

Chapter I: Introduction

1. Toni Morrison: A Symbol of Racialized Society

Toni Morrison, an activist writer with Afro-American spirits, aims to challenge the power structures established by the dominant white systems. Morrison speaks the language of resistance, power, struggle, and change and she tries to politicize every black experience informed by massive suppressions and oppressions. Morrison raises questions, reflects reality, and shows paths for change and quests for identity.

Black writers, in America, are in search of a black literary tradition where they can create their own cultural space so that they can talk about the experience of black people in American society. The major struggle of black American is concerned for their human and social rights, and their writings reflect the effect of white American racial prejudice on the minds of the blacks. Blacks have the long history of slavery, discrimination and oppression. They have the layers of "black anger" heaved on the inner-most part of their heart. They were given the words and the hopes, but it simply withered without realization of it. Langston Hughes expresses this very anger in his poem "Harlem".

What happens 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? (365)

As long as the black experience in America remains different from that of other Americans, there will be probability of new explosions in the days to come. The twentieth century marks the revolution in the field of literary taste and writing. One of the most important themes in twentieth century American history is the struggle of black Americans for their human and social rights. And the most influential black writers like Ellison and Morrison are also directing their attention in the same path by placing black culture at the centre while dealing about the issues like racism and identity as a whole.

Thus, in a landmark collection on black British feminism, H.S, Mirza highlights the importance of Toni Morrison's work of identity, agency, and a place called home:

The desire for a place, then, black feminism as a spontaneous yet conscious coalition is a meaningful act of identification. In this place called home named black feminism, we as racialised and gendered subjects can collectively mark our presence in the world where black women have so long been denied the privilege to speak; to have a valid identity of our own, a space to name ourselves. We, as black women invoke our agency; we speak of our difference, our uniqueness, and our otherness. (19)

Morrison, a black skinned girl from her early child hood is conscious about the Afro-American tradition and through her own experiences and peers, acquires the

knowledge of exploitations from the same kinds of human beings but with a different color, a color called white. Her parents had moved to Ohio from the South, hoping to raise their children in an environment friendlier to blacks where she grew up relatively unscarred by racial prejudices. Morrison's life from the early childhood up to her professional arena projects herself as an agent and advocate of rights and justice through her writings and practices. She spent her childhood in the Midwest and read voraciously, from Jane Austen to Tolstoy. Morrison's father told her folktales of the black community, transferring his African-American heritage to another generation. Therefore, despite the move to the North, the Wofford household was a world steeped in the oral traditions of Southern blacks.

Inevitably, she began to feel more of the effects of racial discrimination, as she and her peers grew older. Growing up in Lorain, Ohio, Morrison immersed herself in the close-knit community spirit and the folklore, myth, and supernatural beliefs of her culture. The songs, stories, and women's gossip of her childhood undoubtedly influenced her later works. She received a legacy of resistance to oppression and exploitation as well as an appreciation of African American folklore and cultural practices. A common practice in her family was storytelling; after the adults had shared their stories, the children told their own. The importance of listening to stories complemented Morrison's profound love of reading. In an interview with Jean Strouse, Morrison described her childhood experiences with literature:

Those books were not written for a little black girl in Lorain, Ohio, but they were so magnificently done that I got them anyway -- they spoke directly to me out of their own specificity. I wasn't thinking of writing

then—I wanted to be a dancer like Maria Tall chief—but when I wrote my first novel years later, I wanted to capture that same specificity about the nature and feeling of the culture I grew up in. (98)

A great part of Toni Morrison's struggle has been to create a literary language of black America that draws strength from the oral art forms of that culture. An extremely gifted student, her literary outcome was an abundant labor in reading and writing.

In Howard in 1957 she met and married Harold Morrison, a Jamaican architect. They divorced in 1964. Raising her two sons, as a single mother, Morrison continued working and writing. This also shows Morrison's own commitment to create an identity of her own, she resisted through the ill fates but eventually established herself as a symbol of resistance against the hegemony of patriarchy that made her live as a single mother and bear the society's advances while also striving for an authentic identity.

It was also during this time that she joined a group of writers and wrote the short story that would become the basis for her first novel, *The Bluest Eye* (1970). While critically observing her Afro-American background, experiences of dominations and the projection of her career as a creative writer focused on the issues of resistance and exploring the events of atrocities during the dark days help us to understand that she has tried to stand up as a political activist.

It is worth mentioning that many of her writings are informed by historical incidents and historical experiences. *The Bluest Eye*, the story of a young innocent girl who is badly heated by the dominating legacies of the white world, wants blue eyes and

later loses her mind. After many rejections, *The Bluest Eye* was published in 1970. The novel was well received by critics but was a commercial failure.

Gary Storhoff in *The Identifying Fictions of Toni Morrison: Modernist Authenticity and Postmodern Blackness* says:

As a modernist, she explores in her first four novels her own racial identity to establish her authority as a cultural voice. During this period, she is an essentialist, searching through her narratives for "a place where the alienated individual might discover [an African-American] authenticity" (15). In her subsequent work, however, Morrison's increasingly "postmodernist understanding of the constructedness of all identity" is detected, especially in *Paradise*, where the quest for a purist racial category is much more problematic than earlier in her career.(45)

Her another novel *Sula* published in 1974 presents the complex position of a black woman in the society that curtails her freedom. *Sula* was nominated for the National Book Award but it was *Song of Solomon* which was published in 1977 won the National Book Critics Circle Award for fiction. *Song of Solomon* dealt more fully with black male characters and with the publication, Morrison gained an international attention. After the success of *Song of Solomon* Morrison bought a four-storey house near Nyack, New York and enjoyed both commercial and critical success.

In 1981, Morrison published *Tar Baby*, a novel focusing on a stormy relationship between a man and a woman. Morrison in *Tar Baby* renounces

masculine property rights in black women. Significantly in her first four novels, Morrison self-reflexively measures the personal cost to her identity as an African-American woman who chooses to become a writer. Then, *Beloved* was published in 1987. Many consider *Beloved* to be Morrison's masterpiece. Mythic in scope, *Beloved* tells the story of an emancipated slave woman named Sethe who is haunted by the ghost of the daughter she killed. *Beloved* could be called a foundation story for black America. When *Beloved* failed to win either a National Book Award or a National Book Critics Circle Award, a group of black writers and intellectuals decried the lack of national recognition given to Morrison. However, it became a best seller and received a Pulitzer Prize. It was inspired by the true story of a black American slave woman, Margaret Garner. She escaped with her husband Robert from a Kentucky plantation, and sought refuge in Ohio. When the slave masters overcame them, she killed her baby, after the infamous 1870s Fugitive Slave Act, in order to save the child from the slavery she had managed to escape. She published *Jazz* in 1992, along with a non-fiction book entitled *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination*. The next year she became the eighth woman and the first black woman to receive the Nobel Prize in Literature. 1998 saw the publication of her seventh novel, *Paradise*.

Toni Morrison broke through barriers for women and blacks when she won the Nobel Prize for literature in 1993. The lives of black Americans, especially black women, noted the Nobel Committee, gained a powerful voice through her lyrical prose style. As the Encarta Encyclopedia tell us, on receiving the award, the author said: I am, of course, profoundly honored. But what is most wonderful for me, personally, is to know that the prize at last has been awarded to an African-American. Winning as an American is very special, but winning as a black American is a knockout. (Nobel Lecture)

As, winning a Nobel prize for her is not just to be awarded for writing as any other writer but it is a victory of the black consciousness. It is an acknowledgement of the creativity of a mind inside a black skin as well. Encarta Encyclopedia, 2003 asserts, while giving a lecture at Princeton, Morrison was asked by a student "who she wrote for." She swiftly replied: I want to write for people like me, which is to say black people, curious people, demanding people -- people who can't be faked, people who don't need to be patronized, people who have very, very high criteria. (Nobel lecture)

While writing her novels she continued teaching at Yale and then Bard College up to 1988. Morrison's novel blurs the line between 'fantasy' and reality' and her work labeled as 'magic realism' in spite of her own objection. The complexities of blacks' lives are beautifully sketched in her novel. Her stories beautifully present the different places in a very rich cultural framework. But the suffering of the ordinary blacks in Morrison's world is the result of racism and sexism which is rampant in American soil. Myths and legends are connected which depict the psychic violence of racism and sexism. In spite of the vivid mythical exploration of place, her novel attempts to capture the reality of the real world. By narrating the story she brings the historical facts and connects it to the present. In the process she explores the Black Cultural heritage which is rich in its tradition. Regarding Morrison's issues in her novel, James P Draper 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 African Americans face in trying to achieve a sense of identity in a society dominated by white cultural values. (215)

In short, Morrison's novel covers the wide range of subject matter; beauty and ugliness, goodness and evil, friends and family, joy and sorrow, African American cultural heritage, Black and White relationship, and the politics of racism.

Morrison's works are characterized with precise, highly controlled use of metaphor and vivid visual images. Her novels deal with the complex state of the black's lives, who are compelled to behave according to the constructed norms of the whites. This reality is presented in her first novel *The Bluest Eye* where beauty is measured and defined according to the white standard that leads the character to the state of frustration. Her writing as a whole span, whole of the African American culture from the beginning to the present. Her novels are in the sense historical novels that combine and explore the history of African Americans, Black Emancipation, and new system of slavery during so called Reconstruction and black identity. Historicity of black history becomes the main theme in her writings; through which she tries to recover her people's true self.

In this paper, I will discuss the issues of inter and intra racial conflict and power dynamics portrayed in *The Bluest Eye*. I will explore various aspects associated with the social status of the disempowered, and examine the specific effects of being others in terms of race, gender and with the theories which are post colonial and feminist along with a personal touch to Morrison's life as a black woman.

Chapter II: Review of Literature

Colonizing Human Minds

The quest of identity has been a key area for human beings. Every human being as an independent subject aims to have an independent world, as Samuel Enoch Stumph focuses on Friedrich Nietzsche's concept of will to power in this way:

For Nietzsche, there is however one thing that does characterize the human beings and that is the desire to dominate the environment. This will to power is more than simply the will to survive. It is rather an inner drive to dominate the environment. This will to power is more than simply the will to survive. It is rather an inner drive to express the vigorous affirmation of all man's powers . . . "the strongest and highest will to life does not find expression in a miserable struggle for existence but in a will to power." (419)

The history of human civilization has passed different phases of dominations. One of the most powerful domination is imposed by colonialism. Colonialism deliberately displaced, misplaced, dominated and discriminated millions of people across the world whose impacts are still vibrant in different forms such as racism and hybridism.

The discourse of Post- English colonialism thus often speaks in a tongue that is forked. If colonialism takes power in the name of history, it repeatedly exercises its authority through the figures of race and oppression.

In an interview with Oprah Winfrey, Toni Morrison has stated, "I suppose *The Bluest Eye* is about one's dependency on the world for identification, self-value, feelings of worth". (Source: www.oprah.com/morrison/bluesteye) Toni Morrison has been consistently insightful critic of her work. She states that her aim with regard to her first novel is to show, "how to survive whole in a world where we are all of us, in some measure, victims of something." Morrison's broad vision extends beyond the individual to one that explores self-discovery in relation to a shared history.

The Bluest Eye remains one of Toni Morrison's most powerful, unforgettable novels and a significant work of American fiction. In *The Bluest Eye*, almost all the black characters not only accept the white oppression but also are busy in self-loathing and even discard their own black value and culture. This becomes efficiently possible because the oppressors oppress the blacks not by violence but by, what Foucault says, 'disciplinary power and gaze' (Foucault, D&P: 345). According to Foucault, the supervisor's observation controls the observed individuals by the power that coexists with the supervisor's oppression. Through this method, a massive group is placed under control.

In order to keep the society under control, the white gaze, that Morrison mentions in her after word accompanied by the white value and disciplinary power, subtly controls the black. The blacks feel helpless, yet internalise and admire the gaze that controls them. When Claudia dismembers the white doll, grown black people frowned and fussed: "You - don't - know - how - to - take - care - of - nothing. I - never - had - a baby - doll - in - my - whole - life - and - used - to cry - my - eyes - out - for them. Now - you - got - one - and - you - tear - it - up - what's - the - matter - with - you?" (14)

The white gaze implicitly forces the natives to be willingly oppressed and thus when the Whites conform to colour to be the norm of beauty, black stands for ugliness. Living in a white society, fully internalizing their norms, they adopt the white value and lose their own.

Foucault's concept of gaze offers us an explanation why most of the characters in *The Bluest Eye* are passive victims who do not fight back racism but internalize and practise it in daily lives. The white gaze functions as a vehicle to permeate the black

community with white values. The disciplinary power wielded by the white gaze psychologically manipulates the blacks into accepting distorted and debasing self-image and thereby indirectly places the whole community in control. As Cynthia A Davis puts it, “the destructive effect of white society can take the form of outright physical violence but oppression in Morrison’s world is more psychic.” (7)

When everyone accepts the white value as a norm, order is guaranteed. With this norm and order the people imprison themselves by adopting and practicing the white values that inculcate into their minds the myths of ownership and beauty. They live in a disciplinary oppressive society, aware of nothing to fight back, mistaking the white myth as absolute truth to which they have to live up for they regard racism as normal. As a dismal result of the fact that they learn to see themselves through the white gaze of blue eyes, they learn to despise their blackness and in order to compensate for their inborn ugliness they revert either to the logic of white mythologies or to the practice of violence within their own community. In the text, we see even the children of the black community who are little richer and a little lighter in color, conform to this norm of the white gaze, and mock Pecola. "She also knows that when one of the girls at school wanted to be particularly insulting a boy, or wanted to get an immediate response from him, she could say, “Bobby loves Pecola Breedlove! Bobby loves Pecola Breedlove!” and never fail to get peals of laughter from those in earshot, and mock anger from the accused." (34)

In addition, after school one day, a group of boys circle around Pecola and begin making fun of her chanting, “Black e mo. Black e mo. Yadaddsleepsnekked. Black e mo black e mo...”(50). Here we see her schoolmates name her darker shade of skin as too ugly to accept.

The Bluest Eye presents and examines the story of Black families, with a pessimistic view. They are unable to establish order and govern their own families. The racial experience has caused them to perceive themselves as inferior to the whites. White people's education and cultural colonization have presented the English world, with its rich culture, as a world of order, discipline, success, and achievement. As a result, the natives consider their own culture, customs and traditions, religion, and race to be inferior to those of their masters and try to identify themselves with them. This idea of Foucault about gaze, the pervasion of white gaze is actually a form of oppression that the African Americans do not understand but Morrison notices. It is thus not surprising that Morrison uses the eyes as a means to convey her concern about the invasion of white value, embedded in the white gaze of the Blue eyes.

Cholly Breedlove, Pauline's husband and Pecola's father, is also deformed by feelings of separateness and unworthiness. Cholly relies on alcohol and becomes increasingly disconnected even from those near him. Barbara Hill Rigney describes Cholly as one of "those characters . . . who lose humanity through excess of freedom, whose drive to disorder is so unfettered that becomes destructive to self as to others."(99)

Cholly's freedom comes from exclusion, not from choice. He had been abandoned by his mother and rejected by his father. In his first sexual encounter, Cholly and his girlfriend are surprised by two white hunters who order him to proceed while they watch:

“Get on wid it, nigger, said the flashlight one.

“Sir?” said Cholly, trying to find his button hole.

“I said get on wid it, An’ make it good, nigger, make it good.” (116)

In addition story further continues:

Powerless in face of humiliation, There was no place for Cholly's eyes

to go. They sold about furtively searching for shelter, while his body remained paralyzed. The flash-light man lifted his gun down from his shoulder, and Cholly heard the clop of metal. He dropped back to his knees. Darlene had her head averted, her eyes staring out of the lamplight into the surrounding darkness and looking almost unconcerned, as though they had no part in the drama, taking place around them. He pulled her dress up, lowered his trousers and underwear.

“Hee hee hee hee heeeee”

“ Come on, coon. Faster. You ain’t nothing for her”

“Hee hee hee heeeee” Cholly reacts, “Cholly, moving faster, looked at Darlene. He hated her. He almost wished he could do it-hard, long, and painfully, he hated her so much.” (116)

He vents his anger at the woman, that is, at the one weaker than he.

Sullen, irritable, he cultivated his hatred of Darlene. Never did he once consider directing his hatred toward the hunters. Such an emotion would have destroyed him. They were big, armed men, white men. He was small, black, helpless. His subconscious knew what his conscious mind did not guess- that hating them would have consumed him, burned him like a piece of soft coal, leaving only flakes of ash and a question mark of smoke.... For now, he hated the one who had created the situation, the one who bore witness to his failure, his impotence. The one whom he had not been able to protect, to spare, to cover from the round moon glow of the flashlights. (118)

Cholly has had no one to teach him how to be a father. Aunt Jimmy is so much older that she hardly seems an adequate role model. Cholly searches for father figures, first, in Blue Jack, and then in his biological father. The rejection by Samson Fuller is a turning point in Cholly's life, "Abandoned in a junk heap by his mother, rejected for a crap game by his father, there was nothing more to lose" (126). Cholly knows nothing of love and little of faithfulness or family.

His rape of Pecola is motivated by hatred. The text says explicitly that he despises his daughter for loving him because he is painfully aware of his failures. He feels a mix of tenderness and hatred as he rapes Pecola, the tenderness confused and misapplied. Ultimately, any tender feelings Cholly has for Pecola are transformed into a desire to consume her. Carroll Arnett further describes this pathetic situation:

Don't offend.....The full bloods/
Don't offendThe Whites/
Stand there in the middle.....Of the god-damned/
Road..... and/
Get hit. (42)

This book is about the horrid destruction of society that occurs when oppression is permitted, when racism is permitted, and when abuse is permitted. Another character of this kind, Geraldine, clearly displays this profound anxiety of having no identity, yet yearning for others when she explains to her son that there is a difference between the colored people and niggers and their family belongs to the first category.

White kids; his mother did not like him to play with niggers. She had explained to him the difference between colored people and niggers. They were easily identifiable. Colored people are neat and quiet; niggers are

dirty and loud. He belonged to the former group: he wore white shirts and blue trousers. (67)

Since she has fully internalized the mesmerizing standard of white civility, she parallels herself with them by imitating them and keeping herself aloof from the other black people who do not have the ability to live aspiring for bourgeois respectability. So, she doesn't like Pecola and insults her, "Get out. You nasty little black bitch, gets out of my house." (72)

Pauline, rejects her home and children and works proudly for a White Fisher's home as a maid and a shortened name Polly. Their worship of their colonial masters and hatred of their ancestry turns them to mimic men and self-loathing people. Pauline Breed gives most of her attention and love at the house where she works. In contrast to her own house which is miserable and in despair, her own daughter matters less than the little white girl who calls her Polly as seen in the assurance she gives to the white girl that she needn't trouble herself with the black girl, Pecola.

Who were they, Polly?

Don't worry none, baby

You gonna make another pie?

'Course I will

Who were they Polly?

Hush, Don't worry, none, she whispered and the honey in her words complemented the sundown spilling on the lake. (85)

Pauline and Cholly Breedlove, steeped in their self-hatred, are unable to provide a nurturing environment for their children. The internalization of values from the dominant culture and the displacement of frustrated emotions which mark the Breedloves also affect the community at large. Shirley Temple items, Jean Harlow posters, the blue-eyed, yellow-haired, pink-skinned image stamped on dolls and on Mary Jane candy wrappers are everywhere. Since all these images render the blacks as subhuman, in this kind of society, the Declaration of Human Rights does not apply to them, inversely because they have no rights. Racism diverts and pollutes the best energies of a man and destroys even his own love for himself.

When the people in the racist society internalize and admit the inferiority and unreality of their own culture like this, time looks back again, to the face of the colonizers, who took a new name, the White people. In a way, this kind of brainwashing of the colored people is another form of colonization, as it is very essential for survival of power. As Foucault says:

Racism first develops with colonization . . . with colonizing genocide. How can one not only wage war on one's adversaries but also expose one's own citizens to war, and let them be killed by the million . . . except by activating the theme of racism? Racism is a way of introducing a break into the domain of life that is under power's control: the break between what must live and what must die . . . "The more you live, the more deaths you will cause". . . "The very fact that you let more die will allow you to live more". . . The more inferior species die out, the more abnormal individuals are eliminated, the fewer degenerates there will be in the species as a whole, and the more I—as species rather than

individual—can live, the stronger I will be, the more vigorous I will be. . .

(80)

Pecola and other characters in the novel create their identities through their own experiences and then Morrison talks about Claudia, who resists the norms of white's world and Mrs. Mac Teers who knows that own culture and tradition can be a means to reconstruct the identity. In demonstrating pride in being black through Claudia, the writer does not simply portray positive images of blackness; instead, she focuses on the damage that the black characters suffer through the desires to be like the whites.

Racism in American Soil

Race refers to one of the groups of populations constituting humanity. It is a socially constructed concept that divides humankind in major division in terms of distinctive characteristics. "In its original use, race itself referred to origins in common stock. This could be family, religion or nation, but it applied equally to plant and animal life" (Gerzina 125). Generally, categorization of a group of race resulted from the biological basis. But at present the concept is applied to choose individual or fractions of population by equating the biological criteria of the race with the mental characteristics such as intelligence, personality.

The concept of race developed since long back when conquests, invasions, migrations 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. The study and practice of race is not the present phenomenon. It was also prevalent in the writing of classical Greek and Hebrew Societies. They distinguished themselves with "others" on the basis of appearances, costumes, traditions, language, attitude, religion, physical surrounding or location.

During the fifth 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 275). Likewise, in the Hellenic world, the black “Ethiopians” and blonde “Scythians” were regarded inferior to Greeks. But, in the writing of Pre- Socratic sophist and Homer, racial characteristic was defined on the basis of an individual quality of a person instead of colour. The treatment given to the blacks whether in past or a present is based on preconceived prejudice.

Racism is a broader term, which encompasses the elements of history, culture and ethnicity. It involves the superiority of one group, ethnicity or its cultural practices over the other because the entitled inferior group lacks the set of criteria as prescribed by the privileged group. In course of social dealings, racism exists both in conscious and unconscious level. But its effect is very much damaging both to the victims and the perpetrators if it is practiced in an unhealthy manner. In fact, it is a false notion to associate the genetic traits to social characteristics. Therefore Gerzina has said, “racism at individual level involves a misguided personal belief that an entire racial group is deficient or superior because of a set of moral, intellectual, or a cultural traits that are thought to be indicated by the group’s biological origin.” (126)

Race is socially constructed concept rather than an inherently meaningful category. Mostly, it is shaped by the power relation under different social institutions. No one is a born racist rather it is learnt or acquired through social process. In United State, racism was analyzed for political purposes so that it would be easy to rule over the oppressed groups. Therefore, W.H.Tucker in his article 'The Science and Politics of Racial Research' argues, “The truth is that though waged with scientific weapons, the goal in this has always been political, indeed the debate has no strictly scientific purpose

or value (380)." Thus, making science as an authority to propound the existing racial prejudices, scientists modified the subject matter to suit their personal agenda. Tucker 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 superiority of whites over the blacks declaring that blacks have smaller size and shape of skull than the whites. The association of blacks with the apes for longer arm and smaller skull size and shape is nothing more than white's trick to justify the practices of slavery. It is the strategy to rule over the blacks by silencing their voice. They taught the world that true Negro was less human because he possess "an oval skull, flat forehead, snout-like jaws, swollen lips, broad flat nose, crammed hair, calf less legs, highly elongated heels, and flat feet" (Ellis 13). Thus, exaggerating the deformities as set by the whites' standard, they tried to give permanence and stability to the false doctrine of natural Negro inferiority.

As Ralph Ellison says, whites have used the strategy 'Use a Nigger to catch a Nigger' (*Invisible Man* 549). In order to rule over the mass black they choose a group of Negro from the community in order to mediate between themselves and the blacks. At the same time giving greater significance to the colour of skin they created sharp division and conflict between light-skinned blacks and dark-skinned blacks. But being blind to the reality blacks started to compete within themselves and, 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*.

Morrison's "sugar brown mobile girls" try to train themselves in accordance with the white standard so that their imitation or the training of the white modes of standard may provide new social recognition:

They go to land-grant colleges, normal schools and 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 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 64)

The problem with the black is he suffers from the inferiority complex, alienation and dislocation in the mist of dominant white cultural norms. Therefore in order to get rid from mental agony he tries to adopt the mainstream cultural norms and values but in this process he gets split between two modes of cultural values: African heritage and the European tradition. Blacks in the racist society are categorized, defined, and dehumanized but their desire of being 'white' is the product of their wish to attain social recognition and nothing more than that. Due to this he develops the wish for the white skin. Franz Fanon writes, "I marry white culture, white beauty, white whiteness. When my restless hands caress that white breast they grasp white civilization and dignity and make them mine." (Fanon, *Black Skin White Masks* 63) It is the helpless condition of the blacks who cannot 'cry' because their voice is silenced by the white's whiteness.

Whenever we talk racism in America, both the south and the northern region appear as the dominant playground of racial discrimination. The south as an agrarian region had the more demands of laborers for the cultivation of the soil. As a result south, in a sense, became the real home of the mass blacks as they toiled hard in making south a

beautiful place. They gave south new shape by clearing the forest, cultivating the soil and building the houses. Legally, the cultivated land was never their own but it is tragedy that they became slaves and received second class treatment. The whites invented the myth to oppress the blacks on the basis of so-called natural inferiority. Their labour was valued but they were dehumanized. Though they developed their intimate ties with the south, they became foreigner in their own dreamland. The practice of racism was too severe even in the North. In the North, the average black population suffered not only from the hands of whites but also well- to- do blacks were ready to exploit the poor blacks. As a result they had to bear double oppression. It is what Morrison's character Pauline experiences after migration to 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 except it from them" (Morrison 91). Though in the surface level North appeared as a free land but the underneath reality was something different. Freedom and equality were displaced by the practices of racial prejudice. Blacks moved to North for better opportunities and freedom but they felt themselves alienated and isolated in new urban life. Again in North they faced problem of identity crisis, sense of dispossession and fragmentation. So in order to gain new identity they started to internalize white norms. They tried to see the black self through white glasses. In fact, it was impossible task, which brought the tragedy in their lives.

Exploring Femininity

Patriarchal domination has been one of the facts of human civilization. Domination, suppression, and oppression created by different forms of patriarchic modes have marginalized the status of women. Even within the history of domination, the saga of women's suffering is bitter. The reality of women as human subject have been

misrepresented, and misinterpreted. This is not only the issue of misrepresentation, largely this is the issue of bitter realities that women have to go through in each historical phase; it happened during the colonial phase as well. Thus women as receiving organs of society are victims of colonialism and racism.

Within the patriarchic society, the seeds of oppressions are acquired during infancy and earlier childhood and are reinforced as they transit to adulthood. Parents to begin with, give a very strong sex role and a corresponding self-concept to their children and later the society reinforces the same. They all teach boys and girls that they are not only different but unequal too.

As Mary Wollstonecraft says:

Females, who are made women of when they are mere children, who are brought back to childhood when they ought to leave the go- cart forever, have not sufficient strength of mind to efface the super inductions of art that have smothered nature. Is it surprising that women everywhere appear a defect in nature, when the discriminations are fostered from family. (395)

After centuries of being beaten down by mistreatment, gradually a sense of resistance among the female writer came into existence and that gave birth of the resistance politics. Hazard Adams says:

Perhaps, the most successful of these political movements has been feminism, which has produced enough variety of theoretical positions to fill a number of anthologies of its own. Feminism has recovered and revered the writings of many women excluded from the so-called literary

canon and raised many voices against the canon's sexual (and racial) exclusiveness. (117)

As we know that the constant thing in the world is that it will change, Feminist activists emerged from within diverse communities, and feminist theorists began to focus on the intersection between gender and sexuality with other social identities, such as race and class. Many feminists today argue that feminism is a grass-root movement that seeks to cross boundaries based on social class, race, culture, and religion; is culturally specific and addresses issues relevant to the women of that society and debate the extent to which certain issues, such as rape, incest, and mothering, are universal.

This vast difference between the social construction of femininity in a white and in a racist society obviously functions as a divisive force between the women at large. For black women have much to think before thinking about combating patriarchy. Kirsten Petersen says how a Malawian poet Felix Mnthali states this view very clearly in a poem called "Letter to a Feminist Friend":

My world has been raped/
Looted/
And squeezed/
By Europe and America/
And I have been scattered/
Over three continents/
To please Europe and America/
AND NOW/

The women of Europe and America/

After drinking and carousing/

On my sweat/

Rise up to castigate/

and castrate/

their menfolk/

from the cushions of a world/

I have built!/
/

Why should they be allowed/

To come between us?/
/

You and I were slaes together/

Rapes and lynchings-/

The lash of the overseer/

And the lust of the slave-owner/

Do your friends “in the movement”/

Understand these things?/
/

.../
/

No, no my sister,/

My love,/

First things first!

.../

When Africa/

At home and across the seas/

Is truly free/

There will be time for me/

And time for you/

To share the cooking/

And change the nappies-/

Till then/

First things first (43)

The larger disciplines that construct a feminine body out of a female are by no means race or class specific, yet, there is a vast gulf between the oppression of white and black women. Along with the gender differences, differences of racial and ethnic background further create a hierarchy between the marginalized groups themselves.

Morrison points out while people are generally equal, there are still prejudices in the idea of what is beautiful and who is worthy. The society that Pecola inhabits in *The Bluest Eye*, adores blonde haired and blue-eyed beauty. Black children are invisible in this society; they are not special, they are less than nothing is.

The idea that the colour of your skin somehow makes you lesser was cultivated by both whites and blacks. White skin means beauty and privileged and this idea was not questioned at that time in history. This idea contaminated black people's lives in many different ways. The beauty is also the same white face and blue eyes. The case of Pecola

is not different but it still concerns racial prejudice; however, the idea that fair is lovely and if you were beautiful your life would be better, still exists.

There is an acceptance of the fact that in cultures, where low valuation is placed on one's life and dignity they feel non person and have an inadequate, often negative self concept. This self-concept is the result of the internalization of values from the dominant culture. This domination of psychosocial power has a long lasting effect in the social mindset, and they start the act of looking at one's own self with other's eyes. This makes the exploited people victims of power and domination.

These anomalies confronted by the black women are the main concerns of Morrison. In the novel she describes a situation about how even doctors, the angels of life, look at their sisters when they wear a cloak of racist attitude. In the novel, when Pauline goes for Pecola's delivery, she says:

The pain was coming, but not too bad. A little old doctor come to examine me. He had all sorts of stuff. Some more doctors come. One old one and some young men. The old one was learning the young ones about babies. Showing them about how to do. When he got to me he said now these here women you don't have any trouble with. They deliver right away and with no pain. Just like horses. The young ones smiled. They went on. I seed them talking to them white women; How do you feel? Gonna have twins?
(97)

This kind of shocking account of partiality in the same society due to western standards of beauty was inevitable to catch the attention of a writer like Morrison. In the novel, Morrison challenges Western standards of beauty and demonstrates that the

concept of beauty is socially constructed. When Whiteness is a standard of beauty, internalized racism occurs from this standard and oppression from white society. This belief that white sets the standards for beauty, is a major factor to the racial self-loathing, also known as internalized racism, which occurred in America in the past as well as today.

The Bluest Eye tells the story of an eleven-year-old black girl, Pecola Breedlove, who wants to have blue eyes, because she sees herself, and is regarded by most of the characters in the novel, as ugly. The white child actor, Shirley Temple, who has the desired blue eyes, represents the standard of beauty that her peers subscribe to. John Leonard writes:

Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* is an inquiry into the reasons why beauty gets wasted in this country. The beauty in this case is black; the wasting is done by a cultural engine that seems to have been designed specifically to murder possibilities; the "bluest eye" refers to the blue eyes of the blond American myth, by which standard the black-skinned and brown-eyed always measure up inadequate. (473)

The novel starts with the description of an ideal white family, where we meet Dick and Jane and their lovely parents living in a nice and comfortable house with a lovely dog and a cat. The Dick and Jane text functions as the hegemonizing force of an ideology, the supremacy of 'the bluest eye' by which a dominant culture reproduces its hierarchical power structures.

As Donald B. Gibson also argues, the Dick and Jane text implies one of the primary and most insidious ways that the dominant culture exercises its hegemony,

through the educational system. It reveals the role of education in both oppressing the victim and more to the point teaching the victim how to oppress her own black self by internalising the values that dictate standards of beauty (Gibson,). In contrast to this hegemonic identity, the main black characters are depicted in three hierarchical families: first, there is Geraldine, a counterfeit of the idealised white family, secondly, the MacTeers and The Breedloves are at the bottom of the social order. The novel shows how these black characters respond to the dominant culture differently and this refutes easy binary social distinctions. Consequently, in trying to conform to the ideal of white femininity, the black women characters despise their blackness, which in turn leads to self-hatred. They see themselves through the eyes of white people and their worship of white beauty has destructive effects on their own community.

Chapter III: Textual Analysis

Racial Hostility in the Text

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

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

devoid of love and cooperation as a result, a deep rooted hatred is born in their heart that ultimately helps to build up the hostile situation.

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 also it extends to the level of interracial hostility as the 'chain of oppression' which always operates in course of social interaction. The whites as members of privileged class dominate the blacks. Mostly, it is the head of the family who has to bear the whites' oppression at the initial stage. He can not directly confront the whites because they later possess the power and it would rather invite his own doom. In such traumatic state, he directs his anger upon the female member of his own community. Females in a patriarchal world turns out to be helpless. So, they too direct their anger to their children who are the most vulnerable members in the black community. The relationship between Cholly, Pauline and Pecola in *The Bluest Eye* illustrates these facts.

When whites started to enslave blacks by instigating racial violence, the relationship became bitter. But counter racism by the blacks made the situation rather worse. It is disbelief and distrust that occupy the heart of both community members. As a result, racial hostility brought tragedy in their lives. Whites do not see blacks as an individual, simply because they are in Power and Position. The Pronouncement of social equality, freedom and pursuit of happiness to all the members of American citizens could not materialize on behalf of the blacks. Whites enjoyed the Power and Position whereas poverty and inequality became the property of the blacks. In fact, the blacks too equally took part in building of nation but their contribution were never paid attention. In such state, the relationship between them turned out to be quite hostile or problematic. The

position of blacks as circus animal and whites as the master created a deep gulf in the relationship between them.

Thus, in order to raise the voice for equal rights, opportunity and identity, Toni Morrison has created prominent work, *The Bluest Eye* where she has presented the inter and intra racial hostility which has shaped the lives of both blacks and whites. In this novel, it is the intraracial hostility that shapes the lives of the community members. But it does not mean that there is no white oppression at all. In *The Bluest Eye* the whites like Yakobowski and two white armed men are in the background. Morrison's interest also lies in the presentation of the 'chain of oppression' which operates within black communities in terms of social dealing. The innocent and helpless children like Pecola turn out to be the victim in her own community. She is sexually exploited by her own father and mentally raped by her own mother. Characters like Pauline, Cholly, Pecola and Geraldine negate their own self in order to enter in white man's world by internalizing white norms. But such attempt is all futile because it rather invites psychological splits and disintegration.

Thus in the novel, racial hostility emerges out of the notion of hierarchical relationship of whites and blacks. Wide socio-economic gap and the biased notion of class, caste, colour and beauty have further aggravated the situation. The practice of discrimination and oppression upon the weaker members of the community is the root cause behind racial hostility between whites and blacks.

Inter Racial Hostility in *The Bluest Eye*

The lives of blacks in a racially divided society is characterized by deformity and mutilation which is the product of oppression and marginalization whether resulting from gender, ethnic minority, identity, economic circumstances, or their cumulative

consequences. When black-white relationship is backed by wide socio-economic gap, the black becomes 'the other' in white's eyes. The surrounding atmosphere looks so complex that they can not share love rather a deep rooted hatred is born in their heart. And when colour is added as a measuring rod of social acceptance it becomes the glass that changes the reality. In such state, appearance becomes the false measure of inner worth. The social structure becomes so complex that the community is understood in terms of alienated existence. As a result, the oppressed community becomes the pariah. Roberta Rubenstein quotes the reality in her essay "Pariah and Communit": The black community is a pariah community. Black people are pariahs. The civilization of black people that lives apart from but in Juxtaposition to other civilizations is a pariah relationship.... But a community contains pariahs within it that are very useful for the conscience of that community. (155)

Social marginality has become the permanent condition in the lives of black. Children are taught middle class white standard as the ideal way of life. But that is beyond blacks' reach either in terms of color or in family structure. This is the stage from where the tragic story begins.

Discrimination and prejudice takes birth in such unhealthy social environment. The very dominant background of primer text indoctrinated the children about the concept of beauty, color and sophisticated middle class white life as an middle 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, 1)

This very 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. This epigraphical introduction implies one of the primary and most insidious ways that the dominant culture exercises its hegemony, through the educational system. The educational system becomes the tool to oppress the victim by defining the standard of beauty and forcing them to internalize these values. The impose whole scheme of value such as political, religious, moral, aesthetic that has little or nothing to do with blacks' actual lives. But the major problem is that they cannot meet these impose standards and turns out to be the pathetic figure. The experience of Pecola and Claudia as hinted by Gibson demonstrates that " in a land where the bluest eye holds hegemony none of the dispossessed escapes its gaze." (Text and Counter text 172)

Moreover, simple to complex structural development of Jane and Dick implies how simple matter of color consciousness develops in to a very complex one in the mind of children. The very school education to the innocent children turns out to be shocking experience especially in the life of black children. The wide socio-economic gap between the whites and the blacks can be noticed by comparing the life standard of Rosemary Vilanucci and that of Mac Teer sisters. Rosemary Vilanucci "live above her father's cafe, sits in a 1939 Buick eating bread and butter" (Morrison 5). Whereas Frieda and her sisters live in "old, cold and green" house and had to go railroad tracks in order to" fill burlap sacks with the tiny pieces of coal lying about"(5).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. Claudia is conscious of the existence in white men's world. It is the colour that makes the black as an outsider but along with this their poor economic status makes them marginal: Being a minority in both caste and class, we moved about anyway on the hem of life, struggling to consolidate our weaknesses and hang on, or to creep singly up into the major folds of the garment. (11)

Such outdoors and peripheral existence bred in them a hunger for property, for ownership. The firm possession of a yard, a porch, a grape arbour, so that they may have social acceptance. Pecola was so much fascinated by the desire of having blue eyes and white skin that she always drank milk in a blue-and-white Shirley Temple cup. Unlike Pecola, Claudia did not like such practices rather she hated Shirley but the impact of blue eyes and white skin as the only measuring rod of beauty dominates so much in her surrounding that she too learned much later to worship her. It was not only the children who considered Shirley Temple as symbol of whiteness and beauty but all the grown ups and the 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 child treasured' (14). This sort of institutionalized definition of beauty had brought tragedy in the lives of blacks. It is the way to impose one's cultural values over other.

The Breedloves lived in a store front because they were poor and black and they stayed there because they believed they were ugly. They lacked even the common things such as furniture, musical instruments and bathrooms in their house. Such poverty ridden life further compelled them to internalize dominant social voice which define them. The

major problem with Breedlove family is that they believed they were ugly, they never had any type of self-esteem or confidence:

You looked at them and wondered why they were so ugly; you looked closely and could not find the source. Then you realized that it came from conviction. 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, in fact, support it leaning at them from every bill board, every movie, every glance. (28)

Each member of family in own cell of consciousness, was manufacturing own kind of reality according to his/her own experience.

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 "Bobby loves Pecola Breedlove! Bobby loves Pecola Breedlove!" Such appalling state of inhuman situation forced her to find out the ultimate solution of her ugliness. It 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 both the classmates and the teachers and the same fashion she too wants to gain social acceptance by being something different than what she is naturally:

It had occurred to Pecola sometime ago that if her eyes, those eyes that held the pictures, 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 a long, long time.
(34 - 35)

In a racially divided society the hegemony of whites makes the existence of blacks very deplorable. They cannot confront it because it is so much pervasive that it determines the reality.

Pecola likes to buy and eat 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" (38). In the eyes of many people she does not exist. Mr. Yacobowski, fifty-two-year old white immigrant storekeeper, does not see her because for him there is nothing to see. It is simply because she is black small child in her miserable outlook. Such figures are simply dismissed and ignored. The total absence of human recognition in white's eyes is Pecola's common experience that makes her feel the permanent loss:

But she has seen interest, disgust, even anger in grown male eyes. Yet this vacuum is not new to her. It has an edge; somewhere in the bottom lid is the distance. She has seen it lurking in the eyes of all white people. So, the distaste must be for her, her blackness. All things in her are flux and anticipation. But her blackness is static and dread. And it is the blackness accounts for, that creates, the vacuum edged with distaste in white eyes.
(36 - 37)

The healthy social dealing between Pecola and white shopkeeper cannot take place because even while offering money, he hesitates to touch her hand. This is the

extreme point of discrimination and humiliation that makes the black pariah within social surrounding.

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 always forces human being to explore the area that is untouched or forbidden. Due to this, black children fantasized the beautiful park where only the white had access.

Claudia narrates what black children feel when they are in front of the beautiful park has Lake Shore Park: "it was empty now, but sweetly expectant of clean, white, well behaved children and parents who would play their 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." (81)

Even in hospital doctor's behaviour toward a black woman is biased. Their treatment to a black patient is shaped by colour prejudiced. The mode of diagnosis gets changed only on the basis of colour. At her second gestation, Pauline is admitted in hospital but doctors treat her as if she were an animal and does not feel any pain. The old doctor while narrating the younger doctors points to Pauline and says, "these here women you do not have any trouble with. They deliver right away and with no pain. Just like horses"(97). But the same doctor addresses to a white woman in a different manner.

Whether it is school or park, shop or hospital, blacks always receive the second class treatment. They never get human recognition. The whites never like to express their sympathy and loving attitude to the blacks. The position of a black woman was more tragic in comparison to the male. She had to obey the order of both white master and her husband. In fact, she is the central passive figure upon whom the whole action revolves.

The pathetic story of the woman can be heard through the narrative voice: Everybody in the world was in a position to give 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."(108)

In fact, 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 of existence, her wish of attaining social recognition never materializes and this situation is further aggravated by her poor economic status.

Behind the conscious present in Cholly lies the history of distortion. His present existence is shaped by the past experiences as a poor helpless black youth who is victimized by both black and white oppression. The sense of dread and despair became the part of his life. He was first oppressed by his own mother who abandoned him but he was raised by his old aunt Jimmy. Cholly's only knowledge is his father's name- Samson Fuller. His first experience of sexual intercourse is interrupted by two white men whose comments render him impotent by making it public pleasure show. His search of his father ends when the man chases him away; such denial of socialization renders him wild. He hates Darlene rather than the white men because she was the witness of his powerlessness. He cannot direct his anger upon the whites because they possess gun, i.e., power.

The social discrimination between the blacks and the whites has been a bitter experience. The whites tend to dominate and discriminate them simply because they are black and, therefore, 'the other'. It is certainly inhuman behaviour and extreme form of discrimination that whites practice upon the fellow human being. The whites are strong

because they possess wealth, control media and, thus, define whiteness as the standard of beauty. The blacks, on the other hand, felt themselves inferior because they assume that they have not attained the so-called social standard of beauty i.e. whiteness which is supposed to bring power and wealth. The cultural domination is the major responsible factor in inviting tragedy in blacks' lives. The blacks tend to internalize white norms because there is no way out for survival in a racist society.

Intra Racial Hostility In *The Bluest Eye*

When a community member discards its cultural root in order to attain the mainstream culture, the victim passes through the inferiority complex. In order to get rid of such psychological problem, they begin to adopt or internalize mainstream culture by renouncing their own cultural norms. But the problem is that they can neither totally discard their own cultural roots nor can merge in the mainstream culture. As a result, they turn to be mimic men. Ultimately negation of one's own cultural heritage not only creates frustration and humiliation but also brings cultural disintegration and division within race. Such appealing state of existence creates unrecoverable wound in the lives of victims.

Mac Teer's family is more cultured and conscious than the Breedlove. But the sense of command and the sense of disgust against the children hover even in Mac Teers' family. Parents never play with their children. They are mostly indifferent against the situation. Claudia narrates how children are treated by their parents: Adults do not talk to us-they give us 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 we are crazy. When we catch colds, they shake their heads in disgust at our lack of consideration. (Morrison 5-6)

No doubt the elders have their own problem. They had to work all the time in order to feed themselves and their children. And their anger is the product of existing situation rather than their own self contempt. But such environment gives the negative impact in the mind of children. They feel themselves lonely and are forced in search of love. As a result, they begin to internalize white norms because they see white family as the happy one. Parent's indifference forces the children to find other alternative way to share their feeling and emotion. As Claudia says, "when I think of autumn, I think of somebody with hands who doesn't want me to die"(7). This erosion of love in black family gives birth to the sense of alienation, frustration and disgust. As a result, family relationship disintegrates. It is love that joins the family members whereas hatred invites division. The common experience in black children is that elders never see the younger with intimate concern: "Had any adult with the power to fulfill my desires taken me seriously and asked me what I wanted, they would have known that I did not want to have anything to own or to possess any object" (14 - 15). This is how Claudia feels. She does not want anything to possess, rather she is longing for love from her parents.

Cholly's wild behaviour forced Pecola to take recluse in Mac Teers' home. Except Mac Teer sisters, there is no one who could seriously love and understand her feelings. She became the victim of inferiority complex due her black facial structure. She drinks milk from Shirley Temple cup not because she loves drinking milk but because she could handle and see sweet Shirley's face. Miss MacTeer thinks that Pecola drinks milk because she is greedy. Ashamed of the insults, Pecola keeps silence. Such insult goes on hours and hours. The major problem with Breedlove family is that there is no broad understanding about the existing realities. Due to their disgust to their own blackness, they do not have self respect. As a result, they never question to anyone. They simply

believe whatever they are told. It is this sense of conviction which brings psychological trauma in their lives. The narrator describes the situation of their own self evaluation like this:

You looked at them and wondered why they were so 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 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; saw, in fact, support for it leaning at them from every billboard, every movie, every glance. (28)

Cholly's first sexual pleasure with Darlene was disturbed by two white men. But he could not throw his anger upon the whites because they possess gun so he directs his anger against Darlene because she is the witness to his powerlessness. He even could not abandon Pauline because she is the only woman whom "he could touch and therefore hurt." (31)

They never had good relationship. They mostly engaged in conflict and fought. The children were the victim of such uncongenial family environment. The reaction to the situation was different according to the respective temperament of son and daughter: "Sammy cursed for a while or left the house or threw himself into the fray"(Morrison 32). Whereas Pecola's reaction was quite passive. She prefers to use the language of silence and simply "wish that she herself could die" (32). Pecola feels everywhere rejected. At her home there is no peace. At school she stays alone at double desk. She feels that she could not get rid of such situation as long as she is ugly. She spends hours and hours just

looking at the mirror in order to find out the mystery behind her ugliness. As narrator describes: " Long hours she sat at looking in the mirror, trying to discover the secret of ugliness, the ugliness that made her ignored or despised at school, by the teachers and classmates alike." (34)

Within the community there is fierce competition for better facial look. Maureen Peal, being better in her outlook directly address her friends referring to their blackness; " I am cute! And you ugly! Black and ugly black e mos. I am cute!" (56). All are running after the white skin and grey hair because it is the only beauty that is ever defined in their community. The privileged member tries to give outlet to his/her own self-contempt by victimizing weaker members from their own community. The boys surround Pecola and then they " gaily harassed her" by extemporizing a verse "Black e mo. Black e mo. Yadaddsleepsnekked"(50). Actually this insult is directed not only to Pecola rather it was their own contempt for their own blackness. It is the result of their negation to self and their own cultural heritage. Actually, by hating Pecola's blackness they hate themselves.

The "sugar- brown Mobile girls" are too conscious of their beauty as well as possible sexual violence. They prefer whiteness of dominant culture rather than the blackness of their own. In order to get the mastery over white men's household work, they train themselves by different means:

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 wide range of human emotions. (64)

In the same fashion of "sugar-brown Mobile girl" Geraldine loves to imitate white cultural norms. But the most tragic instance is that like mobile girls she hates black thing and black people. She never allows her son junior to play with niggers:

White kids; his mother did not like him to play with niggers. She had explained to him the difference between colored people and niggers. They were easily identifiable. Colored people were neat and quite; niggers were dirty and loud. He belonged to the former group. . . The line between colored and nigger was not always clear; subtle and telltale signs threatened to erode it, and the watch had to be constant. (67)

People like Geraldine are inviting cultural disintegration by creating division within a race. Such gulf is very difficult to recover because once it is maintained in social dealing it functions as a permanent form of order. Junior's upbringing under Geraldine's care has made him wild and, thus, enjoys bullying girls. Junior victimizes Pecola creating a false hope. He taunts her not only at physical level but also provides mental agony. She cannot get out of his house because she is his prisoner. When Geraldine enters the room she feels extreme hatred towards Pecola because she is living image of her own repressed blackness. She does not want to see Pecola any longer therefore, she orders her to get lost from her house.

When Frieda and her sister go to visit Pecola in order to get some whiskey, they are surprised at Breedlove's odd behaviour. The accidental fall of hot blueberries on Pecola's leg makes her bear not only pain 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. (84 - 85)

Mrs. Breedlove has no concern for her own child's pain rather she is worried of her master's child. She is Mrs. Pauline Breedlove in her home but Polly in Fisher's house. But it does not make her any difference rather she feels comfortable over the new prescribed name by her master. She even does not like to introduce Frieda and Claudia to the white baby because they are black.

Pauline and Cholly got married and went away up north, Ohio where Cholly began to work in steel mill and Pauline started keeping house. But they could not be happy with little money so she started job, it also did not bring hope. After discovering Pauline's pregnancy, Cholly became more responsible. Pauline stopped her day work but loneliness haunted her. In order to pass her time, she began to visit movies. It changed her life and imagination. She gradually internalized white norms negating her own realities. She took physical beauty as a source of happiness and order in life. Being blind to the world of movie she accepted all the norms without objection. Movies taught her two things, love of white world and hatred of the blacks. When she delivered a child in hospital she found the baby Ugly. "Head full of pretty hair, but lord she was ugly." (98)

Pecola is rejected by her own mother at the moment she was born because she is black and therefore ugly. It is what Pauline had learnt from the world of movie. But her blackness becomes even blacker due to her poverty and ignorance. Thus, Pecola is emotionally detached from the primary source of her love. No one helps to develop her

self. As a result, she adopts cultural norms and attitude that are available in her surrounding.

Pauline's job at Fisher's house makes her realize that beauty, order, cleanliness, and praise are possible only in the world of whites. Regarding whites' house as paragon of order she takes less interest in her own house as if it is the world of disorder and chaos. She teaches fear instead of empowering love to her children: "Them she bent towards respectability, and in so doing 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's. 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." (100)

Even being a mother she cannot act as a mother. There is always crisis of emotional attachment between the mother and the children. Instead of encouraging and inspiring her children she cultivated fear in their life. It is not only under Pauline's care that Breedlove children are suffering but Cholly is also inviting tragedy in their lives. Behind Cholly's alcoholism and brutality lies the history of distortion. Abandoned by his own mother and rejected by his father, there was nothing to lose. Likewise, his first sexual encounter is interrupted by two white men whose derisive comments render him impotent. He directs his anger to his partner who is the witness of his powerlessness. He could not bestow parental love to his children because he himself had never experienced it. His life of appalling oppression and dislocation pushed him at the bottom where there is nothing to lose. He had no any hope of any possible glory. In his world, even god is a "nice old white man with blue eyes"(105). He was alone with his own perception. Once having tasted the unlimited freedom Cholly could not tolerate the dullness of married life. He inverts Pauline's values. He deals with self-hatred and oppression by becoming as evil

as possible, even to the point of raping his own daughter and trying to burn his own house. Actually the perverse act of his life, the rape of Pecola, is a product of his confusion of violence and love as the sequence of his emotion was directed by "revulsion, guilt, pity, then love." (127)

Both Pauline and Cholly exploit an innocent child because she is the only object they could find. Soaphead church, a mulatto, inclined to child abuse especially little girls, harassed them by touching "their sturdy little tits" (143). He renders Pecola to madness by providing 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 see her blue eyes. But *she* will. And will live happily ever after. I, I have found it meet and right so to do. (144)

Pecola's pregnancy caused by her own father becomes the subject of daily gossip in the community. An innocent and powerless black girl turns out to be victim. No one is there to understand her. The whole community members are alien and indifference to her plight. But the gossip goes on:

"Did you hear about that girl?"

"What? Pregnant?"

"Yas. But guess who?"

"Who? I don't know all these little old oys".

"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." (148)

Pecola not only bear the mental torture due to her pregnancy but had to undergo sever physical punishment. Instead of consoling her, Pauline bit her brutally. The people curse even the unborn baby and wish its death. She could not attain individuality and full humanity because the society objected her. She prefers negation to her own cultural norms as an alternative means of gaining social acceptance but her path led her no where more than self-hatred, illusion and then madness.

Pecola's madness may haunt the sanity of the community member. She became the scapegoat for the sake of community. She did her utmost effort to get salvation from her traumatic state of existence but it all became futile. It is not only Pecola's father but all the members of her community had raped her. Forgetting their own ground level realities- ugliness and blackness, they victimized Pecola. Pecola was a powerless passive figure but the society failed her. As Frieda narrates:

All of our waste which we dumped on her and which she absorbed. And all of our beauty, which was hers first and which she gave to us. All of us- all who knew her- felt so wholesome after we cleaned ourselves on her. We were so beautiful when we stood astride her ugliness. Her simplicity decorated us, her guilt sanctified us, her pain made us glow with health, her awkwardness made us think we had a sense of humour. Her inarticulateness made us believe we were eloquent. Her poverty kept us generous. Even her waking dreams we used- to silence our own nightmares. (163)

Pecola's madness is not only the result of Cholly's fatal love but "It was the fault of the earth, the land, of our town" (164). No doubt, very few members of her

community loved her. Frieda and Claudia had their own limitation due to their size. Cholly loved her but he was a free man and "the love of a free man is never safe. There is no gift for the beloved. The lover only possesses his gift of love. The loved one is shorn, neutralized, frozen, in the glare of the lover's inward eyes." (163)

All the members of the community try to uplift themselves in a better world. Ignoring the norms of their own race they consciously make an effort to conceptualize the norms of the dominant culture. In such process they impose their blackness to the weaker member of the community. In a racially divided society the colour of the skin plays vital role and the member of the community are too conscious about it. In a deeper level, prejudice of race not only divides the people of distinct colour alone but it also divide the people of same colour. It is because, on one hand, dominant race impose its ideology upon the weaker community. In such state, people of less privileged community turns out to be helpless. In order to make their survival easy, they must follow the norms of the dominant culture and cultivate racial self-loathing because every institution is controlled and ruled by them. But they are neither fully able to acquire the cultural standard of dominant race nor can maintain their cultural heritage. In such state, they are ready to oppress the weaker one so that they may suppress their own funk, the blackness. Socio-economic status also makes a lot of difference in terms of social dealing. The privileged are treated providing certain level of respect whereas the poor are systematically deranged. Such pattern of behaviour brings disintegration and division not only between the races but also within a race.

Chapter IV: Conclusion

The legacy of colonialism still stirs the vast multitude across the black world in the form of racism. Racism, which holds its monopoly on the basis, that the ones who have white skins are beautiful and civilized. This monopoly is bestowed to them by knowledge and power. This tool had long been the business for the oppressors to know others. This knowing of others dehumanized the blacks so much so that, they were increasingly persuaded to identify themselves with white eyes. Frantz Fanon demonstrates the way by which this calamity is internalized. He tells us his experience:

The black man among his own in the twentieth century does not know at what moment his inferiority comes into being through the other. And then the occasion arose when I had to meet the white men's eyes. An unfamiliar weight burdened me.

"Look, a Negro!" it was an external stimulus that flicked over me as I passed by, I made a tight smile.

"Look, a Negro!" It was true. It amused me. I made no secret of my amusement.

"Mama, see the Negro! I'm frightened!" Frightened! Frightened! Now they were beginning to be afraid of me. I made my mind to laugh myself to tears, but laughter had become impossible. (323-324)

Fanon goes on:

The Negro is an animal; the Negro is bad, mean, *ugly*. Look a Negro! The little boy is trembling because he is afraid of the Nigger. The *Handsome* little boy is shivering because he thinks the Negro is quivering with rage,

the white boy throws himself to his mother's arms, mama the *ugly* nigger will eat me up.

All round me the white man, above the sky and under the earth, there is a white song, a white song. All this whiteness burns me. I sit down and I become conscious of my colour, my uniform. I had not seen it. Now I can see it, it is indeed *ugly*. I stop there; can anyone tell me what *beauty* is? As I begin to recognize that the Negro is a symbol of sin, I catch myself hating the Negro. (324)

This is the way which has chained the racist oppressor and racially oppressed into an implacable dependence, the oppressed finds their definitions in the oppressor's eyes. This definition then molds their respective characters and dictates their conducts. As do the characters like, Pauline, Pecola, Cholly and Geraldine in Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*.

Toni Morrison's fiction furthers this line of research and resistance by providing a more detailed analysis of the relationship of trauma to social oppression and by showing how this connection is dramatized. Although Morrison addresses white American racial dominance, she is concerned with the relation between social power and individual psychology and tries to give voice to those who are traumatized by oppressive social and familial forces and paves a way for them to reclaim identity through resistance through her mouth piece Claudia.

In particular, Morrison's first resistance in *The Bluest Eye* (1970) is that she introduces a new element into post-colonialist discourse of resistance; it features young subaltern girl as a protagonist, which was not previously represented in the Western literary tradition. For Morrison, traumatized women and children provide not merely poignant metaphors but also concrete examples of the neglect, exploitation,

disempowerment of certain communities and even entire cultures. In this way, the novel encourages us to see colonialism as an on-going problem in the name of racism and she challenges the subordination of women and children by testifying to their experience and by engaging the readers in that experience.

Morrison really worries about the females and yet males as well. She is concerned not over presenting the African American men like Cholly and Soaphead as sex-demons, but as how and why they strive to establish their manhood by transferring the oppression they suffer in the society to the females. As she presents it, what has been seen as individualized psychopathological symptoms must be viewed differently. The epitome of this devalued community, the Breedlove family suffers from trauma caused by startling events, in the form of daily, grinding oppression, whereby the parents pass their suffering on to their children and men to their women. The Breedlove's daughter, Pecola, is especially sensitive to the fearful, repetitively ritualized violence that her parents direct towards each other and their children. Her further devaluation by the world, with little relief except from her playmates and the flesh traders who befriend her, includes constant ridicule from other school children because of her dark skin, poverty and ugliness.

The child victim created by Morrison is the embodiment of traumatic knowledge that, once understood and articulated, would reveal fearful truths about the other characters' lives. This knowledge, denied by victims and observers alike, sets individuals apart from one another, and underlies separations by skin color, cultural affiliation, class, etc., that help to maintain hierarchies of power. *The Bluest Eye* explores how the traumatic experience of social powerlessness and devalued racial identity prevents the African American community from joining together and much less finding ways to oppose dominant forces.

Pecola's desire for blue eyes becomes obsessive after her rape, and her conviction that she has been given them by Soaphead Church indicates a complete psychic disintegration. Her own negative reflection in others' eyes has been the continual source of her pain, and her main wish is that her reflection be desirable. "Look. I can look right at the sun," she says, "I don't even have to blink. He really did a good job. Everybody's jealous. Every time I look at somebody, they look off" (154). Pecola's belief that she has blue eyes represents her pitiable attempt to take power, for she is now the one who looks, but they more importantly symbolize the trauma of not being loved. She defends against her pain by re-experiencing others' gazes with what she believes is an acceptable, if not loveable, appearance. Ironically, this delusion makes her more of an outcast because her madness spooks everyone, including her mother. In our last glimpse of Pecola, her wandering in a regressive animal-like state is punctuated by useless, repetitive movements:

The damage done was total. She spent her days, her tendril, sap-green days, walking up and down, up and down, her head jerking to the beat of a drummer so distant only she could hear. Elbows bent, hands on shoulders, she flailed her arms like a bird in an eternal, grotesquely futile effort to fly. Beating the air, a winged but grounded bird, intent on the blue void it could not reach- could not even see- but which filled the valleys of the mind (162).

The novel is an attempt to speak for victims virtually silenced by the process of internalization of racial norms. This takes the form of trying to articulate the victims' own words, suggesting their traumatized condition through the narrative. Pecola similarly seeks comfort in words. In part she seeks understanding of what her father has done to

her, but her conflicted dialogue with a split-off persona of herself also illustrates how much she has been isolated and how her pain and need to speak are ignored by her community and even her family. To characterize this self-splitting, Morrison utilizes an interchange of roman type and italics:

How come you don't talk to anybody?

I talk to you

Besides me

I don't like anybody.

I just wondered. You don't talk to anybody. You don't go to school. And nobody talks to you.

How do you know nobody talks to me?

They don't. When you're in the house with me, even Mrs. Breedlove doesn't say anything to you. Ever. Sometimes I wonder if she even sees you. (156)

Thus, Morrison calls for the African American community at large to gather to fight against the implicit racial oppression in the white society when they hate each other no more, that is a Pecola should be accepted and a Cholly should be understood. The more they despise each other and their culture the more they conform to the white norm. So, Morrison creates a resistance, a discourse for unity. Morrison does have expectations from her readers, not just to read a painful story of a fragmented black girl, but she exclusively demands each reader's engagement in the discourse around power, domination, resistance, and justice.

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