *The Bluest Eye* 47) The girl wore good quality clothes, shoes and socks that Frieda and Claudia could never have even at Easter. Maureen enchanted the entire school and the MacTeer sisters were both fascinated and

irritated by her. As a result they try to find some defect in her body which would devalue her and hence give them some sort of satisfaction:

Frieda and I were bemused, irritated, and fascinated by her. We looked hard for flaws to restore our equilibrium, but had to be content at first with uglying up her name, changing Maureen Peal to Meringue Pie. Later a minor epiphany was ours when we discovered that she had a dog tooth- a charming one to be sure- but a dog tooth nonetheless. And when we found out that she had been born with six fingers on each hand and that there was a little bump where each extra one had been removed, we smiled. They were small triumphs, but we took what we could get- snickering behind her back and calling her Six- finger- dog- tooth- meringue- pie. But we had to do it alone, for none of the other girls would cooperate with our hostility. They adored her.” (Morrison, *The Bluest Eye* 48)

When a society is measured in terms of beauty and wealth, one throws the stone to his own community members who are weak and helpless. There are various instances where it happens. For example, the boys encircle Pecola and humiliate her about the colour of her skin and her father’s sleeping habits:

“Black e mo. Black e mo. Yadaddsleepsnekked. Black e mo black e mo ya dadsd sleeps nekked. Black e mo.....”..... They had extemporized a verse made up of two insults about matters over which the victim had no control; the colour of her skin and speculations on the sleeping habits of an adult, wildly fitting in its incoherence. That they themselves were black, or that their own father had similarly relaxed habits was irrelevant. It was their contempt for their own blackness that gave the first insult its teeth. (Morrison, *The Bluest Eye* 50)

Poor Pecola was so helpless that she dropped her notebook and began to weep covering her eyes with her hands. She was female and she was weak so they could hurt her. After the victimization of Pecola, the three girls return home with Maureen peal. Maureen wanted to buy some ice cream. She pulls out 'a multifolded dollar bill' from her pocket and asks Pecola if she also wants some ice cream. As Maureen is about to enter the ice cream parlor with Pecola she asks the MacTeer sisters if they too wanted ice cream. The MacTeer sisters looked at each other for a while, and Frieda replied "No" (Morrison, *The Bluest Eye* 53). Actually, they had a desire to have the ice cream but were well aware of their poverty. Claudia hence narrates:

Frieda looked placidly down the street; I opened my mouth but quickly closed it.

It was extremely important that the world not know that I fully expected Maureen to buy us some ice cream, that for the past 120 seconds I had been selecting the flavor, that I had begun to like Maureen, and that neither of us had a penny.

(Morrison, *The Bluest Eye* 53)

As the girls were walking together, they talk about the formation of a child inside the womb. Suddenly the conversation shifts to their fathers. Claudia is well aware of the inferior position of Pecola's father. So she asks her why she is talking about Pecola's father. Maureen retorts that she was not talking about her 'black daddy' (Morrison, *The Bluest Eye* 56). They quarrel for a while on beauty and Maureen boasts about her beauty and says, "I am cute! And you ugly!" (Morrison, *The Bluest Eye* 56). Claudia is shocked by the words of Maureen so she meditates for a while and concludes that of course Maureen is not their enemy and an object of hatred. Claudia thinks, "The *Thing* to fear was the *Thing* that made *her* beautiful, and not to us" (Morrison, *The Bluest Eye* 58) Claudia here is referring to the society which regarded beauty as the source of power and wealth.

Junior plays with the black boys because he could feel the hardness of their skin and smell wild blackness. His mother Geraldine, a black woman never allows him to play with niggers:

White kids; his mother did not like him to play with niggers. She had explained to him the difference between coloured people and niggers. They were easily identifiable. Coloured people were neat and quiet; niggers were dirty and loud. He belonged to the former group: he wore white shirts and blue trousers..... Even though he was light- skinned, it was possible to ash. The line between coloured and nigger was not always clear; subtle and telltale signs threatened to erode it, and the watch had to be constant. (Morrison, *The Bluest Eye* 67- 68)

Junior enjoys bullying girls. Once he tempts Pecola and succeeds in victimizing her. Junior is the perfect example of a colonizer who gives false promises to the colonized people and succeeds in victimizing them. One day when he was idle, he saw a very black girl standing alone at the playground. He requested Pecola to go to his home to see black kittens. Pecola wanted to see the kittens so she followed him reluctantly. When she enters Junior's home she became surprised by seeing the well decorated rooms. She wanted to see everything slowly. Junior suddenly called her and as she turned to Junior:

“Here is your kitten!” he screeched. And he threw a big black cat right in her face. She sucked in her breath in fear and surprise and felt fur in her mouth. The cat clawed her face and chest in an effort to right itself, then leaped nimbly to the floor. Junior was laughing and running around the room clutching his stomach delightedly. Pecola touched the scratched place on her face and felt tears coming. When she started toward the doorway, Junior leaped in front of her. “You can't

get out. You're my prisoner", he said. His eyes were merry but hard. (Morrison, *The Bluest Eye* 70)

Geraldine, who wishes to repress the blackness and conceal the characteristically the Afro- American qualities such as thick lips, nappy edges, encounters Pecola. Junior blames Pecola for killing the cat. She sees the unpleasantness of blackness, the absolute eruption of temper on Pecola:

She looked at Pecola. Saw the dirty torn dress, the plaits sticking out on her head, hair matted where the plaits had come undone, the muddy shoes with the wad of gum peeping out from between the cheap soles, the soiled socks, one of which had been walked down into the heel of the shoe. She saw the safety pin holding the hem of the dress up ..... She had seen this little girl all of her life. (Morrison, *The Bluest Eye* 71)

In a violent anger Geraldine says, "You nasty little black bitch. Get out of my house". (Morrison, *The Bluest Eye* 72) She hates Pecola not only because she is black but also because Pecola represents the funk which she tries to repress. By chasing Pecola out of her house, she is trying to get rid of her fears of her own evil; of her own unworthiness, of her own shadow of blackness. People like Geraldine are responsible for inviting cultural disintegration by creating division within a race. Such gap is very difficult to remove because once it is maintained in social dealing, it functions as a permanent form of order.

Pauline likes to be called "Polly" in the Fisher's home. The Fishers for her are nearer than her own daughter. She does not even care to introduce Frieda and Claudia to the white baby because they are of no importance in the presence of the white girl. She first blames her foot restricting her to participate in dominant culture. A rusty nail pierced in her foot when she was two- year- old. The wound left her with a crooked, arch less foot that would flop when she

walked. Because of this deformity, she loses many opportunities so she was satisfied with her job as a maid for the white family. She is happy there because it gives her a chance to mimic the white norms:

It was her good fortune to find a permanent job in the home of a well- to- do family whose members were affectionate, appreciative, and generous. She looked at their houses, smelled their linen, touched their silk draperies, and loved all of it .... She became what is known as an ideal servant, for such a role filled practically all of her needs. (Morrison, *The Bluest Eye* 98)

During her pregnancy, Pauline goes to movies to pass her leisure time. It completely changes her life and imagination. Slowly Pauline begins to negate her own culture and tries to mimic white cultural norms. She learns from movies that a white home is an ideal example of harmony and order. Her job at the Fishers makes it possible to control her life that is impossible in her own home. When she gave birth to a child she found it was ugly. Pauline seems to be a mother who hates her own children though she was supposed to be the primary object of emotional attachment. She was the one responsible to develop and transmit the cultural norms and values to the infant. Pecola addresses her mother as Mrs. Breedlove. Pecola is rejected by her mother from the day she was born. This rejection gave birth to deep-seated alienation. Instead of filling the life of her children with love and encouragement, Pauline fills their mind with fear:

She taught them fear: fear of being clumsy, fear of being like their father, fear of not being loved by God, fear of madness like Cholly's mother. Into her son she beat a loud desire to run away, and into her daughter she beat a fear of growing up, fear of other people, fear of life. (Morrison, *The Bluest Eye* 100)

Pauline remains alienated from her family and her responsibility towards her husband and children. She hence becomes an extreme individualist.



Cholly's life is also eventful and full of troubles. Behind his present drunken state lies a history of distortion. His mother who is not certain of his father's identity abandons him. This kind of life makes him uncivilized. During his first sexual intercourse, he is interrupted by the white men. Out of his sexual humiliation, he hates the girl Darlene instead of the white men because she is the witness of his powerlessness. He has been denied socialization so has no sense of the socially accepted behavior. He is not capable of the appropriate fatherly love because he himself had never received it. He is not able to comprehend what such relationship should be. Both Pauline and Cholly hate each other. They have accepted the idea that they are ugly. They do not know the meaning of love and cannot give their children a sense of self, for they have none of their own. Cholly deals with self-hatred and oppression and becomes as evil as possible even to the point of raping his own daughter and burning his own house:

She appeared to have fainted. Cholly stood up and could see only her grayish panties, so sad and limp around her ankles. Again the hatred mixed with tenderness. The hatred would not let him pick her up; the tenderness forced him to cover her. So when the child regained consciousness, she was lying on the kitchen floor under a heavy quilt, trying to connect the pain between her legs with the face of her mother looming over her. (Morrison, *The Bluest Eye* 128- 129)

Cholly's life of awful oppression and dislocation pushed him at the bottom where there was nothing to lose. Throughout his life, he had experienced the sense of dread and despair. In such condition, he became extremely free. He was alone with his own perception and appetites and they alone interested him. Once having tasted the freedom he could not tolerate the bondage of a married life. Both whites and blacks oppressed him. In fact, fragments of Cholly's life could become coherent only in the head of a musician:

Only a musician would sense, know, without even knowing that he knew, that Cholly was free. Dangerously free. Free to feel whatever he Felt- fear, guilt, shame, love, grief, pity. Free to be tender or violent, to whistle or weep. Free to sleep in doorways or between the white sheets of singing women. Free to take a job, free to leave it. He could go to Jail and not feel imprisoned[...] he was free to live his fantasies, and free even to die, the how and the when of which held no interest for him. (Morrison, *The Bluest Eye* 125)

The act of raping his own daughter is a product of his confusion of violence and love as the sequence of his emotion was directed by “revulsion, guilt, pity, then love” (Morrison, *The Bluest Eye* 127). Finding a miserable eleven year- old helpless victim, Cholly “wanted to break her neck but tenderly” (Morrison, *The Bluest Eye* 127). In a drunken state Cholly gets confused and thus sees Pauline’s image in Pecola:

The confused mixture of his memories of Pauline and the doing of a wild and forbidden thing excited him, and a bolt of desire ran down his genitals giving it length, and softening the lips of his anus. Surrounding all of this lust was border of politeness. He wanted to fuck her- tenderly. But the tenderness would not hold. (Morrison, *The Bluest Eye* 128).

Cholly’s wild behavior forced Pecola to take refuge in Miss MacTeer’s home. Except the MacTeer sisters there is no one who could seriously understand her feelings and problems. Even here Pecola becomes the victim of inferiority complex. Miss MacTeer thinks that Pecola drinks milk because she is greedy. Ashamed of insults Pecola has no alternative but to keep silence. Such insult goes on for hours and hours. Miss MacTeer is never tired of rebuking her: “Bible say feed the hungry, that’s fine. That’s all right. But I ain’t feeding no elephants..... Anybody need

three quarts of milk to live need to get out of here. They in wrong place. What is this? Some kind of dairy farm?” (Morrison, *The Bluest Eye* 19)

Pecola’s life seems quite pathetic. She has been victimized not only by the society but also by her own parents. The rape of Pecola is a product of Cholly’s violent and destructive love. She was made pregnant by her own father. Ironically instead of becoming the subject of pity, she becomes the subject of daily gossip in the society. The Mac Teer sisters, who are selling seeds for collecting money for the survival of Pecola’s future child, listen to the fragments and put them together.

“Did you hear about that girl?”

“What? Pregnant?”

“Yes. But guess who?”

“Who? I don’t know all these little old boys”.

“That’s just it. Ain’t no little old boy. They say it’s Cholly”.

“Cholly? Her daddy?”

“Uh- huh”.

“Lord. Have mercy. That dirty nigger”. (Morrison, *The Bluest Eye* 148)

The same community members are criticizing Pecola and making the story of her life a matter for their daily gossip. They forget that she is a member of the same community and that the same thing might happen to any one of them. When all are from the same community and all are blacks, why do they call Cholly a dirty nigger? Had a white man done it, they would have never talked about it. They curse and criticize Pecola and Cholly to make themselves pure. They become the colonizers who oppress their own community members. Not only they hate Pecola, they even curse her unborn baby. Pecola not only had to bear the mental torture due to her pregnancy but had to undergo physical torture as well. Her mother Pauline, instead of consoling

and giving her the necessary support, beat her brutally. Even the unborn baby is already cursed and despised:

“Well, it probably won’t live. They say the way her mama beat her she lucky to be alive herself.”

“She be lucky if it don’t live. Bound to be the ugliest thing walking”. “Can’t help but be. Ought to be a law: two ugly people doubling up like that to make more ugly. Be better off in the ground”. (Morrison, *The Bluest Eye* 149)

Pecola is living in such a community where one seems to be trying to put the other one step below. They dominate the weaker ones of the community. The blacks while trying to mimic the white cultural norms are actually cut off from their own cultural values. There are even characters like Soaphead Church who had come to retain his noble blood of whiteness who act like a colonizer and succeed in victimizing innocent characters like Pecola. He gives the fake promise that she will get blue eyes and hence is somehow responsible for the tragic end of Pecola.

Do you know what she came for? Blue eyes. New, blue eyes, she said. Like she was buying shoes. “I’d like a pair of new blue eyes.” She must have asked you for them for a very long time, and you hadn’t replied. (A habit, I could have told her, a long- ago habit broken for Job- but no more.) She came to me for them.

(Morrison, *The Bluest Eye* 143)

Soaphead Church renders Pecola to madness by giving her the false hope of blue eyes:

I, I have caused a miracle. I gave her the eyes. I gave her the eyes. I gave her the blue, blue, two blue eyes. Cobalt blue. A streak of it right out of your own blue heaven. No one else will see her blue eyes. But she will. And she will live happily

ever after. I, I have found it meet and right so to do. (Morrison, *The Bluest Eye* 144)

All the members of the community though they are blacks exclude Pecola. They seem to have purged themselves from it. Everyone like the white storekeeper, light skinned children, and middle- class blacks see Pecola as a piece of filth. Displacing their fear and anger onto Pecola, the black community define themselves as 'better'. As Cynthia Davis says:

Pecola is the epitome of the victim in a world that reduces persons to objects and then makes them feel inferior as objects. In this world, light- skinned women can feel superior to dark ones, married women to whores, and on and on. (33)

Pecola becomes the scapegoat of the community. The black community members pile up all their blackness and ugliness on her and want to be released from it. Pecola's story illustrates the destructive potential of a culture that recognizes only the standards of physical beauty and equates those standards with virtue. Apparently Pecola is driven mad by her inability to possess the blue eyes. But actually her insanity is the result from the fact that she serves as the communal scapegoat, bearing not only her own self- loathing, but that of her neighbours and family as well.

#### 4. Conclusion

Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* draws our attention upon the fundamental cultural and racial problems of the racialized American society. Beauty, whiteness and happiness are deployed in contrast to ugliness, blackness and despair. Because the blacks are oppressed by the whites, the blacks try to adopt white norms in order to exist in the white society. In one way, the blacks are themselves responsible for the oppression. They underestimate themselves and readily accept that they are ugly, inferior and thus remain silent to white domination. For instance, Pauline after giving birth to her daughter finds that her hair is pretty but she was ugly. At the house of fishers, Pauline slaps her own daughter and takes the side of the white baby. Geraldine, who suppresses her racial identity and tries to imitate the white norms, finds herself in confusion. The 'sugar- brown Mobile girls' go to land- grant colleges to get the knowledge not for themselves but for serving white families. Nevertheless, the whites also victimize the poor blacks by creating a hierarchy of white supremacy and domination.

The whites taught every generation that they are superior to the blacks. They always tried to dominate the blacks. During the colonial period, the white superiority was established on the basis of economic status and during the post- colonial period the white supremacy was in the form of 'hegemony'. Bible described Jesus as white and in this way in the name of religion also the whites tried to establish their supremacy. The blacks were hence marginalized and interpreted the colour of their skin as a product of sin. Hence they considered themselves inferior and ugly.

Morrison opines that the concept of race if conceived in a wrong way, will invite psychological problems and disintegration in the society. For example when Pecola fails to attain blue eyes, she suffers from psychological breakdown and ultimately to madness. Its effect can also be seen in black Americans who are separated from the main stream culture. It should be practiced healthily as it is the source of cultural development. Morrison states:

Race has become metaphorical- a way of referring to and disguising forces, event, classes and expressions of social decay and economic division far more threatening to the body politic than biological “race” ever was. Expensively kept, economically unsound, a spurious and useless political asset in election campaigns, racism is as healthy today or it was during the enlightenment. It seems that it has a utility far beyond economy, beyond the sequestering of classes from one another, and has assumed a metaphorical life so completely embedded in daily discourse that it is perhaps more necessary and more on display than ever before. (*Playing in the Dark* 63)

The only desire Pecola had was to be perceived as a human being. When she sees whiteness and blue-eyes highly regarded by everyone, she comes to realize that life depends on whiteness and blue eyes. So poor Pecola longs for blue eyes. There are many instances which have contributed in disintegrating the black community. Pauline feels happy in the white Fishers’ kitchen. Cholly believes that whiteness means power. Soaphead Church’s intention is to preserve noble blood and Junior victimizes the girl. All other characters victimize Pecola to be free from their blackness which results in Pecola’s psychological breakdown and communal disintegration. Her sense of lack of blue eyes and whiteness dehumanize and alienates her from her own culture.

Incest is another issue raised in this novel. Cholly had indulged in physical relationship with his own daughter. It hints at the fact that incest is there in black community and that they accept it with some degree of reservation. But in white society it is taken as evil and the most dangerous act. Morrison’s *The Bluest Eye* is concerned with black- white relationship. Whites are not shown so much dangerous though oppression is there. In fact, most of the blacks seem to negate their own cultural values and norms and seem to internalize white norms and cultural values. This has brought more tragic consequence in their lives by creating psychological

breakdown and disintegration within black communities. The fundamental problem with American values is that it cherishes outward success that forces the blacks to seek power, beauty in whiteness because their dream teaches them that happiness lies in whiteness. The blacks should therefore love themselves, maintain peace among themselves and try to attain self-conscious manhood and should also merge their double self into a better and true self or else the consequence would be communal disintegration and psychological split.

In Morrison's novel, characters bear the share of guilt irrespective of any colour or caste. Pecola invites her own downfall by making unattainable quest of bluest eyes. Unlike MacTeer sisters she can't feel content with her own true self. Pauline, Cholly and Geraldine negate their own self and try to internalize white norms. They are ready to impose pain upon the weaker member of their own community. All the boys victimize Pecola in order to repress their own blackness. Rosemary and Maureen Peal humiliate MacTeer sisters which breeds anger in their hearts. Geraldine also hates Pecola in order to repress her funk. People like Yakobowski turns indifferent to Pecola. He doesn't see her as an individual simply because she is black and poor. Cholly's first sexual act becomes a public show because he can't do anything against the two white figures who possess gun and are thought to be the powerful. Hence the existence of blacks as an individual entity is always questioned. They are therefore compelled to internalize white norms and cultural values so that they may be accepted in the society.

There are however some characters like the three prostitutes China, Poland and Miss. Marie who seem to have an understanding that their lives in the past and present have some value. They show that no matter how much they are despised by others, their lives have meaning because these women define themselves rather than relying on other's judgments. They make no pretensions about being anything other than "whores in whores' clothing". Thus they contradict with Pecola and her mother who try to change themselves in order to fit in the white society. On



the other hand, Pecola and Pauline always try to separate themselves from their heritage. But the experience of Pauline and Pecola suggest that it is not possible to adapt in the white society until and unless you sacrifice your true self. However these two characters fail to retain their authenticity, to be who they really are. They try to embrace western concept of dualism- of believing that life is divisible, that good is distinguishable from evil and that past, present and future are not connected to each other.

Morrison's novels offer a full range of African American realities that define authentic Afro- centric interpretations of humanity, culture and history. Her works not only reinvent the meaning and significance of the African American's cultural "home" in America but also makes it accessible to Black people everywhere. She depicts the African American culture naturalistically and holistically: humanity is constructed as an extension of inseparable form, and interdependent with the natural universe.

Morrison works to get the language that is particular, very particular. Her fictions use a form of semantic trickery to constitute a discourse of resistance the bedrock of black dehumanization, degradation and sorrow into an archetypal Black homeland, a cultural womb that lays a mother's claim to history's defamed and disclaimed African children. Morrison's works have helped to change the face of American literature- a literature that once told only the conquests of whit men with white women as minor characters. Her works introduced lyrical prose, story- telling, African- American folklore and history to American literary establishment. African- American literature which too was dominated by male characters was similarly changed when Morrison introduced the female point of view and female sensitivities and made them credible.

Morrison's narrative technique is also unique. It is a mixture of reality and fiction. The retelling of the past events in present attracts interest of readers and enhances enthusiasm.

Morrison emphasizes upon memory as a source of narration. The revelation of the past also influences the present in her writings. In other words, she accepts past as the key source of present. In that sense, she creates the inevitable link between past and present which is based upon memory, inclusive of various sectors of black culture, history, religion, myth and social phenomena. Memory is thus the medium for Toni Morrison to explore the past history as a part of struggle.

## WORKS CITED

- Abrahams, M. H. 'A *Glossary of Literary Terms*'. Bangalore: Prism Books 2003.
- Appiah, Kwame Anthony. "Race." *Critical Terms for Literary Study*. Ed. Frank Lentricchia and Thomas Mclaughlin. Chicago, 1990. (274- 277)
- Awkward, Michael. "The Evil of Fulfillment": Scapegoating and Narration in *The Bluest Eye*." *Toni Morrison: Critical Perspectives Past and Present*. Eds. Henry Louis Gates and Appiah. New York: Amistad, 1993. (175- 207)
- Bulmer, Martin and John Soloms. General Introduction. *Racism*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1999. (3- 7)
- Byerman, Keith E. "Beyond Realism." Gates, Jr. and Appiah. (100- 125)
- Davis, Cynthia A. "Self, Society and Myth in Toni Morrison's Fiction." Ed. Peach. London: Macmillan, 1998. (27-42)
- Dobzhansky, TH. "Races, Nature and Origins Of." *Encyclopedia Americana*. 1966 ed.
- Douglass, Frederic. *Narrative of the Life of Frederic Douglass, An American Slave*. Ed. Henry Louis Gates Jr. New York. 1994.
- Draper, James P. Introduction "Contemporary Literary Critisms" Vol 81. Ed. David Middleton. Detroit: Gale Research. 1994.
- Du Bois, W. E. B.: "*The Souls of Black Folk*". New York, 1986.
- Ellis, George W. "*The Psychology of American Race Prejudice*". Cashmore and Jennings. (10- 17)
- Fanon, Frantz. *Black skin White Masks*. Trans. Charles Lamb Markmann. New York: Grove P, 1967. (17- 41)
- Gates, Henry Louis, Jr. and A. K. Appiah, eds. *Toni Morrison: Critical Perspectives Past and Present*. New York: Amistad.

- Gerzina, Gretchen. "Racism". *The Encyclopedia Americana*. 1996. ed.
- Gibbson, Donald B. "Text and Counter Text in *The Bluest Eye*". Gates and Appiah. (159- 175)
- Harris, Virginia R, Trinity A. Ordana. "Racism and Cross Racial Hostility". *The American Dream*. Ed. S.P. Lohani et al. Kirtipur: CDE, 1995.
- Heaton, David M.. "Toni Morrison: *Contemporary Novelists*." Lesly Henderson. Ed. Chicago: St. James Press, 1972. (661-662)
- High, Peter B.: "*An Outline of American Literature*" New York: Longman, 1986.
- Hughes, Langston. "Harlem". '*The Norton Anthology of Poetry*'. Ed: Margaret Ferguson, Mary Jo Salter and Jon Stallworthy. New York: Norton, 1996.
- King, Martin Luther Jr. "I Have a Dream". '*The Heritage of Words*'. Eds. Shreedhar Lohani, Rameshwor Adhikari and Abhi Subedi. Ekta Books, 1999. (73- 79)
- Klotman, Phyllis. "Dick and Jane and the Shirley Temple Sensibility in *The Bluest Eye*". *Black American Literature Forum*, 1997. (123)
- Linger, Leonard. Ed. '*American Writers: A Collection of Literary Biographies*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. 3 Vol. New York: Charles Scribnes Sons, 1974.
- Loring, Brace, C. "Race." *The Encyclopedia Americana*. 1996.
- Mobley, Marilyn Sanders. "Narrative Dilemma: Jadine as cultural Orphan in *Tar Baby*". Gates and Appiah. (284- 293)
- Morrison, Toni- "*The Bluest Eye*". London: Vintage, 1990.
- "*Sula*". London: Macmillan, 1992.
  - "*Love*". London: Chatto and Windus, 2003.
  - "*Beloved*". London: Picador, 1987.
  - *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and Literary Imagination*: Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1992.

Rhodes, Lisa R. 'Great American Writers'. Grolier Publishing Co. Inc 2001.

Rigney, Barbara. "Hagar's Mirror: Self and Identity in Morrison's Fictions." Peach. 1998. (51-70)

Smith, Valerie: "*Song of Solomon: Continuities of Community*". Gates and Appiah. (274- 283)

Tucker, William H: "The Science and Politics of Racial Research". Cashmore and Jennings. (380- 385)

Willis, Susan: "Eruptions of Funk: Historicizing in Toni Morrison". Eds. Gates and Appiah, New York; Amistad 1993. (307- 329)