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Title

**Women Empowerment in Alice Walker's *The Color Purple* and Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye***

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Academic Year 2022-2023

Title

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Submitted by

Mrs. BOUGOFA Zeyneb

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## Statement of Authorship

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this doctoral thesis entitled: Women Empowerment in Alice Walker's *The Color Purple*, and Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* , supervised by Dr. BACHER Ahmed of Mohamed Khider University of Biskra,Algeria, and that I have not used any sources other than those listed in the bibliography and identified as references. I further declare that I have not submitted this thesis at any other institution in order to obtain a degree.

To the best of my knowledge, all the sources that I have used and/ or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by complete reference.

Mrs.BOUGOFAZeyneb

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# Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to the memory of my father

To my mother, who has served as my motivation, support, and mentor and who has instilled in me a sense of individuality, drive, and self-belief.

To my husband ,whose unconditional love, unwavering support have brought me thisfar

To Mr.BOUHITEM, the head of our department .

To my colleague Yasser BENMOUSSA , who helped me in my dreaded days, thank you brother for making my work life easier.

---

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# Abstract

The malfeasance in perpetuating systemic racism echoed by patriarchy, bolstered by a number of negative stereotypes, nuanced with the fetishization of white beauty standards; the dismays of incest, rape, and sexism are strategically used to emphasize the horrors of the undefeatable thoughts of racism and colonization along with the ontological traumas they cause. This thesis delves deeply into the complex connection between the scars of today and the horrible events of slavery as it digs out the root causes of the destructive misrepresentation of African American women as stereotypical mummies and matriarchs, which has perpetuated crimes against them and their offsprings mainly sexual abuse. At their most positive, being a mammy or a matriarch, allows connection of black families with their white masters, via black women's practices of mothering white babies, at their most negative they affect the mother-daughter bond and turn black women into racist mothers against their own children and turns motherhood into a devastating force and a type of slavery. Through the lenses of Black feminist theory, Fanon's Theory of oppression and Bowlby's Attachment theory, respectively, this paper performs a close reading examining the novels' thematic intersection of Black feminist theory and colonial trauma theory, by applying hermeneutics as a methodological approach to investigate how the dynamics of colonial life and life after decolonization intersect with African Americans' psychological well-being.

**Key Words** : black feminism, colonial trauma, culture of dissemblance, empowerment, sexual victimization, stereotypical perceptions, systemic racism.

## Résumé

La malversation dans la perpétuation d'un racisme systémique répercuté par le patriarcat, appuyé par un certain nombre de stéréotypes négatifs, nuancés par la fétichisation des normes de beauté blanche ; Les consternations de l'inceste, du viol et du sexisme sont malignement utilisées pour mettre l'accent sur les horreurs des pensées indéfectibles du racisme et de la colonisation ainsi que les traumatismes ontologiques qu'elles provoquent. Cette thèse examine en profondeur le lien complexe entre les cicatrices d'aujourd'hui et les horribles événements stressants de l'esclavage afin de déterrer les causes profondes de la fausse représentation aussi injuste que destructrice des femmes afro-américaines en tant que mamans stéréotypées, matriarches et mammas coquines, qui a perpétué les crimes contre elles et leurs enfants, principalement les abus sexuels et les effets psychologiques de la violence raciale. À travers les points de vue de la théorie féministe noire, de la théorie de l'oppression de Fanon et de la théorie de l'attachement de Bowlby, respectivement, cet article effectue une lecture attentive en examinant l'intersection thématique des romans entre la théorie féministe noire et la théorie du traumatisme colonial. En appliquant l'herméneutique comme approche méthodologique pour étudier comment la dynamique de la vie coloniale et de la vie après la décolonisation se recoupe avec le bien-être psychologique des Afro-Américains.

**Mots clés:** autonomisation, culture de la dissemblance, féminisme noir, perceptions stéréotypées, racisme systémique, traumatisme colonial, victimisation sexuelle.

## المستخلص

## مستخلص

ان المنهجية التي اتبعها النظام الأبوي ، مدعومة بعدد من الصور النمطية السلبية ، متباينة مع معايير الجمال الأبيض وأهوال سفاح القربى والاعتصاب والتمييز على أساس الجنس هي كلها دلالة على الأفكار التي لا تُقهر من العنصرية والاستعمار وما خلفته من صدمات وجودية. تتعمق هذه الأطروحة في العلاقة المعقدة بين العبودية وما خلفته من آثار مروعة خاصة على المرأة السوداء حيث تسعى الباحثة من خلال الاطروحة الى استكشاف الأسباب الجذرية للتحريف المدمر للمرأة الأمريكية من أصل أفريقي على أنها أم نمطية أو أم مسيطرة حاكمة، مما أدى إلى استباحة جرائم العنف الجنسي والجسدي ضدها وضد ذريتها بشكل اساسي. في أكثر حالاتها إيجابية ، أن تكوني أما أو أما مسيطرة ، يسمح بربط العائلات السوداء مع أسيادها البيض ، عبر ممارسات النساء السود المتمثلة في إنجاب أطفال بيض ، وفي أقصى حالاتهم السلبية ، تؤثر على رابطة الأم وابنتها وتحول النساء السود إلى أمهات عنصريات ضد أطفالهم وتحويل الأمومة إلى قوة مدمرة ونوع من العبودية. يتم تعزيز الفكرة القائلة بأن دورة الأجيال من الصدمة لا مفر منها في تجارب النساء الأمريكيات من أصل أفريقي على وجه التحديد وحياة الأمريكيين من أصل أفريقي عمومًا من خلال الارتباط الاستطراذي للهوية الأمريكية الأفريقية . بالاعتماد على النظرية النسوية السوداء ، ونظرية فانون للاضطهاد ونظرية التعلق لبولبي تسعى هذه الأطروحة الى قراءة دقيقة لفحص الترابط الموضوعي للروايات بين النظرية النسوية السوداء ونظرية الصدمة الاستعمارية ، من خلال تطبيق التأويل كمنهجية لتحري مدى ترابط الحياة الاستعمارية والحياة مابعد إنهاء الاستعمار وتأثيرهما على الراحة النفسية للأميركيين الأفارقة.

كلمات مفتاحية: النسوية السوداء ، الصدمات الاستعمارية ، ثقافة التمكين من الاختلاف ، الإيذاء الجنسي ، التصورات النمطية ، العنصرية النظامية.

### **List of Abbreviations**

WHO World Health Organization

AWA Acting White Accusation

PTSS Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome

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# General Introduction

## General Introduction

By virtue of our race, sex, or class, each of us happens to be a victim and/or perpetrator of oppression. For African Americans in particular, racism, misogyny, and class exploitation are the most overt manifestations of oppression today. The USA's morality is conveniently set aside or asserted for self-justification in order to maintain privileges over black people, whose families are uprooted and their psyches are torn apart. Even after gaining their freedom, colonized people tend to imitate colonists and view themselves from their point of view. The tendency to justify our beliefs with examples from western ideology highlights the necessity for self-reflection and the reclaiming of our own history and culture.

Women of color were viewed as unclean and unworthy of respect. They were more likely to face racism, sexism, inequality, and sexual victimization. They have consistently faced exclusions and restrictions, and they are rarely heard. Throughout history, black women have had minimal legal protection, particularly those who have been raped, and preconceptions about their hypersexuality have been used to justify this lack of assistance. Before to 1970, just a few black female writers had published what many scholars regarded significant work; however, a slew of black female writers arrived and contributed to the growth of African American literature, propelling it to new heights.

Alice Walker, Toni Morrison, and many others gave a fuller sense of what black community is, the way women related to men was completely explored, not only this but above all the way women related to each other, challenging the most powerful variables in influencing social perceptions which are: racism, sexism, social economic status. To alleviate their oppression both as black and as women, African- American female writers needed to free themselves through challenging the established literary canon that helped shape the images of female inferiority, therefore African American women starting from the 18 th century begun to depict reality and transmit it to the audience through narratives.

Before the 1970s, it was really hard to find any female writings, almost all writings were of male black American novelists such as: Richard Wright, Ralph Ellison, James Baldwin, who were mainly concerned with the oppressive nature of the American society, unlike their female counterparts who addressed the embittered and brutal relationship between the two sexes. Notable writers like: Alice Walker and Toni Morrison, over-emphasized in their novels the oppression women experienced in their personal lives at the hands of men, which was in fact more interesting to the reading and film going public, than those issues already discussed by male writers.

Subverting the seeming powerlessness of women, Alice Walker in 1983 came up with the term Womanism in her essay *In Search of our Mothers Gardens*, trying at the same time to highlight the shades of the new term, Alice Walker wrote her third novel in 1982 entitled *The Color Purple*. This novel was Walker's successful presentation of the pathos and ethos of black women fight for recognition. It placed her among the most important contemporary American writers and made her an overnight literary celebrity. One might understand that Alice was trying to shed light on the way black women were thrice victimized by: Racism, Sexism, and the Economic Exploitation, this is true to a large extent, but the newest thing Walker intended to lay the ground for through her concept of Womanism was that women are victims not only because of men or other things, it is because they are immature and irresponsible, moreover, the idea of Womanism unlike Feminism focuses more on universality, and global society where all its members are encouraged to survive and coexist. she can overcome racism and sexism only if she is strong, and only if she can identify with other women instead of identifying with men.

Transforms from a victim of racism to a self-possessed woman, capable of responding to prejudice Toni Morrison, a notable writer that was considered as the voice of African American women was born in Ohio 1939, she wrote her master stunning piece *The Bluest Eye*

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in 1970, and her awareness of the country's political conditions helped her crafting a body of work in which she reveals the violent injustices committed against black community. All together the two novels have one thing in common which is the sexual victimization their main female characters have been through.

### **Background of the Study**

Only a few works in the history of African American literature, according to Gates, have sparked as much debate as Walker's *The Color Purple* and Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*. According to him, the novels' supporters praise it for its honesty, creativity, and use of vernacular English. He also demonstrates that opponents "censored the novel for depicting incest and domestic abuse in African American families, as well as incest and lesbianism.

Walker's third novel *The Color Purple*, 1982, winner of the Pulitzer Prize and later adapted into a film directed by Stephen Spielberg, is Walker's most acclaimed and well-known novel through which the triple bind of racism, sexism and poverty was explored. The novel is an important part of American literature, it describes events that mirror US society in the time that the story takes place, which is an appropriate example to research the representation of black female sexuality in literature, the novels of black women, like the slave and free narratives that precede them, did not just reflect or mirror a society; they attempted to change it (Carby 95).

The way in which African American dealt with their sexuality was one of the biggest reasons why black feminism arose, and Walker herself is also a scholar on black feminism. In addition to this, the novel tackles different themes such as sexuality, gender, class and race. Historically speaking, few original works were written by African American women, the genre of slave narratives, was traditionally focused on the experiences of black men, however, in *The Color Purple*, Walker manipulates the slave narrative genre by writing from the point

of view of African American women who endured multiple oppressions. Furthermore, *The Color Purple* focuses on the theme of black women's journey from silence to voice, the novel fulfills African American women's need for a female hero, a woman who ultimately claims her place within a large society, a woman who empowers another woman and helps in liberating all the females from their history of oppression, subordination and silence. In creating a hero for African American women, Walker created a woman whose condition speaks to everywoman.

The most heartbreaking and upsetting truth is that when some of us are rejected as our companions because of their class, gender, or race, the effort is instead focused on how to suppress those with those distinctions rather than savoring these diversity to the benefit of the world. Despite the fact that the term "race" or "Qabeela" was initially used to describe groups of people looking for refuge from animals or natural catastrophes. However, Language and racial discrimination are deeply ingrained in the mindset of the so-called superior groups, which is why some writers have focused on these topics in their works in an effort to capture the suffering of marginalized people. *The Bluest Eye* explores the difficult situation faced by black women in America, reveals how racism threatens the self-image of all black people, particularly women, and demonstrates the damaging results of total internalization of dominant social beliefs. It also emphasizes the need for the community to act, participate, and remember the appalling realities that still exist in their midst rather than "remain impartial."

The author criticizes the American system that prevents black individuals from creating an identity and rejects them due to their gender, color skin and class, Morrison's knowledge about the pain inflicted on black women is connected to her own history, she demonstrates the way those black women resisted, and above all the author introduces her readers to the traumatic and shameful upbringings of someone's parents in order to bring forth

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awareness to how society's disempowerment of a people is at the root of everlasting traumatic events.

As Sharon Rose Wilson writes : "Morrison is a postcolonial writer who "powerfully critiques U.S.colonialism of both past and present, the system of patriarchal racism, sexism, and classism that has not only denied the freedom, self determination,and even humanity of African Americans, but has sometimes literally colonized the bodies of people who live within its territories and borders" (Rose 78). Morrison's postcolonial project to rewrite American history from an African American perspective.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Black women exploitation and devaluation did not end with slavery, the unfair destructive misrepresentation of African American women as stereotypical mummies, matriarchs, and hot mammas has perpetuated crimes against them, mainly sexual abuse. Yet, black women chose to propagate public silence to end negative stereotyping especially the one that black women are prostitutes. At their most positive, being a mammy or a matriarch, allows connection of black families with their white masters,via black women's practices of mothering white babies, at their most negative they affect the mother-daughter bond and turn black women into racist mothers against their own children creating therefore an Intergenerational trauma that is usually disregarded or, at best, only briefly explored, despite the fact that we are well-versed in the economics and politics of oppression, including sexism and institutional racism.

The fact that psychologists have been active researchers in this field does not imply that they are indifferent with trauma and its effects. However, the historical trauma of colonialism and slavery which continues to have an effect on African Americans today, was not taken into account in the early academic studies of trauma. Not even intergenerational trauma, which harms black relationships with one another and deteriorates parenting and

motherhood to the point where it turns into a master-slave or oppressor-subject connection and eventually leads to violence and internalized self-loathing among blacks.

### **Research Questions**

- 1- Why are feminists cruel to each other than can men be to them?
- 2- How do the dynamics of colonial life and life after decolonization intersect with African Americans' psychological well-being ?
- 3- How do African Americans' perceptions of their race and identity differ as a result of their experiences with colonialism and slavery in both novels?
- 4- How can the terrible experiences of colonization and enslavement be overcome by African Americans?

### **Significance of the Study**

We claim that this study is going to be different in terms of thematic and stylistics treatment, the importance of this work lies on how the notion of female consciousness plays a crucial role in developing the character of the protagonists and makes them strong and confident in encountering all the forms of racism, oppression and injustice both in family and society, by mainly eliminating a whole set of defects left over from childhood.

This work will surely have fulfilled its goals if it contributes to a better appreciation of women empowerment and charts a perspective to the psychology of oppression among black people by identifying gaps in previous research, with the purpose of addressing them.

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## **Research Methodology**

This study presents a systematic agenda to study two major works written by two brilliant African American female writers. The research methodology intended to be used here is primarily hermeneutics, that combines literary study and interpretation with the pursuit of literature, because there are relevant and interesting parallels between the two novels concerning gender oppression and culture dominance, which became evident with the use of the postcolonial feminist criticism. More specifically the research will explore and describe women's experiences and perceptions of women to each other and above all how sexual victimization is portrayed in the two novels as an emotional inconsistencies that are in charge of the complex's structure, which in my humble opinion, can only be revealed by a psychoanalytical analysis of the black dilemma.

## **Literature Review**

America's violent rampage throughout the practice of slavery and colonialism and the legacy of superiority it bequeathed on black people have led to multiple traumas for African Americans, Postcolonial literature is thus born from the binarism that still exists between the colonizers and the colonized as an oppressor and oppressed, and as the outcome of paradoxical white ideals.

Black males are fighting against the hegemony of racism, while black women have, in addition to racism, an additional axe to grind which is patriarchy, an overwhelming phenomena that have deeply harmed collective identity. Male chauvinism is indeed so deeply ingrained in language and thought and action that their female counterparts habitually talk of God as "He," humanity as "mankind," and history as "his-story, men were always meant when the term "black people" was used, and white women were always intended when the term "black women" was used. Black women were neglected and ignored in both feminist



theoretical analysis and criticism as well as African American culture. In addition to the discriminatory and damaging representation of African American women as stereotypical mummies, matriarchs, and hot mammas that has fostered the recurrence of abuses against them, primarily sexual assault black women have chosen to maintain a public silence instead of fighting and reacting to those negative, racial stereotypes.

Yet, Building one's identity need not be feared as long as women are empowering one another. To highlight its theoretical framework and inform the researcher about the numerous aspects that will be explored in this research, this thesis chooses a collection of key works in this regard. They serve as a source of inspiration for the researcher and serve as a starting point for ongoing and future research, which makes them incredibly valuable.

### **The Bluest Eye**

This work examines the idea of black women resilience and empowerment as a critical tool for overcoming the racism and sexism that African American women experienced. African American women who were oppressed by both black and white men used these friendships as a form of self-realization and independence, Morrison's novel encapsulates several themes such as racism, sexism, sexual abuse. Morrison has never declared herself as a feminist as she said in one of the interviews: "I don't subscribe to patriarchy, and I don't think it should be substituted with matriarchy. I think it's a question of equitable access, and opening doors to all sorts of things." (Jaffrey 1998). She also said: "I write for black women. We are not addressing the men, as some white female writers do. We are not attacking each other, as both black and white men do. Black women writers look at things in an unforgiving loving way. They are writing to repossess, rename, reown." (Mckay 46)

In a journal article entitled : *From Periphery to Centre: Toni Morrison's Self Affirming Fiction* by Sunanda Pal, the author discusses how People of color are depicted as inferior in

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American culture's racist and sexist framework, which also positions women and men in marginal roles. In a parallel with Indians, African-Americans are an underrepresented population, the dominant group's "other," and women are thus the "other" of the "other." And how can this lead to an identity crisis brought on by the shame associated with race, which ultimately leads to psychic disintegration, as it is the case with the protagonist Pecola, "who has internalised the denigrated image of Black women and the idealised concept of white beauty, hence she believes that the absence of white skin and blue eyes is central to her 'ugliness'".(Pal 7)

Another work, Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye: A Critical Study*, by the Indian R.Gandhi Subramanian, discusses the feeling of ugliness felt by Pecola due to her skin color and to other many factors, especially the zero image imposed by white oppressors on black people; a term used by Carolyn F Gerald to illustrate "negative definition of self commonly associated with oppressed peoples and familiar to black children like Pecola in the *Bluest Eye* who struggle. In her family, Pecola has never experienced tenderness or warmth. Her home is a haven for violence, hatred, and sadism.

Early 20's society did not openly confront the serious topic of child abuse. In the opening pages of *The Bluest Eye*, Morrison describes how her father raped Pecola when she was nine years old and how this physical violence led to psychological trauma. Everyone around Pecola treats her violently, including her instructors, classmates, and mother Pauline, who doesn't give her the attention she needs. In an article entitled *Child Abuse in Toni Morrison's "The Bluest Eye"* by Dr. TARANA Parveen, the author tackles child abuse as systematic phenomena and a complicated topic with many underlying reasons. Children can be easily defeated since they are physically weaker than those who oppress them. Once children internalize their oppression, they start to identify with their oppressors and think that their tyranny is legitimate, especially if their oppressors are their parents. The author stresses

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that black individuals who engage in oppression experienced it themselves as youngsters. Pecola's father for example was abandoned by his parents soon after his birth. As a result of their abuse of one another and of their children, Pecola's parents change from being victims to oppressors. When the dominated cannot use their "latent force" against the dominators, they misdirect it toward their own people, strengthening rather than weakening their adversaries.

### **The Color Purple**

The following survey of the literature looks at sources relevant to this investigation of Alice Walker's *The Color Purple* (1982), that has so much in common with our research as for example "From Subaltern to Heroine: Sisterhood and Empowerment, by Maria Dedin Doce , 2018 have focused on gender issues in Alice Walker's 'The Color Purple', by illustrating the crucial place of women over the protagonist Celie, and how each female character is connected to a certain to Celie's empowerment as a woman, The main character, Celie, who has long since forgotten who she is, rediscovers herself with the assistance and empowerment of other black female characters.

Another paper entitled '*A Study of Celie's Emancipation in Alice Walker's The Color Purple*' by Padhi, Dr. P. kumar (2015) reveals that Celie has been victimized by both societies black and white and has been exposed to both sexism and racism Celie is a victim to the black as well as white society. Firstly, she is raped by a man who is supposed to be her father and then forced to a marriage from a man who tortures her and treats her as an animal.yet, by other women help Celie manages to emerge as a free woman who is no longer a slave to society and her family, the path to her self-consciousness wouldn't have been reached without the existence of supportive women around her.

B.C. Indu (2013) in his paper *Voicing the Voiceless: A Study of Alice Walker's The Color Purple* where he illustrates how Black women are brutally exploited and used as

nothing more than objects for the sole purpose of gratifying masculine sexual desires. Celie lived in a patriarchal, discriminatory, and oppressive culture where she experienced dread, misery, insecurity, and loneliness. The protagonist, with the aid of other black female characters like her husband's mistress Shug, sister Nettie, and step-wife son's Sophia, restores her identity.

K. Priya (2014) in her research paper entitled 'violence in Alice Walker's *The Color Purple*' tackled the way how all black women suffered all the burdens of prejudice and mistreatment, black women encountered another barrier which is sexism and racism and their effects, the plethora of violence and the power of women's solidarity in Alice Walker's *The Color Purple* is clearly stated throughout the whole work where Priya reveals Walker's honest treatment of sexism and racism that can only be solved through women solidarity and empowerment to each other.

Even while we are well-versed in the economics and politics of oppression, including sexism and systemic racism, intergenerational trauma is largely ignored or, at best, only briefly discussed. This does not mean that psychologists are unconcerned in trauma and its repercussions; rather, they have been active researchers in this area. However, early academic studies of trauma did not take into account the historical trauma of colonialism, which continues to have an impact on African Americans today. Not even the intergenerational trauma, which has a negative impact on black relationships with one another and impairs parenting and motherhood to the point where it becomes a relationship of a master and a slave, oppressor and oppressed, which eventually results in violence, and self-loath internalization.

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## Outline of the Dissertation

This work is divided into four chapters. First chapter includes the theoretical part, where the study's foundation is laid, defines Black feminist theory and outlines key concepts of Black feminist thought which also reviews relevant literature, describes the study's goals, and serves as a launch pad for this study. As a first point the researcher will try to historicize the African American literature or what some people might call black literature, and how it developed and took its shape during 1950 and 1960. Throughout their vividly told stories our brilliant writers: Alice, and Toni have brilliantly captured the woes of African American people including themselves while articulating and condemning the socio-political discrimination they have undergone throughout history, this why the researcher believes that it is important to sketch the traits of that period, it is our writer's pursuit of identity. In order to provide a distinctive context for the analysis of the nature of black womanhood, which is of crucial importance for my thesis, I decided to analyze the various simultaneous factors of the multiple oppressions: race, gender and class

Secondly, the researcher finds it important to go through the history of black women sexuality in an attempt to shed light on the social norms that led to the appearance of sexual violence, without forgetting of course to define our key terms already mentioned in the abstract.

**Chapter two**, this chapter begins with a sketch of the novelist Alice Walker, as an African American female writer who has made many contributions to African American life in wide ranging and diverse fields, and her difficult life prior to actually moving on to an overview of the book to give the reader a general idea of what to expect. It then moves on to a thematic analysis of patriarchy and the violence perpetrated against black women, namely the protagonist Celie, who has experienced numerous types of abuse over the course of her life by black men around her . Celie's road to rehabilitation from her ordeal is also covered. Celie

finally heals from trauma and discovers her purpose as a black creature by sharing her stories with her husband's mistress Mrs. Shug and other female characters who who helped her forge a black identity and establish connections with others around her, she finally develops a distinct and real identity during her recovery journey. Before concluding with a review of studies done on the book, which shows how critics have generally viewed the work.

**Chapter three**, almost follows the same layout as chapter two, this chapter will examine the intergenerational effects of historical trauma on the main characters and how this trauma turned into an intergenerational Trauma that demystifies the ingrained contradictions in identity discourse through the portrayals of persons attempting to reconcile the tension between their various identities and their sense of self while being oppressor and oppressed.

Through , the protagonist Pecola, the researcher intends to discuss the sexual trauma under the circumstance of racism and paternal abuse. Deformed parenthood and economic oppression are key factors in starting Pecola's trauma and making her injuries worse. This chapter also explores Pecola's traumatic symptoms, mainly her split consciousness and how she gradually distances herself from her family, and even her closest friends Frieda and Claudia by creating an imaginary friend to whom she talks happily about her newly acquired” bluest eyes.”

**Chapter Four** is the practical part of the whole work, in which the researcher intends to blend the two works together to extract the answer to her research questions by an intense analysis and interpretation of Walker’s *The Color Purple* (1982), Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*(1970), it appears that the ghost of colonial trauma has been successfully modeled in the works of Toni Morrison and Alice Walker, who have both endeavored to write about the experiences of black people in their novels. Colonial trauma and attachment theory, PTSS, are the

theoretical framework on which this research is grounded to uncover the underlying roots of the trauma experienced by African Americans and their kids.

Effective communication, re-engaging with the community, and reclaiming one's identity are all stressed as essential steps in this work's overall conclusion for victims to recover from trauma. With the help of other women, especially mothers, they can reestablish ties to the outside world and rediscover their place in society.



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**Chapter One: Revolutionizing the  
Discussion of Race and Misogyny in  
America**



## **Introduction**

When reading any work of literature, one is unavoidably met with a certain set of premises that must be admitted up front. What we hope to conclude from the research is somewhat connected to the historical development of African American writing, especially its earliest literature starting from the slave narratives to recent fiction. The issue needed to be acknowledged is central to the whole question of writing as a consciously symbolic act. Bernard Bell, an African American novelist and scholar, makes the case that black American literary forms in the western world have indigenous roots that are drawn from African American literature. This is reminiscent of what Bell refers to as a hybrid narrative that resulted in the creation of a bicultural tradition in black fiction writing that is both Afrocentric and Eurocentric.

Bell contends that knowledge of Afro-American culture is necessary to comprehend the history of African American literature. This reveals both conventional and current code, according to Bell, who claims that black books are the outcome of paradoxical white ideals or competing black values. The former is mentioned in the earliest age of black writing in the United States, the literature of slavery. A new culture that was different from the cultures of the slaves and the European customs of captivity arose during this time. We must investigate everything from slave narratives to modern black writers in order to analyze the logical connections in African American literature.

### **I. 1.Slavery Era**

“All men are created equal,”USA third president ,Thomas Jefferson’s bold assumption, the man who labeled slavery a "moral evil" and a "hideous scar," yet he continued to regard humans as property throughout his adult life and enslaved more than 600 people .

To justify slavery, Jefferson as quoted by DeGruy declares that Africans and African Americans are : ‘physically unattractive, required less sleep, were dumb, cowardly and incapable of feeling grief and have a bad smell.’’(DeGruy 60)

Slavery, is absolutely the most horrifying thing that can ever happen to a person. All major and minor powers in the Atlantic were involved in slavery and the slave trade, such as the Dutch, the British, the French, and the Americans. The United States of America was a slave society in its early years. What is legitimately referred to as "original sin".

Spain and Portugal were the two major European powers by 1492 when Columbus discovered America. Europe's foreign expansion was started by Portugal, but soon after, England, France, and Holland joined the scavenger hunt to split the spoils. Tobacco, cotton, and sugar were all grown with a lot of labor. Native Americans were the intended target and the slaves when white indentured laborers and prisoners were unable to satisfy the demand.(Bulhan 40)

Europe looked to Africa for slaves when Native American slaves could no longer endure starvation and hard labor. Christianity provided justifications to dull the victims' awareness as well as the predators' morality to support pro-slavery views. Bartolome de Las Casa, who would later become the Bishop of Chiapa in Mexico, wrote to Charles V and urged him to support the importation of African slaves as being humanitarian, beneficial, and in line with Christian philosophy. Rational arguments from religion persuaded the king and eventually marked the official start of African slavery in 1518 till 1880.(Bulhan41)

In America slavery started when Spanish wanted to use Indians as workers in their mines and cotton fields, unfortunately Indians were not strong enough to do such work, thereby, the alternative was bringing black people from Africa in the 1600's. In Cobb's 1858

book, *An Inquiry into the Law of Negro Slavery in the United States of America*, stronger physical and moral qualities were cited as justifications for slavery:

The Negro race ... as peculiarly fitted for a laborious class. Their physical frame is capable of great and long exertion ... Their moral character renders them happy, peaceful, contented and cheerful in a status that would break the spirit and destroy the energies of the Caucasian or the Native American. (Cobb 46-47)

In the middle of the 17th century, Africans developed a special relationship, the one of master and slave, with Europe that caused the destruction of Africa while also advancing the prosperity and development of Europe. Slavery began in 1619, when the first black Africans were brought to the British colonies in North America as cheap labor to work on the vast plantations of cotton and tobacco.

In 1916, African slaves were the main source of income for Europe. The slave trade occurred in four major waves over the course of five centuries, from the fifteenth to the late nineteenth century: the trans-Saharan, Indian Ocean, Red Sea, and trans-Atlantic slave trade (Ball 14.15). "During the Trans-Saharan slave trade, slaves were taken from the south of the Saharan desert to Northern Africa. In the Red Sea slave trade, slaves were taken from inland parts of the Red Sea and shipped to the Middle East and India. In the Indian Ocean slave trade, slaves were taken from Eastern Africa and shipped either to the Middle East, India, or to plantation islands in the Indian Ocean" (Nunn 142).

The longest forced migration of people in recorded history occurred during the Trans-Atlantic slave trade. Over twelve million men, women, and children from Africa were sold into slavery and brought to the Americas. The inhuman circumstances under which Africans were put were unbearable even for the toughest among them. As the need for cotton kept growing more and more Africans were obliged to work more than the usual as a way out of a

low-coast labor force the thing that lead to many deaths of African slaves, Congregationalists and Anglicans viewed the conversion of slaves during the colonial era as a moral duty. Slaves in the north were taught to read and verses from the Bible. In contrast, writing was frowned upon in the rest of the nation, particularly in the south where any form of literacy was viewed as a danger to the slave system.

William Wilberforce and Zachary Macaulay started the abolitionist movement, as a first step they put law that prohibits slave trading followed by the 1848 revolution that brought changes to many countries including ; France, Portugal in 1858, and Netherlands in 1861. Slavery was made illegal in thirty of the thirty-five states when the Thirteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution was approved in December 1865. Slavery was outlawed in Canada, which had much fewer slaves than the US, in 1834. The remaining five states in the United States also outlawed slavery by 1866.

Conclusion :The Congress and the senate were hesitated about the issue of slavery for almost fifty years, southern states were threatening to leave the union, but thanks to the first Republican American president Abraham Lincoln, this danger was ended. Lincoln was aware of the inhuman treatment toward slaves, he strongly fought to put an end to this, though he was murdered, his actions remained alive and slavery was abolished worldwide including Cuba that was under the Spanish government.

During 1903,W. E. B. Du Bois that the issue of the 20th century would be “the problem of the color line.” a phrase used earlier by Frederick Douglass to refer to the widespread discrimination and exclusion of Black people throughout the United States. The irony of having a statue of Liberty watch over the entrance of millions of foreigners in New York's harbor would have delighted Du Bois, who saw Black persecution in the United States

as "the guilt of this happy-go-lucky nation which goes blundering along with its Reconstruction dramas.( Moon-Kie 6)

Africans continued to strive and struggle for their cultural and political identities through black movements like the Civil Rights Movement and the Harlem Renaissance as a way to rediscover their authentic self and transform from an "object" to a qualified individual or "subject" who holds their cultural heritage as a source of pride.

### **I. .1.2. Slave Narratives**

The era of slavery witnessed the literary genre that we all know today as slave narratives, according to Henry Louis Gates, Jr, "The slave narrative is a unique creation in the long history of human bondage, designed by a small but exceptionally gifted group of men and women who escaped and who went on to write books about the severe conditions of their bondage"( Meisha1).

“the issue of slavery has traditionally been discussed through slave narratives, as they provide eyewitness accounts of individual slaves (Heglar 13). Established in 1760 (Andrews 668), the slave narrative genre, also called liberatory narratives or deliverance narratives or fugitive slave narratives.

When in the late 1780s the slave narrative started to make its appearance in American literature, its intentions, most importantly, included making the white society feel sympathy for the slaves and their struggles and fears (cf. Rushdy, Slavery Represented 423). The narratives were aimed at a white audience and were often written by white abolitionists who penned down the former slaves' histories (Andrews 668).

There was first the oral literature through which black people retold their stories , the transition from oral to written is emphasized through slave narratives. Usually this genre takes

the form of autobiographies either written by the slave himself or dictated on someone who would take in charge the process of writing. there are three main types of narratives . First, slaves' spiritual journey,published from the 1770s to the 1820s tackles the possibility of redemption through religion.

Second, from the 1820s onwards, many narratives were written to inspire the abolitionist struggle. As such, these tales were usually written in the autobiographical form, such as Harriet Jacobs' narrative. Lastly, there were some narratives that focused on individual and racial progress. An example of this is the autobiography by Elizabeth Keckley. These narratives contained fewer descriptions of the horrors of slavery, because they were written after the abolition. Instead, the focus was more on the road to freedom and their new identity.

The first narratives started appearing between the year 1760 and the end of the Civil War. According to Vincent Carretta, the originator of the slave narratives was Ukawsaw Gronniosaw also known as James Albert with autobiography entitled:Narrative, published in London in 1772. In addition ,Olaudah Equiano who was kidnapped at the age of 11 and taken to Virginia , he wrote his first narratives : Interesting narratives of the life of O.Equiano, or G.Vassa, the African This genre reached the peak during the Harlem Renaissance Along with the same period the American slave, social orator, writer and statesman: Frederick Douglass, the father of slave narratives, helped in giving the African American literature a push forward. When escaping slavery in 1838, Frederick had the chance to become the leader of the Abolitionist Movement and remain faithful to it until the end of his life he also was the first African American to hold a rank in the government of the United States, he also published his first anti-slavery newspaper called : North Star when he became a professor.

Since Frederick Douglass' autobiography is the most widely read of all the slave narratives, it has historically been the focus of discussion of slave narratives in literary classes. The general consensus among scholars is that there were about 200 narratives published between 1760 and 1947 with nearly half being published before the end of the Civil War (Sources vary as to the exact number of slave narratives that were written) Only a small number of the hundreds of slave narratives released were written by women. The first African American women's work was written by Harriet Wilson in the 1850s under the title : *Our Nig*, and Francis Harper writes *Iola Leroy* in the early 1890s, while Harriet Jacobs published her autobiography ,under the pseudonym Linda Brent, entitled :''*Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*'' hereafter referred to as *Incidents* in 1861, among the most well-known slave narratives ever written and probably the most well-known female slave narrative, In which she informs her readers that: "Slavery is terrible for men; but it is far more terrible for women.

Superadded to the burden common to all, they have wrongs, and sufferings, and mortifications peculiarly their own."(chapter14)

In order to convince a white American audience of the horrors of slavery, these early adaptations of the classic black woman's slave story had a strongly religious tone. Most slave narratives were written by men, that gave a lot of weight to physical effort and bodily suffering, unsurprisingly, male ex-slave narrators did not address the survival of women in similar circumstances, yet from a female perspective, female slave tales offer much-needed insight into the major themes of the slave experience, particularly into issues like maternity, sexual oppression, and violence. :''Although male slaves faced this threat as well, it was not in the same numbers as females ''(Foster 447).

All female slaves, according to Jacobs, endure dreadful mental tortures such sexual harassment and the death of their children. She illustrates the emotional suffering of mothers

whose children are taken from them through several anecdotes, as well as the embarrassment of slave girls who are sexually abused by white males. These events were just as terrible for these women as any physical punishment endured by men, if not harder.

<https://www.sparknotes.com/lit/incidents/quotes/page/2/>

Surprisingly, pregnant slaves and mothers were still subject to punishment. Some people were even expected to work during childbirth or to return to work right away after giving birth. Slaves were subjected to harsh penalties on a regular basis, including rape, sexual torture, and beatings. They also had no control over their own bodies.

## **I.2 Double Jeopardy**

While men were enduring the problem of being black, black women on the other hand had to endure both: being black and being a woman. Racist and sexist ideologies permeate every facet of the American society to a degree that they become hegemonic and yet are seen as ordinary. Being black in an American society meant that you are to be excluded from their culture and despised by them as it is said in the following rhyme: “if you are white, you’re all right, if you are brown, stick around, but if you are black, get back get back .”(Broonzy, Song)

In 1972, Frances Beale coined the term double jeopardy to describe how all black women suffer all the burdens of prejudice and mistreatment. Deborah King, in her article about the multiple jeopardizes of being black and being female presents the model of race-sex analogy and explains how these systems were an effective tool in discrimination. Actually, Black women were ignorant of the fact that their womanhood and race are important aspects of their identity, they thought that the only self-defining trait was race. It was not until the last



decades of the 20th century when black women came to the conclusion that sex and race are interrelated and they were a means through which their subordinate status was established.

Debrah King indicates, that black women were mistaken when they thought that there is no difference between being black and being a female, she adds that those differences between sex and race need to be identified because they have different scopes and different intensity. In 1904, the first president of the national association of colored women wrote: ‘not only are colored women ...handicapped on account of their sex, but they are almost everywhere baffled and mocked because of their race. Not only because they are women, but because they are colored women(King 331).

However, Beverly Lindsay have built up on Beale’s notion of double jeopardy and extended it to triple, since black women are being economically oppressed and exploited as well, while others have even come to suggest a fourth jeopardy which is homophobia, according to Barbara Smith and Audre Lorde . King on the other hand, found that these terms do not really cover racism, sexism and class oppression as interconnected control systems, thus she developed another term: multiple jeopardy, the one she believes can convey the multiple forms of discrimination against black women (King 331)

It is worth considering however, that black female intellectuals of the 19th century such as: Maria Stewart, Berry Smith, Anna Cooper fought to free themselves from the ties of a sexist society order and to overcome the barriers of patriarchy. Marie Stewart, was the first woman to defend black women’s rights in public

Contemporary black writers such as: Gloria Naylor, Paul Marshall, Maya Angelou, Toni Morrison, Alice Walker and many others are in the top today thanks to the African American poet Phillis Wheatley who gave the impetus to the beginning of African American literature and provided the background for its writers when she wrote about her life during

slavery, after she was sold as a slave child to Americans due to involuntary immigration. Not only Phillis all the already mentioned writers in a way or another they were the cornerstone and contributed in paving the way for contemporary writers who thanks to them they have an audience today.

Although most of the notable writers have been men, African American women who suffered more oppression, continued the struggle and gave more focus in their novels to the individual and collective identity, mutual influences of sexism and racism, class, gender and any social force that was connected in the lives of the contemporary black women writers in particular and black women in general.

### **I.2.1.Black Women Sexuality**

African American women began to be employed in the sex trade during enslavement, Black women were also exploited in fields and industries and subjected to verbal and sexual harassment as part of the white man's effort to subjugate them. African women have traditionally endured harsh living conditions, even after the end of slavery.

### **I.2.2. History: Hottentot Venus and the image of the prostitute**

In the 19th century when sciences such as medicine and ethnography started to develop, and led to the formation of different ideologies, the iconography of the 19th century whose conventions are clearly recognizable in the world of art, literature and medicine, two negative symbols of a female gained protuberance: the icon of the Hottentot Venus and the prostitute. The former goes back to an African young lady named Sarah Baartman, whose body was displayed at audiences in France and England in an attempt to show her enlarged buttocks, her genitals were dissected, cast in wax and exhibited in a French museum.

George Curvier, the anatomist who elucidated her body believed that black women are inherently sexually different, this convention reflected the 19th century understanding of black female sexuality, because of the unusual size of the sexual organs, black women were considered as lascivious and pathological, such an attitude promoted the western colonial ideology of supremacy of the white race and urgent need to civilize the non-white one. Furthermore, the psychologist Havelock Ellis asserted that beauty ranges from the white to black, if the size of pelvis and buttocks were big, then it is a sign of grotesque nature and primitiveness, which was exactly the case with black women, since then they become only a target for sexual fantasies and considered as sexual objects.

According to Carol Vance, black female sexuality is: a domain of restriction, repression, and danger as well as domain of exploration, pleasure and agency (Hammonds 489). In addition to their subjugation and absence in different spheres: history, literary, feminist theory they were misrepresented in regards of their femininity and sexuality. For Toni Morrison, black women's sexuality is one of the "unspeakable things unspoken" i.e. a terrible taboo that nobody seems willing to discuss it. Black women were considered to be as immoral, they were characterized as promiscuous and loose, in other words as natural prostitutes. In this regard Gerda Lerner asserts in *Black Women in White World* that there were complex system mechanisms that supported those negative myths:

one of these myths was the myth of bad black woman. By assuming a different level of sexuality for all blacks than that of whites and mythifying their sexual potency, the black woman could be made to personify sexual freedom and abandon. A myth was created that all black women were eager for sexual exploits, voluntarily loose in their morals and, therefore deserved none of the consideration and respect granted to white women. (Lerner, 163-164)

Not only this, they were considered as inherently dirty and source of disease because they never minded adultery nor they cared about their virginity in addition to their dark skin color that was viewed as a sort of pathology, Lerner mentions the law of intermarriage, the denial of the title Miss and Mrs. To a black woman, or assigning same sex toilet booths to both sexes, for her this reinforced more those myths.

### **I.2.3.Stereotypical perceptions**

In literature and art, stereotypes are frequently used to characterize African American women. Because, as Trudier Harris demonstrates, it is society's stereotypical picture of her that is being explained, rather than her, reductive preconceptions make her simpler to explain and "understand" than other racial sub-groups. Julia Jordan-Zachery writes that the purpose of stereotypes is not to reflect a reality but to "function as a disguise, or mystification, of objective social relations" which "normalizes the inequitable position of black woman" (Zachery 26).

To comprehend stereotypes, one must first comprehend the creation and function of myths. Richard Slotkin describes myths as "tales from the past that have been detached from their context and have gained symbolical significance for the community that created them over history." He uses the example of the game Cowboys and Indians, which is a myth that has been taken out of its context, which is the systematic genocide of Native Americans, and given new positive connotations for Americans in order to make the game "morally acceptable." (Slotkin 71) Stereotypes and mystification go hand in hand, the former mystifying reality while the latter simplifies it. Jordan Zachery writes that myths are used to rationalize panic "while at the same time promoting supremacist beliefs" in the context of pictures of black women, which leads to government policies that support supremacist goals (Zachery 30).

One consequence of American slavery was the de-gendering of female slaves, apparently sexual exploitation and devaluation did not end with slavery, thanks to the sexist-racist myth, white people continued to abuse black women and consider them as creatures of little worth, unlike their white female counterparts who were idealized through the images of : piety, purity, submissiveness, and domesticity (Collins 72). Patricia Hill Collins, author of *Black Feminist Thought* said: portraying African American women as stereotypical mammies, matriarchs, welfare recipient and hot mammas help justify US black women's oppression (Collins 69). Therefore, addressing sexual violence faced by black women, requires an understanding of the unfair and destructive misrepresentations of black women that perpetuate crimes against women of color. The main four destructive, persistent racial stereotypes that lead to modern women being problematized today according to Winfrey Harris in : *The Sisters are Alright : Changing the Broken Narrative of Black Women in America* are :the jezebel, the mammy, the sapphire and the matriarch.

#### **I.2.4. The Jezebel Myth**

The Jezebel stereotype or the jungle bunny, as described in the Hebrew bible, fabricated evidence against an innocent land owner who refused to sell her property to her husband, causing the landowner to be put to death. The name Jezebel since then became linked with deceiver and represented the African American woman as promiscuous man-eaters whose sexual appetites are: at the best inappropriate and, at worse insatiable'' (Collins 83)

And because the girl wore makeup and fine clothes there was an implication of a prostitute women. In America there is a strong belief that black women, evidenced by their clothes were truly wanton and sexually loose, consequently many African American women

were afraid that if they put on makeup, wore revealing clothes or expressed affection in public, it would confirm the image of the jezebel(Harris Perry 59-61).

But the mere fact is that jezebel was invented to rationalize the concept of slavery, black women were forced to work half naked, to justify their cruel behavior of forcing them into nudity, white man created the jezebel image to justify his deed. On the other hand white man could sexually abuse black women because they were promiscuous, and seductive raping them was not a guilt in addition to this the jezebel stereotype had a second function, it endorsed the breeder stereotype of female slaves.

Female slaves were thought to be highly fertile and give birth to numerous offspring, chattel, and labor units. Furthermore, there was another image that goes in parallel with the jezebel which is the hoochie, the one that also embodies the deviant sexuality of black woman. As a man the hoochie has a strong desire for sex, therefore, she is stigmatized as perverse and unfeminine. Unfortunately the jezebel stereotype continued to have a lasting effect on black women's lives, they were continuously exposed to sexual assault with no legal protection as historian Frances White elaborates: "Virtually no legal protection was provided for women portrayed as loose and licentious. Under such conditions, black women promiscuous by definition found it nearly impossible to convince the legal establishment that men of any race should be prosecuted for sexually assaulting them. The rape of black women was simply no crime at all." (Frances34)

### **I.2.5.The Mammy Archetype**

This archetype of mammy emerged from American Civil War (1861-1865) when the black female figure was represented as thick lipped, ugly, overweight cook and housekeeper,strong with big breast and arms. Her main purpose is nurturing, this image of mammy is also known as Aunt Jemima which stands in a complete contradiction with the

idealized fragile white woman and gives more emphasis on the racial opposition of black and white social role and beauty. Though the image of the mother in African culture was a symbol of fertility, it was distorted and became an image of domesticity by the white men who thought that black mothers lacks femininity, she was depicted as asexualized and defeminized because of her old age, her physical strength and her obesity.

Incarnating the perfect mother in the house, was capable of nurturing white children and at the same time looking after hers, and sustaining her family, acting as the all mother figure, the mammy was criticized by her people for giving much care to white children than to her own children, this is why she was not given much space in most American histobiography.

#### **I.2.6.The Sapphire Stereotype**

Also known as the angry black woman, Sapphire was a character designed from the enslaved female ilk, a tyrannical woman who castrated men and usurped their authority. So in contrast to the mammy image, Sapphire represented those women who worked in farms and were as strong as men, this stereotype was used by white men to justify their dehumanization and exploitation of black women.

#### **I.2.7.The Matriarch**

Black women were also condemned for perpetuating a matriarchal stereotype, female slaves were presented as genderless so they were not allowed the choice for motherhood and instead of being regarded as mothers they were only considered as breeders who like animals were able of giving birth to offspring easily. In her essay *Mama's baby, Papa's maybe* Hortense Spillers examines American slavery, she argues that black women unlike their white mistresses were deprived the right of motherhood, they were only allowed to give birth, and

their children were to be possessed and nurtured by the white family to be sold later on. Spiller goes further and adds that female slaves and their daughters did not have a gender identity similar to that of their mistresses and their daughters, they were genderless therefore they could not be mothers and only the white mistresses who were gendered females.

While the mammy is a symbol of the good black mother, the matriarch embodies the bad mother who is portrayed as unable to look after her children because of her work nature which requires a long absence, hence failing in performing conventional duty of a mother.

All in all, these stereotypical images are fundamental to black women's oppression. In this regard Patricia Hill Collins said: From the mammies, jezebels, and breeder women of slavery to the smiling aunt Jemimas on pancake mix boxes, ubiquitous black prostitutes, and ever-present welfare mothers of contemporary popular culture, negative stereotypes applied to African American women have been fundamental to black women's oppression (Collins 5)

### **I.3.Culture of Dissemblance**

Since slaves were considered to be subject to the legal authority of their owners, the common law did not offer any protection for them. Therefore, raping a Black woman is not a crime. Painter (1995) explained that the sexual abuse of the enslaved women was used by the owners for multiple reasons. One, was for reproductive benefit, as their offspring could be sold off at a profit. Two, as an example to others to discourage misconduct. Lastly, to fulfill any sexual desire the owner, owner's son, or owner's friends had. Some owners even loaned out their enslaved women to perform sexual favors to pay off a debt (Burrowes 11).

Robert adds that : ‘ Rape was also an act of physical violence designed to stifle African American womens' will to resist and to remind them of their servile status (Burrowes 12).



Even when it was asserted that a statute was racially neutral in terms of victimization, prosecution inaction and judicial rulings made it plain that Black women who were raped had no recourse. In the few places where the rape of a Black woman was formally criminalized, Black women were prohibited from testifying about their victimization due to rules of procedure. It was believed that the law was required to govern both genders' wild behavior because Black women were regarded as lustful and hence incapable of being raped, whereas Black men were depicted as being lascivious and must be stopped from unrestricted sexual intercourse.

For a Black man who raped or attempted to rape a White woman in 1816, Georgia mandated the death penalty; but, for a White man convicted of the same offense, the minimum sentence was reduced from seven to two years, and "hard labor" was not imposed. As a result, the pre-Civil War legal framework not only strengthened the institution of slavery but also sustained a gendered racist narrative that has influenced how we currently think about rape as a crime even after the war. (Pokorak 13)

In a 1989 paper, Darlene Clark Hine examines how oppressive systems, notably the sexual and racial exploitation of black women, influence the personal information that people make public and, consequently, what becomes part of the historical record. Black women typically established a cult of secrecy, a culture of dissemblance, to protect their mental and emotional well-being, Hine claims. As a result, black women rarely talked about the numerous acts of violence they frequently encountered both inside and outside of their communities. Black women's experiences with mental illness, notably depression and post-traumatic stress disorder, are directly related to this upholding of secrecy and quiet surrounding rape, incest, domestic violence, and other types of abuse.

### **I.3.1.Silent Reaction**

By the 19th century black women reformers started resisting these stereotypes of their sexuality which were used as justification for rape and many other abuses by whites, the resistance strategy came at the beginning of the 20th century, but in a silent way. Yes, black women chose to propagate public silence to end negative stereotyping mainly the one that black women are prostitutes. Silence and secrecy about their sexuality, was the black woman reaction to the aforementioned controlling images, scholar Darlene Clark Hine suggested that rape, economic oppression, and domestic violence influenced the motivation of African American women to maintain integrity about their sexuality, resulting in a culture of dissemblance.(Hine13).

By this term Hine means the behavior and attitudes of black women that created the openness and disclosure but actually shielded the truth of their inner lives and selves from their oppressors (Hine 912).

Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham agrees that black women adhered to the Victorian ideology of moral purity, which was crucial not only to the protection and upward mobility of black women but also to the attainment of respect, justice, and opportunity for all black Americans''(Higginbotham 266).

Apparently the strategy was not of great success, when choosing this strategy black women lost the ability to articulate their own conception of their sexuality and gave another opportunity for whites to define sexuality in their terms. The scholar Patricia Williams pointed out that black women are still unable to talk about their sexual needs and wishes, they are still struggling to dismiss the negative stereotypes of an: unreliable, untrustworthy, hostile, angry, powerless, and irrational. Dispelling the myth of sexually loose black woman went in vane, the historian Hazel Carby stated that: in the face of a dominant culture that

characterized all black women as sexually promiscuous being, public recognition of the self as sexual being was seen as compromising the reputation of all black women and of the race in general. ( Jewell179)

#### **I.4.The Thirteenth Amendment and Slavery Abolition**

In anticipation of the country's third year of civil war, President Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863. All "persons held as slaves" within the rebelling states shall be free, according to the proclamation. For slavery to be permanently abolished, Lincoln understood that the Emancipation Proclamation would need to be followed by a constitutional amendment. Although the Southern states had not yet been admitted back into the Union when the 13th Amendment was ratified, it should have been a simple matter for Congress to approve it.As part of the Reconstruction era, the 13th Amendment was the first change made to the US Constitution. After the amendment's ratification on December 6, 1865, the debate over whether slavery was permitted in the United States came to an end.

SECTION 1. Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction. (U.S constitution)

SECTION 2. Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation

Colonialism has taken the place of slavery. There were various reasons why slavery gave way to colonialism, including worries about slave uprisings and an expanding slave population that may displace the "master race." Until a more viable and acceptable alternative to slavery appeared, it is certain that the slave trade would not be abandoned. As a result, when the age of colonialism arrived, Euro-Americans easily adjusted their conscience to the

new economic imperatives, and the call of abolitionists, which had previously been disregarded and ignored, gained widespread credibility.(Bulhan 42)

### **I.5. Erasure of Black Women from the Literary Canon**

The world of black literature belonged to black males, who belittled the works of their female counterparts, it is true that black males were excluded from positions of power and authority in the US, but not as much as women were. They were not really recognized as a separate group, when black people were talked about it definitely meant men, and if women were brought into discussion, then it was absolutely white women. Black women were unacknowledged of in both: African American culture and feminist theoretical analysis and criticism, they were marginalized and invisible. Barbara Smith stated: "Black women whose experience is unique, are seldom recognized as particular social entity and are seldom thought to be important enough for serious scholarly consideration. This invisibility, however, means that the opportunities for creative research are infinite."(Smith 2)

The patriarchal relations within the black community in the 19th century hindered black women from having an equal opportunities with men, they even had difficulties in publishing their works because only black men could fund, direct and control the newspapers. Having the sphere of literature dominated by males, resulted in complaints among intellectual women and feminists like: Hazel Carby, Bell Hooks and Evelyn Brooks who condemned the absence of black females in the literary canon who were also contributors in the production of African American culture such as the essays of Anna Julia Cooper and the novels of Pauline Hopkins during the 1890's.

In this regard, Hazel tried to consider this period as: Women's Era in order to fill the voids of African American cultural history. The first half of the 20th century brought a new generation of black female writers, but they remained in the second position such as: Paull

Marshall, Ann Petry , Lorraine Hansberry, Margaret walker,...etc.The only one who received critical recognition was Zora Neale Hurston.

African American women have continually endured exclusions and restrictions, women have hardly been listened to because the noises of men have drowned out their voices in every sphere of life, during the 1960's this male chauvinism continued to predominate, even with more black women writers, the unequal treatment kept growing. Yet, this did not stop women from writing, rather they made a challenge to those circumstances through their literary work, and managed indeed to get their works published.

In 1970, Toni Crade Bambara in her anthology, tried to shed light on the impact of Sexism on the lives of black women. In *The Black Woman*, 27 female writers expressed their ardent desire for liberation, it was the beginning of an end. Over the last decades African American female writers succeeded in writing themselves into the national experience; Toni Morrison, Maya Angelou, Alice Walker, and so many others have had a great impact, and largely contributed in making the voice of marginalized women heard.

### **I.5.1. Black Males' Chauvinism Myth**

Contemporary black female writers dared to challenge their male counterparts with their new ideas and bold subjects, male dominance and patriarchal ideologies were on the edge a reason why black males felt threatened and offended especially that those writings were a direct opposition to those written by men, as for example Michelle Wallace's book: *Black Macho and the Myth of the Super Woman* which gained a strong acceptance and reaction from both: critics and public.

Men haters and traitors of race, this is how men called these women, not only men other women as well whether being intellectuals, writers or political activists, as if they were

not concerned with the fight being taken, who claimed that the white feminist propaganda have had that influence on them and poisoned their minds with the ideas of liberation. Unfortunately those women were not aware that even white Feminism was excluding them from its theory and discourse.

Because of their color, black women were totally ignored within a larger discourse of women's cultural production, their works were treated in isolation from those of white women, in fact the term women itself has always referred to white woman's experience, such custom perpetuated Racism and Sexism, and instead of fighting these practices white women continued depriving black women's sexual and racial identity. Thereby, black women had to develop their own theoretical and critical approach. Feminism, was not the only movement that has oppressed black women, Liberation Movement (Civil Rights Movement, The Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee, Black Nationalism, The Black Panther ( have also been crucial to black women, and have oppressed them racially. Having enough of the black men Sexism, and the white women Racism, black women were convinced that it was time for them to forge their own movement: Black Feminist Movement.

Feminism and womanism are similar in that both struggle for women's equality in their societies, yet this does not imply the two terms are interchangeable. Some feminists have reacted negatively to all theories because, in their eyes, every idea was connected to male supremacy. Feminism began in the late 19th century, and the term itself entered common usage in English during the 1890s. Feminist theory can be divided into two major stages:

First-wave feminism: concentrated on political concerns and women's suffrage

Second Wave The 1960s saw the emergence of feminism, which primarily refers to the radical feminism of the 1960s and early 1970s Women's Liberation Movement. Its primary concerns were social injustices, cultural disparities, equal pay for equal effort, and, on top of

all that, achieving sexual freedom and equality, particularly for other repressed groups like blacks, who were being defined. Another point of contention has been whether or not white men and women see the world equally to black women, and whether or not the male dominance of language has given rise to the question of whether or not females have a particular language. A long line of female authors from this era, including Kate Millet, Sandra Gilbert, Ruth Robbins, and others, had independence as their ultimate goal. The two waves, however, are founded on views held by white women who believe that men are the main cause of danger and the threat to women's lives. Although not all Womanists hold the same perspective. The second and third waves of feminism emerged throughout the ensuing decades. It is currently in a phase known as post feminism. Feminism's diversity, which focuses on the idiosyncrasies of the female experience in various circumstances, is one of its key characteristics.(Bougofa 37)

### **I.6.Feminism and Black Women: Exclusiveness of Black Women**

The concept Feminism is in fact an umbrella term for a number of different cultural approaches. It is a collection of movements and ideologies aimed at establishing, and defending equal political, social, and cultural rights for women. This includes defining the ways in which patriarchal structures have marginalized women seeking to establish equal political opportunities, relevance and recognition for women in education and employment. To this extent Oliver Banks has defined feminism as the following:

A sense of dissatisfaction with the conditions of women's life and opportunities  
Coupled with the beliefs that women disabilities rise not from nature itself nor indeed from any ills which afflict mankind but from the way in which woman's desire and abilities have been made subordinate to their needs, desire, and interests of men.

However, from the very beginnings of feminism as a movement, the divide between white and black women was obvious. Feminism sought to gain equality for women, but at the same time the equality they meant to establish was unequal to black women. Apparently, in the 19th century there was a negligible concern for black women, and it became clear that there were two separate women's movements. In US, white women intended to maintain black women at the bottom of the social ladder by refusing to acknowledge their basic rights. For example, white women in the south refused to acknowledge the basic rights of black women, in her famous speech *Ain't I a Woman*, Sojourner Truth demanded equal rights for all women.

Frances Harper, explained the 19th century struggle for suffrage, when white women refused the black women's claim to the same civil and political rights, another good example is the objectification of the slave Saartjie Baartman as the Hottentot Venus due to her physique. This reveals the rotten truth that Feminism rests upon binary oppression, the colored woman and the poor woman who was seen as the other because of her difference in terms of: race, origin, race, ethnicity and class. Hence, feminists accepted patriarchal policy and built their dominance at the expense of colored women's gain. Spivak and Allen criticized white feminism for consisting elitism and cultural imperialism reflected in the imposition of white women's norms upon the rest of womanhood in this regard Liu states:

A key aspect of white women's privilege has been their ability to assume that when they talked about themselves they were talking about all women, and many white feminists have unthinkingly generalized from their own situations, ignoring the experiences of black women, or treating them as marginal and different (Liu 574).

Eminent African American writers such as Toni Morrison, , Alice Walker emphasized the fact that racism is rooted within feminism they even begrudged feminists for non-womanizing blackwomen and considering them as different species. Feminism, then is not the



belief that one gender should be raised in power above another. The very definition of feminism shows a complete opposition to this belief. So when people comment against feminism, they are supporting sexism. There is no sitting on the fence. You are either a feminist or sexist. Unfortunately, most sexists don't know they are sexist, and compose the majority of the population. They are unaware that sexism is something that has been forced on to them through the brainwashed media of a patriarchal society.

### **I.6.1. Alice Walker's Womanism: From Exclusiveness to Inclusiveness**

Feminism's earliest forms have been criticized for taking into account only white and educated perspective. Moreover, for African American women, Feminism is a tool of Imperialism aligned with western ideologies from Marxism, Structuralism to Deconstruction and Post-modernism; however, feminism must imply something from black's culture; or rather it must be vividly depicted in order to be able to raise social consciousness that sympathizes with African women's histories, present realities, and future expectations. In a number of novels written by Alice Walker, Toni Morrison, and others the relationship between racial struggles and feminist issues was clearly defined, concomitantly marking the difference between white and black feminism: Although we are feminist and lesbians, we feel solidarity with progressive black men and do not advocate the fractionalization like white women who are separatists in demand. Our situation as black people necessitates that we have solidarity around the face of race, which white women of course do not to have with white men...we struggle together with black men against racism, while we also struggle with black men about sexism.

Black feminism was determined by the needs of independent movements, it is a critical social theory that "provides an alternative, self-defined lens through which Black women can be seen and their experiences understood in the world" (Patterson et al 43).

As theoretical and political movement, it did not gain recognition until the early 1960's, while African writings did not get the chance to be published until the very end of the 19th century and continued to get tremendous success from the late of the 20th century as well. African American writers have begun to advance their own conception of Feminism, that will express African women's experience adequately and away from the constraints of western Feminism which have subordinated Black women as subjects in favor of White women and Black men. From an African American perspective, feminism is a multilateral ideology with two major shades: womanism and feminism.

### **I.6.2. Definition of Womanism**

Womanism, forged out of global Feminism to analyze the condition of black women that is why it is sometimes referred to as Black Feminism. It insists on the fact that African women from the stone age to the modern age have been thrice victimized, by: Racism, Sexism, and Economic exploitation, the plight that the feminist movement failed to cover, and instead focused on white women's suffrage and even fought for their suffrage right without getting involved in the civil right movement to help in having a universal social equality. The fact that African women have been oppressed by sexism and racism and economic exploitation was among the issues Feminist movement has failed to recognize and address. Womanism encapsulates the principle of gender complementarity.

According to Collins (2000), Crenshaw(1991), and hooks (1989) there are three fundamental elements of Black feminist theory in their literature : intersectionality, oppositional knowledge, and justice. Intersectionality "denotes the various ways in which race and gender interact to shape the multiple dimensions of Black women's experiences" (Crenshaw 1244), while also subsuming other bases of identity such as class, sexuality, and

religion. As a concept, intersectionality helps Black women deconstruct overlapping systems of oppression, principally racism and sexism (Collins 8)(Taylor 32).

Then, from their shared experiences of economic, political, and social subjugation, Black women develop oppositional knowledge that they employ to fight injustice and forge survival strategies.

lastly , Black feminism is dedicated to the pursuit of justice at all scales : ‘‘both for Black women as a collectivity and for. . .other similarly oppressed groups’’(Collins 9)

Womanist from womanish (opposite of girlish, i.e. frivolous, irresponsible, not serious) Womanism, is a term that was first used by Alice Walker, in 1983 when she talked about the womanist theory in her essay: “In Search of Our Mother’s Gardens”. As an alternative to feminism which advocates exclusiveness, Walker has coined the term Womanism in an attempt to bring about a change in the treatment given to black women by black men and whites in the society. However, Walker tries to highlight the shades of womanism in *The Color Purple* through the reflection of humiliation of black woman being both black and female.

Walker defines a womanist as a black feminist or a feminist of color who loves other women and/or men sexually and/ or non-sexually. In her description of the circumstances that prompted her to create the womanist movement, Alice Walker recalls the rejection of including the African American writers in the survey of women writer’s history by her American scholar friends: Patricia Meyer Spacks and Phyllis Chesler only, according to them, because the psychology of third world women requires special knowledge and expertise to enable analysis of the work of ethnic and minority women, thus ignoring racial and cultural differences and marginalizing black women again. Therefore, as an alternative to dominant and patriarchal novel, Womanism appeared as a reflexion by colored women to clearly state

their objections to such marginalization by white feminists: “Womanists wanted to decenter white feminists and challenge the normality of their perspective (Byrson 228).

Womanism emphasized the need for a strong community of women who would support each other in resisting oppression, racism and denigration without insisting that their situation is identical. Walker, was inspired by the culture of African American foremothers which was based on building networks among women for they were the most vulnerable in addition the oppressed groups of men as well. In other words, womanism was against any power structures that would inhibit human development, it aimed at placing the commonality of female experience and introducing nonexclusive womanist alternatives to enhance social equality by providing a broader framework than the one of feminism the one that went in parallel with colonialism, in the sense that they both operate from the position of dominance and subordination of African nations and the representation of black women as the negative instance of the white, as Metha maintained.

Unlike feminism, womanism focused on gender inequality, issues of gender, ethnic minority groups, classism and racial violence the thing that made it a more viable option for many women around the world. In Bryson’s opinion : more developed and systematic analysis of the ways gender, class, and race discriminations overlap, influenced various movements, to move beyond mere critique of white feminism to develop original theory which has serious implications not just for white feminism, but for all women (Byrson 226).

### **I.6.3. Multicultural Feminism**

During the late 1990’s and in the first decade of 21st century, womanism changed under the influence of multicultural feminism who apparently seems to have many tenets in common with womanism; as the focus on ethnicity, race, sex, class and their effect on the lives of colored women multicultural feminists criticized womanism for its exclusionistic

stance in relation to white feminists a reason why walker changed her standpoint to include all women ,irrespective of their color, within the span of womanism. Another reason for this change was the effect of constant criticism by colored women on white feminism which led some of the white feminists to finally change their stance from exclusiveness to more inclusiveness, hence incorporating different voices into feminism. Furthermore, if womanism remained closed on black women interests, this might have led to its downfall, as many womanist scholars, including Walker, demonstrated: womanism is in danger of becoming similar to feminism. In this regard Bryson said: Any claim that black women have a superior standpoint upon the world is highly suspect(Bryson 231).

Womanism, has also included spiritual and religious aspects within its tenets as in the works developed by Walker mainly: *The Color Purple*, *The Temple of My Familiar* and *Possessing the Secret of Joy*. Where she explores the ways matriarchal societies were suppressed patriarchal and pantheistic religion. The scope of womanism has also been broadened to include aspects of eco-feminism, ecology and preservation of natural resources. Many eco-feminists believe that there is no difference between the way animals and women are treated, a parallel can also be drawn between womanism and spiritual eco-feminism in their concern for the preservation of earth, respect for all beings.

### **I.7.Sexism and Racism**

Without definitions, the terms racism and sexism are often used in study papers and in debates. Moreover, the terminology may be so widely used that most individuals assume they understand what they mean. Nonetheless, it appears necessary to carefully investigate the many ways in which the terms are defined.

### **I.7.1 Sexism**

Sexism is any action or language that encourages stereotypes against a person based on Sex. It is a form of ambivalence, because it contains both connotations, one of domination and the other of protection and affection, which means that Sexism is a multidimensional construct that encompasses two sets of sexist attitudes: Hostile and Benevolent. (Bougofa 22)

Sexist language, on the other hand, is the language that is used to express bias in favor of one sex. Men are usually the preferred sex, while women are the ones treated in a discriminatory manner. What led of course to the appearance of this language is the existence of Sexism in society, needless to say that language is a social phenomenon that is related to social attitudes. (Bougofa 24)

In other terms, if a society looks at a woman as the subordinate and man as the powerful, language will automatically reflect this social fact. For example in English-speaking countries, which hold the claim that “everyone is created equal”, discrimination against women exists, therefore, language will automatically reflect this fact.

Common forms of sexism in English include the use of 'man' and 'he / him / his' as generics—that is, nouns and pronouns referring to both men and women, another example is that English does not possess a third person singular pronoun which is gender neutral, Instead the 'masculine' pronouns 'he', 'him' and 'his' are generally used to refer to both men and women, like the following example : We want to hire the best men for the job. Here we can't know the exact sex of the person they want to hire. (Bougofa 25)

They may want only girls, or both sexes, but they simply use “man” .The thing that could be confusing and inaccurate, and will automatically reflect people's deep-rooted discrimination against women, that is, women have to be dependent on men and are even just

some appendages of man, and there are so many examples in English language that are male-oriented like : chairman, councilman, Policeman, salesman, mailman,...etc.

Some other English words show the lower social status of women, such as the English distinction between Mrs and Miss which is not paralleled by a pair of male titles showing whether or not the bearer is married. This implies (unfairly) that it is more important for a woman than for a man to show whether they are married. Also we can give an example from the French language, as for example the feminization of victim is inscribed in such language, it is worth noting that French as a dual gendered language use the word " la victime" both formales and females, this clearly suggests that victims are supposed to be females, and reducing males to this level is feminizing them.

### **I.7.2.Sex- Gender**

Sexism cannot be defined without first defining sex. Sex, generally refers to the biological and physiological differences between male and female,there is a biological difference between the sexes and most people are born either males or females, it means that any enfant when comes to life h/she comes to be labeled boy or girl depending on their sex, individuals are then socialized according to specific gender roles. Biological males are socialized to think and act in masculine ways, whereas biological females are socialized to think and behave in feminine ways. Society later on makes the differences between boy and girl through gender constructions which means that gender refers to the social construction of the differences between men and women in a patriarchal society.

It is assumed, however; in many discussions that gender issues are issues about women, to a large extent this may seem true, for people like politicians, journalists, bureaucrats,.. men would appear to be the Norm, andgender is in fact the way women differ from that norm, thus, gender is a social construct which asserts that the expectations,

capabilities and responsibilities of men and women are not always biologically determined. In society there are several traits that are categorized as masculine and feminine, For example, pink and blue are gendered colours, pink is feminine“ and blue is masculine, and in terms of strength or vulnerability the former is masculine while while the latter is associated with feminine character. Therefore Masculinity and femininity are concepts which signify the social outcomes of being male or female the traits and characteristics which describe men and women give men advantage over women. Femininity and masculinity are rooted in the social (one's gender) rather than the biological (one's sex).

### **I.7.3. Sexuality**

In comparison with white women, African American women had a different relationship with their sexuality. According to the scholar Patricia Hill Collins, we can conceptualize sexuality through three different approaches either as an independent system of oppression similar to race, gender and class or as a junction where intersecting oppressions meet or maybe by analyzing it within these systems. Black women have been oppressed in several ways, they were excluded from the term lady constructed by general US society, which says as much about sexuality as it did about class (Higginbotham 262) they were even considered as being different from the conventions of womanhood, which excluded them from the definition of woman. Sexuality is an evolving conception applied to the body but given meaning and identity by economic, cultural and historical context(Higginbotham 263).

Patricia, insists upon the fact that sexuality is a sort of oppression since one group is denied access to the resources of society, she further highlights that black females are being oppressed : politically(denial of rights to vote, illiteracy, unequal treatment in the justice system) economically(labor exploitation) and ideologically( stereotypical images). As a consequence, three themes emerged during the analysis of black women’s sexuality, first: the



construction of black women as the embodiment of sex. Second, the resistance of black women to the sexual stereotypes. And third, the evolution of a culture of dissemblance (Hammonds 132).

#### **I.7.4. Sexual violence**

Sexual violence has historically been used to perpetuate racism and colonialism, the myth that black women were vessels for sexual desire was used to justify enslavement, rape and other forms of sexual coercion in the early onset of western colonization, this has even been extended to further dehumanize women of color, making it culturally accepted for European imperialist to abuse them for they were rapable. Even after the abolishment of slavery, the Jim Crow system considered black women as sexual objects. Hoards of black women were sexually abused by men of all races who were never punished for committing such crime. Furthermore, black women, when complaining, were less likely to be believed than their white counterparts.

According to the world health organization (WHO) sexual violence is any sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, unwanted sexual comments or advances, or acts to traffic or otherwise directed against a person's sexuality using coercion, by any person regardless of their relationship to the victim, in any setting, including but not limited to home and work. In addition the WHO multi-country study defined sexual violence as acts through which a woman is physically forced to have sexual intercourse when she does not want to, or is afraid of what her partner might do. It is worth noting that coercion can encompass varying degrees of force, psychological intimidation and even threats of physical harm.

To put it in historical context, during slavery sexual violence against black men and women was not punishable by law, because blacks were one of the whites' properties, and they had no human rights to protect them. And if the slaveholders did not abuse their slaves

personally, they would make other slaves do it for them as for example the 16 year old Rose Williams who was forced by her owner to have sexual intercourse with another slave to increase the amount of his slaves, or even those women who were sexually abused by black men who were meant to be their supervisors.

Moreover after the abolition of slavery many white men used rape to establish their power over African American girls and women and unfortunately black women chose to remain silent and never reported their sexual abuse, according to them lots of logical reasons obliged them to remain silent: the inadequate support systems, shame, fear of risk of retaliation, fear of risk of being blamed and not believed and even fear of risk of being socially ostracized. Theoretically African literature understands the interconnectedness of race, class, sex, oppression, consequently it realizes that there are white men and women, and definitely black people who seek to overturn structures of their societies.

### **I.8. Bitter Antagonism between Black Men and Women**

There has been a concomitant tendency for some black women writers to portray black males in an unflinchingly candid and often negative manner like what Alice Walker did in her novel *The Color Purple*, or Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*, these works candidly focused on the perilous, sometimes embittered and brutal relationship between black men and women, whereas the primary concern in the fiction of their male predecessors was the oppressive nature of American society. In a recent article in *Black American Literature Forum*, Mr. Hernton wrote: Black men write a lot about the castrating black female, and feel righteous about doing so. But when black women write about the incest, rape and sexual violence committed by black men against black females of all ages in the family and in the black community at large, and when black women write that black men are castrators and

oppressors of black women, black men accuse the women of sowing seeds of division in the black community.

In stark contrast to the novels of black men who are literally obsessed by the white man, as the main obstacle to their manhood, the black women has a different ax to grind. They have another nemesis: the white woman, whose ideological attributes, defined by the plantation ideology, her fragility, purity, chastity, standards of beauty: the blond silky hair, the blue eyes posited the existence of a polar opposite, a black woman viewed as ugly, loose immoral and hyper-sexed. Thus, from the very beginning the seeds of resentment between black and white women were sown; and the mythical image of the white woman as goddess worthy of worship made black men find white women: strangely alluring and seductive”, to quote Paula Giddings.

Alice Walker strongly believes that the typical attributes of white women’s beauty are scorned, according to her: white women are useless except as baby machines which would continue to produce little white people who would grow up to oppress black women. Toni Morrison, on the other hand, developed the myth of the doll image in her novel: *The Bluest Eye* only to tell that white woman is a mysterious doll, not a real human being. Black women writers envy white women’s privileged social position, who live lives of ease because they owe it to their men. They have even accused them of being duplicitous: while they proclaim sisterhood in theory, they are unable to overcome their racial prejudices in practice

### **I.9.Colonial Trauma**

Colonial trauma is a term used to describe the psychological, emotional and physical trauma experienced by individuals and communities as a result of colonization. This trauma is often passed down through generations and can manifest in a variety of ways, including physical and mental health issues, poverty, and social and economic disparities. Colonial

trauma is rooted in the history of colonization, which began in the 15th century when European nations began to colonize the Americas, Africa, and Asia. During this period, colonizers used violence, exploitation, and oppression to subjugate and control the people they encountered. This included the enslavement of African people, the displacement of indigenous peoples, and the exploitation of resources.(ChatGpt)

It can also lead to feelings of shame, guilt, and anger, as well as a sense of disconnection from one's culture and identity. It is important to recognize the effects of colonial trauma and to work towards healing and reconciliation.

This can include engaging in dialogue and the history of colonization, as well as providing support and resources to those who have been impacted .

In the present day, neo-colonialism coexists with the worst kind of oppression, auto-colonialism, in which the victim actively participates in his own subjugation.

### **I.9.1.Frantz Fanon's Theory of Oppression**

Along with Aimé Césaire, Léon Damas, and Léopold Sédar Senghor, Frantz Fanon (1925–1961), a Martinican native, founded the Negritude movement. Fanon is a brilliant and committed psychiatrist, philosopher, political activist and theorist who is best known for his studies on the psychological effects of racial inequality and institutional racism that have an impact on black people's lives in particular and African people's lives generally. Fanon first encountered European racism when, at the age of 18, he enlisted in the Free French Army to fight the Nazi occupation. This organization, which claimed to fight for equality of all people, really organized its military troops along racial lines, exposed Fanon to racism. Although Fanon participated in the Algerian revolution, his writings are not limited to that movement or time period. Instead, the ambivalence between race and sexuality as well as the unresolved

conflict between cultural and class representation and social reality are what he emphasizes most strongly.

Fanon developed a distrust that would last throughout his career as a result of the vacuity of European ideals. With fellow psychiatrists François Tosquelles and Jean Oury, Fanon launched the institutional psychotherapy movement at Saint-Alban where he started his psychiatry residency in 1951. The unmatched study of the black psyche in a white environment, *Black Skin, White Masks*, originally published in 1952 with the title *Peau Noirs, Masks Blancs*, while Fanon was a resident, was originally titled "An Essay on the Disalienation of the Black." *Black Skin White Masks* mixes literary analysis, lived experience reflections, and critical approaches to psychology and philosophy, to reflect on the effects of colonization and whiteness on black people from the colonies. In his Introduction to *Black Skin, White Masks*, Fanon stressed that "only a psychoanalytic interpretation of the black man can lay bare the anomalies of affect that are responsible for the structure of the [inferiority] complex." (Bulhan 70)

The internalization and reproduction of whiteness among postcolonial black people are problematized in the first three chapters. Fanon looks at how these effects of colonization can be seen in language and interracial relationships. (Custódio, book review)

Fanon seeks to explain the condition of being a Negro, or to what he refers to as emphasis in original), in Chapters Six and Seven. Overall, Fanon calls on black and white people to work together to "turn their backs on the inhuman voices that were those of their respective ancestors in order that true communication is possible" (Custódio, book review)

The insights provided by Frantz Fanon help us understand the historical and social roots of the issues affecting black and white people today. Fanon connected them to two similar catastrophes. He stated: "The calamity of the man of color resides in the fact that he

was a slave." But he also emphasized that "the white man's catastrophe and inhumanity rest in the fact that he has murdered man."(Bulhan 8)

According to Fanon's theory, Black people were unable to develop phenomenologically because they had to contend with a super-ego that was polluted by White dominance in their daily encounters with the outer world. White racism had entrenched an inferiority concept in the Black mind, which eventually became an inescapable distortion of Black consciousness and identity, even in the struggle to eradicate it. His work varies between a psychoanalytic ambivalence of the unconscious, the restration of those who have been marginalized, to reveal the madness of racism, the pleasure of pain, and the oppositional illusion of political power.

The prevailing psychoanalytic theories of the day, which proposed expansive schemas that assumed a priori the privilege of Whiteness, were just a few examples of how this "White gaze" permeated all aspects of life, particularly discourse and culture. It also pervaded the exaltation of interracial romance and the mastery of the French accent. Since violence is the only language that colonizers actually grasp. Unlike Freud, who maintained that only educated patients should be encouraged to seek psychoanalytic treatment since they are most fitted for therapy, Fanon, on the other hand, was neither a white person nor a part of the affluent upper class. Coming from a Caribbean island that had been completely colonized, he had direct understanding of what it meant to be black.

Fanon contends in *The Wretched of the Earth* that complete decolonization cannot be achieved without it. Imperialists fostered a sense of inferiority in the colonized by violence, thus it was only through violence that the colonized were able to reclaim their sense of identity, culture, and the material reality of statehood. Since the fourteenth century, Europe and its successors have invaded every country in the world on an unprecedented mission of

brutality and egotism. According to Fanon, colonizers are responsible for introducing violence into the lives and thoughts of the colonized.

In three specific instances, Fanon makes use of the idea of violence, first to introduce the actual coercive power that "the colonizer" uses to compel "the colonized" to surrender and cooperate which automatically reduces the colonized to an item, or an instrument used directly or indirectly by the Other. The second type of violence is institutionalized or systemic violence, which enables colonialists to sustain and preserve their power monopoly. As a result, Fanon reveals how this "legalized violence" undermines all indigenous systemic norms, practices, and legal standards on the one hand, and creates false traditions that support the survival of the colonial system on the other, and finally the epistemological, cultural, and psychological dimensions of violence round out the list.( Sharif 2)

By addressing injustices like: Why are Black children more likely to receive a behavior disorder diagnosis? Fanon conducted experimental research in an effort to alter therapeutic practice in order to pinpoint the areas where racism and injustice occur and lessen their detrimental effects.(Novey 2-3)

It is worth noting that Frantz's ongoing emotional struggle to overcome maternal rejection was the source and reflection of his public fight against racism and colonialism. To overcome some early traumas—of which the mother's apparent rejection loomed largest—revolutionary Fanon's dedication was only a relocation, a protective move. The mother, we are told, would still pose a huge challenge for Frantz's growth and life even if the Fanon family lived in the ideal situation, free from racism or financial restrictions.(Bulhan 20)

### **I.9.2.Racism**

Racism is belief that race is the primary determinant of human traits and capacities and that racial differences produce an inherent superiority of a particular race (Omi & Winant 54) while race is a social construct and a concept which signifies and symbolizes social conflicts and interests by referring to different types of human bodies. (Omi & Winant 54)

Race was first used to describe people and societies in the way we understand ethnicity and national identity today, but during 17th and 18th centuries, the meaning has changed to refer to biological differences. The difference between race and ethnicity is that ethnicity is determined by cultural factors such as nationality, language and culture, while race is determined by physical characteristics such as skin color, facial features, and hair type(Betancourt 631)

As Western colonialism and slavery expanded, the term was used to justify exploitation, domination and violence against non-white people.

In terms of education and inhuman treatment, Africans were exposed to racism as early as 1700 when the victorian scientists like Charles White, who in 1799, agreed that Africans lacked intelligence and therefore cannot be educated, this had an impact on how slavery was justified in a "scientific" manner. With the publication of Darwin's *The Origin of Species*, it was claimed that the black man "descended from the ape. In 1860, for example, the Frenchman Paul Broca reported that the brain of the African weighed 78.5 grams less than that of the European, furthermore, According to de Gobineau's theory, which holds that dark races are the lowest on the scale, people of color are not only unintelligent but also inherently incapable of developing the basic elements of civilization. (Bulhan82)



Racism is different from both: racial discrimination and racial inequality, for the former is concerned with unequal treatment of races, whereas the latter is concerned with unequal outcomes (in income, education, health,...). The sociology of racism investigates the relationships between these three phenomena, taking into consideration how, why and to what extent they reproduce one another. Racism from the late 19th to the mid-20th century was considered as a set of overt individual-level attitudes; while from the mid-20th century to the present racism means both: explicit attitudes and implicit biases and processes that are sustained at all levels be it micro or macro. In her recent book, Vivian Gordon defines racism as: the power to control and manipulate the major societal forces, and the ability to define for the other the requirements for participation”

### **I.9.3. Forms of Racism**

Racism has caused devastation for many generations, driven many people to seek solace in craziness, and ensnared the so-called normal majority in a silence-defeating culture.(Bulhan 9)

People of color fight an ongoing battle against racism that is interpersonal, structural, geographical, environmental, and internalized. It extends beyond merely disliking specific persons of color to the ongoing subjugation of people of color and the areas in which they live. It declares that one race is superior to all others. With this bias come crude presumptions and caricatures of the "other". Black men are presented as suspects and predators, and Black women are constantly angry. Carroll even went so far as to claim in a piece of writing that "all the evidence indicates that the beast of the field which tempted Eve was a negress(Bulhan82)

#### **I.9.4. Internalized Racism**

As defined by Karen.D.Pyke, internalized racism is the individual inculcation of racist stereotypes, beliefs, ideas, and ideologies about one's racial group that are upheld by the White dominant culture, resulting in sentiments of self-doubt, contempt, and disrespect for one's race and/or oneself"(Pyke 553) The primordality of the black race was hypothesized to be one of innate inferiority. Whites and Blacks' master-slave relationship was seen as a natural fact rather than a product of a certain historical era. Later psychology study in Africa has been significantly impacted by these early justifications of slavery.

Internalized racism, according to psychotherapist and author Lola Jaye, in her study:" If trauma can be passed down through generations, so can joy",is a set of personal biases and beliefs that include internalized privilege, or notions of superiority or entitlement, as well as prejudice against people of different races. Individual racism is sneaky, subconsciously influencing thought patterns, attitudes, and eventually choices.(Jaye1, twitter)

#### **I.9.5. Systemic Racism**

The behaviors and policies that result in the exclusion or advancement of some groups are referred to as systemic racism since they are ingrained in long-standing institutions. One kind of systemic racism that may not be as visible to some people, typically to those who are privileged by the system, is education. In his book:" Systemic Racism, A Theory of Oppression, Joe Feagin Our economic, political, educational, and other institutions have been deeply impacted by systemic racism on many levels, including during slavery and the Jim Crow era (which caused an estimated \$20–30 trillion in losses to the black economy alone), as well as widespread discrimination in the present. The Constitution that governs us now was largely drafted by slaveowners in 1787. Add to it the genocidal oppression of Native Americans beginning in the 1600s, the subjugation of Chinese and Mexican Americans by the

1830s and 1850s, and the subsequent oppression of numerous other racial groups by white people.

Racism is neither a psychological condition nor a moral fault. It is a system that distributes value and opportunity based on phenotype, or how people appear. It is made up of institutions, rules, practices, and conventions. Some people and communities suffer unfair disadvantages as a result.

It is nevertheless commonly accepted among many black Americans today for whom both racism and sexism are a matter of power and control, neither of which is within their grasp. Toni Morrison's analysis confirms this theory: the black woman has nothing to fall back on: not maleness, not whiteness, not ladyhood, not anything. And out of the profound desolation of her reality, she may very well have invented herself." She is truly, in the words of Zora Neale Hurston: the mule of the world.

Racism in traditional feminism was not a main concern, even though black intellectuals have always stressed the intersectionality of gender, race and class. Despite its emphasis on diversity white feminism was mainly concerned with white middle class issues, and black women were left out which makes the white feminism movement one-sided as Collins has declared. The reason that was given by scholars is that they were not qualified enough to talk about race since they have never been through. Apparently, the institutionalized oppression exists from slavery and still existing in the 20th century.

### **I.10. Connections between Racism and Sexism**

Parallelism between racism and sexism can be inferred from an examination of the definitions already developed, both are tools for oppression, and the intersection of these attitudes make women of color particularly susceptible to sexual violence. Managing the

interlocking effects of racism and sexism is a core theme in the daily life experiences of black women these tools impact a myriad of other cultural and demographic factors in their lives (social, cultural, psychological). They also may make it difficult for women to access support services or receive fair treatment within the criminal justice system. Black women's experiences of rape is linked to gender and race, compared to other women, black rape survivors are judged as less truthful and more to be blamed for their rapes, furthermore they are less likely to seek support or report their rapes.

### **I.11. Intersectionality**

Recognizing the difference between race, ethnicity, class and gender is referred to as intersectionality. In feminist theory, intersectionality has become the predominant way of conceptualizing the relation between these systems of oppression which construct our multiple identities and our social locations in hierarchies of power and privilege, however, many conservatives define the word intersectionality as something related to minorities, who because of being so, get special standards and special treatment. Or as the form of feminism that tells you what you are allowed to say, what you are allowed to think. Intersectionality is thus really dangerous or can be considered as a conspiracy theory of victimization though until recent years the term was legally used. The term was used to describe how race, gender, class and other individual characteristics intersect with one another, it operates as both the observance and analysis of power imbalances, and the tool by which those power imbalances could be eliminated altogether

Black legal scholar Kimberle Crenshaw coined the term intersectionality as a metaphor in her 1989 essay, *Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex*. To concretize intersectionality, Crenshaw uses the following analogy:

Consider an analogy in an intersection, coming and going in all four directions. Discrimination, like traffic through an intersection, may flow in one direction, and it may flow in another. If an accident happens in an intersection, it can be caused by cars traveling from any number of directions and, sometimes, from all of them. Similarly, if a black woman is harmed because she is an intersection, her injury could result from sex discrimination or race discrimination...’.

This analogy explains well the multiple oppressions black women have been through, unlike men who have also been victims of the oppression in American society, women experienced an extra dimension of oppression they were discriminated against in ways that bring together racism and sexism, and they had to face oppression in terms of gender, in a different way than that of men. Furthermore Kimberle criticized the American antidiscrimination law and its failure to acknowledge black women’s unique experiences of racism and sexism as simultaneous and inseparable. Therefore we need to define these two main concepts which apparently were responsible for conducting black women’s lives.

### **I.12.Patriarchal society**

Patriarchy, is one among many reasons that led to the emergence of Feminism. Patriarchy, literally means “the rule of the father”, its origins came from the Greek “Father of a race” or “chief of a race”.The term implies male domination, male prejudice against women, patriarchy is thus the rule of a male head in a social unit( family,tribe...)The most commonly accepted definition of Patriarchy is: a social system in which society is organized around male authority figures,in this system fathers have authority over women, children, and property. Patriarchy in fact leads to gender inequality and women’s subordination.Patriarchy idealises motherhood and thereby forces women to be mothers and also determines the

conditions of their motherhood. Patriarchy restricts women's mobility and reproduces male dominance. The socialist feminist Heidi Hartmann defines patriarchy as follows:

“It is a set of social relations between men which have a material base, and which though hierarchical, establish or create interdependence and solidarity among men that enable them to dominate women” (Hartmann14)

Another definition comes from Michael Mann who says that:

The patriarch society is one in which power is held by male heads of households there is also clear separation between the public and the private spheres of life. In the private sphere of the household, the patriarch enjoys arbitrary power over all Junior males, all females, and all children. In the public sphere, power is shared between male patriarchs according to whatever other principles of stratification operate.(Mann 40-56)

However, since the early 20th c, Feminist writers have used the term Patriarchy as a concept to refer to the social system of masculine domination over women, for that reason women did not fold their arms and remain dormant, they rather begun to organize themselves into pressure groups, they wanted to liberate themselves from all this torture and pressure, they wanted to have a say in their society, they wanted to prove that they deserve to be acknowledged of as human beings rather than just things...rebellion was their way to achieve their goals. The patriarchal practice has animated the urgency of Feminism-an ideological Aesthetic and cultural movement to appear- aiming at expanding the frontiers of women's Participation in different fields against the masculine-based cultural universe.

### **I.13.Otherting of Women: Simone De Beauvoir**

Generally for existentialist, one is not born anything, everything we are is the result of our choices, by contrast the avowed life-long existentialist Simone De Beauvoir in “The Second Sex” presented an ambiguous picture of human freedom, in which women struggle against the apparent disadvantages of the female body. Beauvoir, introduced and examined the notion of women’s radical Otherness or, rather, the cognitive and social process of women as the second sex in the patriarchal societies. Femininity according to many men is something negative unlike what Masculinity may represent, women are the peculiar creatures while men are the totally Positive and neutral poles, thus the definition of women is what men decide it to be. The existentialist Jean Paul Sartre, observed that whatever we perceive, including other people is rendered as an object to our gaze and is defined by us, Beauvoir took up this idea and applied it to men’s perception of women: woman is always other because the male is the seer.

Beauvoir Mentioned in her book that male thinkers such as St Thomas and Aristotle have been using Terms such as:” incidental being” and “imperfect men” to describe women, the thing that led her to build on her first thesis: “She is the incidental, the inessential as opposed to the essential, he is the subject, he is the absolute, she is the other...”(Beauvoir163)

It is clear that Beauvoir’s aim from the previous quote is to show that women are totally dependent on men, which is not the case with men who are independent on them. Contriving This theory, Beauvoir brought historical examples where domination of one group over the Other was complete, trying to figure out why such a thing would happen, Beauvoir has Suggested two possibilities: one can be due to number, i.e. the majority oppresses the Minority or for a second reason which may be superiority of strength, the fittest is the Strongest.

For the first reason it would impossible for men to dominate women because they outnumber them, for the second reason Beauvoir cited the scattering of the Jews and the Introduction of slavery. In addition to this Beauvoir presents two ideas from the Bible. Adam Was created before Eve, which makes her automatically a second being. Furthermore, god succeeded in producing the human being in perfection when he created Eve, because Adam was a rough draft.

### **I.13.1.Woman Attitude toward her Body**

Beauvoir raises a crucial question of female embodiment: are the supposed disadvantages of the female body actual disadvantages which exist objectively in all societies, or are they merely judged to be disadvantages by our society? Beauvoir by exploring the various stages in female life came to the conclusion that a woman can use her body as a vehicle for her freedom and feel oppressed by it, she points out that there is no difference between boys and girls during pre-adolescence: “They have the same interests and the same pleasures.”(Beauvoir 295)

In other words, everything is related to the way the woman sees herself being a free subject or an object of society’s gaze, and the biological conditions of any woman are not a handicap unless women want them to be including the development of their sexual organs, pregnancy or menstruation, none of these have a meaning in themselves; but in a hostile society, they can relate to someone as a burden.

Women simply accepted these meanings that were accorded to them by a patriarchal society. In this regard, Adrienne Rich in *Of Woman Born: Motherhood as Experience and Institute* says:” but fear and hatred of our bodies often crippled our brains. Some of the most brilliant women of our time are still mercy reproducing old forms of intellection” (Rich 284).



She further suggests that, in order to achieve intellectual progress women should overcome their negative attitudes.

### **I.13.2.Process of Becoming Flesh**

Beauvoir, emphasizes the fact that society hostile reaction to women grows with her body development, being born with a female body is a curse as it brings nothing but shame, pain and embarrassment. In this regard Beauvoir explores the process of becoming flesh whereby one comes to experience oneself as a sexual, bodily being exposed to other's gaze. In this regard Beauvoir declares: the young girl feels that her body is getting away from her...on the street men follow her with their eyes and comment on her anatomy. She would like to be invisible; it frightens her to become flesh and to show flesh (Beauvoir 333).

### **I.13.3.Recovering Black Female Body**

The body of any black woman, as mentioned above, has always been hyper eroticized by American cultural discourse to make it a site of impropriety and crime. Not only American society, in the entire world there is a consistent reminder that the female body is a problem to deal with. In this regard Beauvoir again gives an example of a mother who frequently criticizes her daughter's body, or the man on the street who makes a sexual comment about a young girl's body.no matter how positive a female body can be ,belonging to a patriarchal society will eventually oblige her to undergo a traumatic event initiation into sexual intercourse, therefore Beauvoir suggests that the way to a more positive sexual experience for both genders is through each partner acting in erotic generosity. Women do not choose to think about their bodies negatively; they are forced to do so as a result of being embedded in a hostile patriarchal society

Henceforth, De Beauvoir's explanation for why women are oppressed is based on woman's ontology or what one might call being. Girls are taught from the beginning by society of how to be women, i.e. passive and object-like. The cult of the feminine or the feminine mystery is used to maintain the oppression of women as the idea is passed down from generation to generation.

#### **I.13.4. Beauvoir's concepts of immanence and transcendence**

Immanence is stagnation within a situation, while transcendence is reaching out into the future, these two concepts were used to further explain the situation of women, at times they have been understood as body and consciousness, but this is not really what they mean. All human beings are born immanent and transcendent and due to some social practices one may be imprisoned in immanence and thus becomes unable to achieving transcendence(freedom) and is absolutely the case with men and women. Men occupy the sphere of transcendence, while women occupy the one of immanence. A good example, according to Beauvoir starts with girl's menstruation or the monthly reminder of the girl attachment to her body as servant to the species via production, this makes them subject to the vicissitudes of their bodies in a way that men are not. Unfortunately women are complicit in their own oppression because they are aware of the way they are observed by men, they only strive to live up to this model of the eternal feminine and become just what they are expected to be, other and transcendent. Thereby, implementing Beauvoir's bold assertion: "one is not born, but rather becomes a woman".

In *The Second Sex*, Beauvoir discusses three kinds of women: the prostitute, the narcissist and the mystic. A prostitute, sells her body for both: money and recognition by men as the other. On the other hand narcissist is unable to be a subject as well, that is unable to freely pursue projects for herself so she turns to become an object of herself. While the last

kind, Mystic sacrifices herself for god so instead of seeking freedom, she seeks possession. Beauvoir does not restrict oppression to women, blacks in relation to whites are oppressed too, poor and rich all these made a deviation from their oppressors as supposedly being the norm and became the subordinate other. Liberation as Beauvoir is both individual and social transformation, women must recognize themselves as a social group, as subjects and not objects.

### **Conclusion**

Inferiority of colored people may seem a natural thing that cannot be changed no matter what. The idea of superiority and inferiority must be discarded and women should fight for their emancipation, by identifying with each other.

To alleviate their oppression both as black and as women, African- American female writers needed to free themselves through challenging the established literary canon that helped shape the images of female inferiority, therefore African American women starting from the 18th century begun to depict reality and transmit it to the audience through narratives

Before the 1970s, it was really hard to find any female writings, almost all writings were of male black American novelists such as: Richard Wright, Ralph Ellison, James Baldwin, who were mainly concerned with the oppressive nature of the American society, unlike their female counterparts who addressed the embittered and brutal relationship between the two sexes. Notable writers like: Alice Walker and Toni Morrison, over-emphasized in their novels the oppression women experienced in their personal lives at the hands of men, which was in fact more interesting to the reading and film going public, than those issues already discussed by male writers.

One comes finally to conclude that resistance is the only option to eradicate oppression and deconstruct the patriarchal class structures that enslave women, because with women resistance brutal forces can no longer implement and instill the oppression ideologies, with women resistance freedom and self-respect can be restored. Mabel Segun has clearly stated that in

Challenges of Being a Female Writer in a Male-Dominated Developing Society: Feminist writers must tackle the systems that oppress and subjugate women. This is a way of helping women “unlearn the lessons of the past, engendering in them a new dynamism borne of their new awareness of their inherent strengths and potentialities for effecting change in their society as equal partners with men (Segun 300).

The status which women reached during the present era was not achieved due to the kindness of men or due to natural progress. It was rather through a long struggle and sacrifice on women’s part and only when society needed her contribution and work.



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## **Chapter Two: Plethora of Violence and Women Resilience in The Color Purple**

## Introduction

Historical events have often given birth to great literature which helps the readers experiencing history through the words of the artist who felt challenged to set the records straight. In all her works, the most renowned African American writer and the founder of Womanism, Alice Walker managed to reflect the diverse experiences of the African American community in the U.S from the slavery era period and the long struggle for civil rights to the triumphs scored in overcoming stereotypes imposed by the white community throughout her works starting from her first novel *The Third Life of Grange Copeland* to the latest collections of essays *We Are the Ones We Have Been Waiting for*. Walker published her Pulitzer winning prize and third novel: *The Color Purple*, in 1982. Alice Walker, as Gray pointed out, finds inspiration in African American history and culture. According to Marilyn Richardson, a novelist, folklorist, and anthropologist Zora Neale Hurston was one of the writers who impacted Walker the most. In "Mothers' Gardens," Walker admits that she admires her art. *The Color Purple*, gives a realistic approach to Walker's observations from the black lives. She has succeeded in presenting the pathos and ethos of Black women's struggle through her characters.

Her characters seem to be the embodiment of real life, apparently her black women characters suffer due to their irresponsible, immature and unwilling nature. This is what she wants to present through her concept of womanism. Walker expresses the grief of black women in Africa from and uses her characters to show their destiny in relation to god, to men, to society, financial freedom, sexual freedom and identity. However, her idea of womanism focuses all time on universality. "The women and men of different colors coexist like flowers in a garden yet retain their cultural distinctiveness and integrity." (Collins11)

Perhaps, she emphasized the idea of a global society where all its members will be encouraged to survive.

## **II.1.About the Author**

Alice Malsenior Walker was born on 9 February 1944 in Eatonton, Georgia, is one of the most significant and outspoken black women writers in the United States in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. Her works show the influence of 19<sup>th</sup> slave narratives and offers a critique of both white racism and black patriarchy and misogyny. Walker was the eighth and youngest child of her parents; she grew up in a male-dominated family. As a matter of fact, Georgia was well known for its male brutality towards women. Walker's father was a tyrant man, an urgent need to satisfy his manhood was by dominating his wife and children violently.

Despite his severe attitude, Walker became pregnant in the last year of college, which made her contemplate suicide. Her father warned them against having sex or getting into any sort of relation with other boys, but at roughly the same time he was encouraging his sons to experiment with sex (Winchell 7-9).

In her works, Walker depicts black women endeavoring to transcend oppression, both sexist and racist, and to develop self-respect plus seeking the legal and social equality, she also tends to draw on black folklore and oral storytelling traditions in its rich use of metaphors, monologue to help providing a distinctive African-American tradition.

As a matter of fact, the female character in Walker's works go through three cycles of her personal construct of the history of black women: the suspended women during 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup>, they were mainly the women excluded from the society and received as cheap laborers. The second cycle from forties and fifties, when some African American women were trying to be part of the white society and eventually they denied their background and

culture. The last cycle includes the women in the late sixties who reclaim their past and have gained awareness after the political changes such as the freedom movement.

### **II.1.1. Trauma in the Author's Life**

Walker, like many other African American writers, struggled with poverty and bigotry. Alice Walker describes an incident on her way to college, when she was riding the bus to her new school and sat at the front of a segregated vehicle, upsetting a white female passenger. As the bus driver ordered Walker to move to the back of the bus with the other black passengers, Walker recalled her thoughts: "I can refuse and sit in the front and get arrested in this little town," she remembered thinking, "or I can stay on the bus, get to Atlanta, check into my college and immediately join the movement for civil rights as the utmost turmoil and upheaval for blacks in America, as they fought for their rights, against white, supremacist society.

"Walker recorded sharecroppers' eviction tales while also creating poetry and fiction. She discovered that the lives of individuals she knew and loved, such as her mother, were being kept hidden. Walker attended a segregated school in Georgia due to Jim Crow laws. "I grew up in the South during the time of segregation," she says. So, I know what it's like to be a victim of terrorism, when your father could be taken out in the middle of the night and lynched simply because he didn't appear to be in an obeying frame of mind when a white person said something he had to do." black history month, february 21, 2017.

Walker opted to write fiction and poetry from the heart, creating characters that are flawed enough to reject to be judged by others' standards. This emotion drove her to create "The Color Purple," which went on to sell 5 million copies and win the Pulitzer Prize for fiction in 1983. via Alice Walker's Makers Appearance Highlights Why She Wrote 'The Color Purple' (VIDEO).



### II.1.2.Walker and her daughter

The tense connection between Alice Walker and her feminist daughter Rebecca Walker, author of the book *Black, White, and Jewish*, and *"Baby Love: Choosing Motherhood after a Lifetime of Ambivalence."*, is proof that difficult mother-daughter relationships transcend race, class, and education. During an interview held on 2008 with the host Farai CHIDEYA, Rebecca explained that she had a turbulent relationship with her mother: "The truth is that I very nearly missed out on becoming a mother thanks to being brought up by a rabid feminist who thought motherhood was about the worst thing that could happen to a woman." Rebecca Walker condemned her mother of making it difficult for her to be a mother to her daughter due to her feminist viewpoint. Alice Walker equally sought to control her daughter Rebecca's maternal inclinations by preventing her from playing with dolls or stuffed animals.

Rebecca also claims that her mother has abandoned her for weeks at a time with her neighbors. Alice finally wrote her daughter a letter "resigning from the burden of being her (Rebecca's) mother." Rebecca claims she was neglected emotionally and physically as a child, but she is determined to be the polar opposite of her mother by becoming a mother. Walker, according to her daughter, was an extreme ambivalent about motherhood, as she wrote an essay called "One Child of One's Own" in which she talked about how if you had more than one child, you would be enslaved to your children, tied up and never stable.

Their connection was further strained when Rebecca fell pregnant; her mother did not react well to the news and has never met her grandson. In a 2008 article for the Daily Mail, *How my mother's feminist extremist ideals tore us apart*, Rebecca revealed other unpleasant attitudes: "My mother took umbrage at an interview in which I'd mentioned that my parents didn't protect or look out for me. She sent me an e-mail, threatening to undermine my

reputation as a writer. I couldn't believe she could be so hurtful — particularly when I was pregnant.”

The host, proceeds the show with Dr. Phillis Chesler, a psychologist and writer of several books on women's issues, including the landmark "Women and Madness." She declares that many second-wave feminists, including herself, took motherhood very seriously and saw it as a sacred choice, the majority of the sexually radical figures of the second wave were single women or represented not choosing motherhood as a form of degraded, unpaid labor, or even slavery, which was maybe natural considering due to how previous generations of women were enslaved to motherhood and proliferating as the only thing a woman was fit to accomplish.

## **II.2. *The Color Purple* as a postslavery culture**

Despite the abolition of slavery, the social and economic structure of life for African Americans in the rural South remained largely unchanged. Despite the fact that they were no longer slaves, many black people remained on the land and worked as sharecroppers. They grew crops, but the land on which they worked belonged to their former white slave masters. Following the migration of African-Americans to the Northern states in 1915, the black sharecroppers who remained in the South became more isolated from white society. Schools, churches, and housing were all segregated, and there were few other options for blacks to make a living than sharecropping. However, some enterprising African-Americans were able to make a name for themselves as business owners.

After 1915, economic opportunities in cities of the industrial North enticed many blacks to leave the South. Those who remained were isolated from white society. Schools and churches, as well as housing, were segregated. Outside of sharecropping, blacks had few opportunities to establish themselves. During the novel's time period, legal segregation of

blacks and whites was enforced to the point where blacks had to sit in separate sections of movie theaters, drink from separate fountains, and were forbidden from eating at white lunch counters. Jim Crow laws, named after a pre-Civil War minstrel character, were enacted to enforce this segregation. The novel was set during a time when racism was prevalent in society. Black people in society were viewed as lesser beings than white people at the time. More specifically, the novel's colored characters are oppressed not only because of the color of their skin, but also because they are women and lesbians. Many women of color at the period were burdened with responsibilities of child care and also faced violence. These burdens were greatly attributed to their gender and social class.

### **II.2.1.Overview**

The color purple has enormous historical and societal significance across a thirty-year time span, including the Harlem Renaissance, the gradual development of both civil and women's rights, and the destruction of great African civilizations by European companies, "The Color Purple" is "...the story of Celie, a poor, barely literate Southern black woman who struggles to escape the brutality and degradation of her treatment by men" (Gates, Jr- Appiah16)

The novel is an epistolary form whose main character is called Celie, the 14-year old poor girl from rural Georgia, who was oppressed, and repeatedly raped and impregnated two times by her step-father, the man she grew up considering as her father.

Prominent social issues and their historical significance undergo a sort of evolution over the course of a person's life, as new problems emerge with each new age, from an early age Celie lost control over her body, she never felt that her body is something that belongs to her.

The *Color Purple* starts with a rape scenario. Celie's stepfather, whom she considers to be her father, rapes her. At first, her stepfather starts to do this when her mother is not at home. Then he says "...you better shut up and git used to it" (*The Color Purple* 3). Celie's expressions show how difficult position she stays. "But I don't never git used to it. And now I feel sick used to it. I be the one to cook. My mama she fuss at me an look at me. She happy, cause he good to her now. But too sick to last long" (*The Color Purple* 3).

The rape scene "...is based on Walker's great-great-grandmother, who was raped and impregnated at age 11 by her master Walker's great-great-grandfather" (Winchell 85). This abuse is related to a real event and it is written by the writer to demonstrate "...the portrayal of black family..." (*The Color Purple* 86)

Celie felt depression and never found any strong shoulder to lean on, she decided to write letters to God as he is the only one she can turn to and thus allows herself to reinscribe the wounds around her body and heal the rift that has ensued from her sexual violence. This is clearly apparent in the first chapter with the opening of the novel when Celie was warned to remain silent: you better not never tell nobody but god.

Her letters span twenty years and record a journey of self-discovery and empowerment. Celie's step-father, managed to get rid of the two children, and then forces her to marry a widower named Albert, in the novel referred to as Mr—, who is actually in love with blues singer Miss Shug Avery. Albert treats Celie as a servant and an occasional sexual convenience (Gates and Appiah 16).

Albert, was abusing Celie continuously, verbally and physically. He even wanted to marry her sister Nettie, whom she was in touch with via letters as well and who was working as a missionary in Africa. When Celie forms a relationship with Shug Avery, her husband's mistress, who helped her in developing a sense of her own beauty. The two women set up a

home and business together. Celie's early life is horrific, but she gradually manages to overcome the effects of years of degradation and becomes able to acknowledge herself as a person of worth. Celie, is the black girl who tells the story of thousands of other black girls.

But no matter how much abuse one can endure, there has to be a way to escape its confines. The story was adapted into a movie starring Whoopi Goldberg and directed by Stephen Spielberg, the well-known Oprah Winfrey, played a supporting part in the film.

### **II.3.Patriarchal Representation**

As a black woman living in a white patriarchal society, Walker's subjects stem from her life experience. Despite the fact that no attention was given to the persecution, abused and oppression of black women during slavery, men were able to assert themselves masterfully. According to hooks, during and after the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s, Black male activists defined freedom as "full participation as citizens in American culture...and thus failed to question and challenge American culture's patriarchal value system. As a result, the primary goal of "equal rights" soon became the establishment of a Black patriarchy " (Hooks5)

*In The Color Purple*, Walker describes the oppression of black women and tries to provide solutions for it. *The* main character in the novel, Celie represents the dominated woman who is well embedded within the traditional male-female sex role of patriarchal society. She is dominated by her husband and her step-father both sexually and aggressively and she never fights back. Even more so, she helps in reproducing the traditional order, as for example when she asked Harpo (her step-son) to beat his wife Sofia, to make her more obedient. Ultimately, Celie rebels against the few independent women in her life.

### II.3.1. Slave in a Slave Auction

The novel depicts how sexism and racism widened the gap between men and women after the Emancipation Proclamation, even after African Americans were freed, they were still forced into slave-like conditions. The definition of patriarchy as mentioned in the first chapter, corresponds well to the prevailing system of gender order in the novel. The black rural society in which the novel is set, is extremely patriarchal, the majority of black males dominate women in a very violent and oppressive way, black males treated them more or less like a slave in a slave auction. Women were subjected to some very high expectations because men have historically governed society, Mary Eagleton in *Working with Feminist Criticism* (1996) has observed that, “A woman was expected to be a wife, a mother, a cook, a maid, and sexually obedient to men. As a form of patriarchal silencing any woman who deviated from these expectations was often a victim of physical, emotional, and social beatings.” (Eagleton 16).

The novel opens with a warning from the protagonist’s step father which silences her, thereby depriving her the right to speak of herself with anyone except God, to whom she addresses all her fears and thoughts.

Celie’s stepfather forced her into loveless marriage with the widower Albert, who has three children. To convince him of marrying her, Celie’s step father tells Albert that she will look after his children, and cook and wash for him and them. Apparently, Albert’s desire was to find a servant and Celie is the perfect one for this job. He treated her as a property and unpaid prostitute, she works in the fields and submit to joyless sexual encounters but she never expressed hatred toward him, instead she was forgiving so the oppression extended more. Linda Abbandonato(1993) writes: ‘‘When Celie marries Mr.—, this man with no

name becomes part of the system of male oppression, joining God the patriarch and Pa in an unholy trinity of power that displaces her identity” (*Gates* 302)

Eventually, Celie becomes the wife of a physically, sexually, and emotionally brutalizing husband, and a step-mother to four children, two boys and two girls, she simply represents “a new generation of women who had been taught to submit, to accept sexual inferiority, [and] to be silent” (Hooks 2). While Celie remains afraid and submissive and complies with all of Mr.’s demands, he continues in abusing her physically, verbally, and emotionally, Mr.’s abuse of Celie rests on what bell hooks refers to as the “systematic devaluation of black womanhood” in American culture (Hooks 70). For instance, he keeps calling her ugly in order to undermine her confidence and self-esteem.

Patriarchal norms were not only imposed on Celie, many other female characters endured the same sufferings in different ways like Sofia who was beaten by her husband Harpo, as an attempt from him to make her obedient, or Mary Anger who wanted to establish herself as a singer and her husband refused it since he provides her with everything she desires, so she must remain dependent on him.

The only woman who happens not to be submissive and fragile is Shug Avery, she instead represents the independent and the outrageous woman, who dared to challenge the traditional conventions about sex, and expressed her sexual desire in her own way. Nettie discovers, while working as a missionary in Africa, that the patriarchal system of oppression of the Olinka women is not unlike the situation she left behind in America. Girls are denied education, and ritual female circumcision and scarring leave many African women joyless and spiritually dead.

Corinne and Nettie, as women, encourage female participation in education, which is ultimately respected. But their efforts are thwarted by white colonialism’s greater power,

whose economic demands mean that no one over the age of seven is educated. Tashi's resistance to the colonists initially forces her to return to the physical oppression of female genital mutilation, until the 'new man arrives.

### **II.3.2.Males as Victims of Patriarchy**

In essence, patriarchy encourages standards and actions that are both unattainable and unacceptable, and as a result, everyone pays the price. The notion of Black male privilege has grown in acceptance. The thesis, which Black feminists frequently use as a conceptual weapon, asserts that Black men are granted alleged privileges in society at the expense of Black women and girls. Furthermore, patriarchy develops male entitlement and hostility and excuses and supports the dehumanization of women. It also promotes dominance over women. However, men themselves happen to be violent to men as much as they are to women and girls, due to hostility internalized in the colonized by the colonizer.

If we consider Fanon's perspective on violence, we will find that he employs the concept of violence in three ways. First, describe "the colonizer's" repressive physical power to compel "the colonized" to comply and submit. Such coercive force converts the colonized to an object, a direct or indirect servant of the Other. Colonial power, according to Fanon, "brings violence into the native's home and mind." (Fanon 38).

In other words, it turns the father into a patriarch and the mother into a matriarch, and make of the two victims due to the violence embedded in their houses as the only way to achieve selfhood and authority.

#### **a- Mr. Albert**

The clue to understanding many of the main character is their lack of self-awareness and their gradual learning to know and value themselves. This is certainly true in Albert's



case. His evil nature stems from his lack of self-awareness. Albert's father did not raise him to be independent, but rather to be subservient to his father's own interests. When Albert grew up, he looked up to his father as a role model and evolved into a self-centered, irrational individual, Mr. Albert, exemplifies the oppression brought about by heterosexuality in patriarchal society.

He has a strong desire for Shug, but his father has forced him to marry Julia and Annie. Mr. Albert, unable to confront his father, is forced to conceal his relationship with Shug. He is unable to live his heart's desire and is the epitome of a miserable patriarchal product. He attempts to do to his son what his father did to him by interfering with his son's wedding when his son was marrying Sofia. After failing to ruin the wedding, he goes on to teach his son about patriarchy by advising him to assert physical control over Sofia, Mr Albert explains to his son Harpo, about how women should be handled. He tells him that women are like children, and it is necessary to let them know who has the upper hand in the house from time to time, and the best way to do so is by beating them.

### **b-Harpo Johnson**

Harpo is Mr \_\_\_'s (Albert's) eldest son, the only one of Albert's children by his first wife, over the course of the book, Harpo is shown as a lovely guy who appreciates domestic tasks such as cooking and housekeeping. Harpo, on the other hand, encounters a lot of unnecessary strife in his life because society and his father's behavior teach him that the domestic domain is only for women. Harpo, epitomizes the pressures that Southern Black society put on men and women to act and express themselves in 'normal' ways.

After marriage, Harpo realizes that his wife Sofia is different from other women in their society. Sofia takes firm stances in a patriarchal society without blindly listening to her husband. and Harpo, having been taught that a man should make his woman a subject, seeks

advice from his father, who advises him to beat her. The idea that the female gender is inferior to the male gender is clearly passed down from generation to generation, making it difficult for the female gender to break free from the maze of gender discrimination. Harpo does not believe that beating Sofia is a good idea, but because the male elite requires him to prove his status, he must do so.

His decision to beat his wife worsens the situation, this is because Furious Sofia eventually fights back against Harpo and wins: “They fight. He try to slap her. What he do that for? She reach down and grab a piece of stove wood and whack him cross the eyes . . . She throw him over her back. He fall bam up gainst the stove.” (*The Color Purple* 37)

Harpo believes he is a failure since he is unable to defeat Sofia in the same way his father Albert is able to defeat Celie. Harpo is unaware that his role model is incorrect, and as long as he is married to Sofia, he will never be able to treat her like Albert does Celie. Sofia, realizes that life with Harpo is a dead-end situation; she needs a vacation. Harpo creates a thriving juke bar on the site of their previous home after Sofia leaves. Mary Agnes, a new partner, enabling Harpo to exert some masculine dominance over a female.

#### **II.4. Plethora of Violence**

A major theme in *The Color Purple* is violence and the suffering it causes, traced through the lives of African American women in the rural South of the United States. Celie, the protagonist of this novel experiences emotional traumas caused by her step-father’s rape, at the age of only 14, separation from her two kids and her sister Nettie, her mother’s death, and devastating marriage with an abusive man. “This cruel treatment further shatters her image of herself and her life becomes pieces of experiences that she must endure.” (Martin 30). Violence is defined as :

a universal occurrence in human civilization that is difficult to identify and discuss. Most synonyms for the term, such as hostile, violent, and ferocious, accurately depict the term's negative element, which is contained in most definitions. According to Kowaleski violence is :''an act of aggression that is usually destructive, antisocial, and degrading in its consequences and that usually seems deliberate (Kowaleski 7).

In another perspective, gender-based violence is a form of oppression rooted in patriarchal systems that has developed over the years. Gender-based violence, in its simplest definition, is the act of inflicting harm on an individual due to their gender. When viewed from a broader standpoint, gender-based violence encompasses various forms of discrimination against women, including physical, sexual, psychological, and economic hardships. Examples of such violence include threats, unjust deprivation of freedom, female infanticide, sexual abuse of children, forced labor, neglect, domestic violence, and early marriage.

#### **II.4.1. Psychological Violence**

Celie, and many other women in the novel, were struggling both being black and being a woman. They were victims of physical and psychological violence. One way of exerting psychological oppression is via verbal insults by degrading the insulted person, mainly women, and considering them as an unintelligent sexual objects. In addition to this, women are to be isolated from society and banned from making any sort of friendship relations to prevent them from complaining or asking support. Moreover, the woman is usually dependent economically on men, and threatened by the destructive relationship she lives within.

In Celie's case we can apply these criteria of psychological oppression as she was the object of diminishing comments by her husband along with degrading attitudes, she was exposed to sexual abuse, and she was deprived the right to contact her sister because her

husband got rid of the letters she should receive from her. When the two sisters separate, Celie beseeches Nettie to write, Nettie responds: "Nothing but death can keep me from it." (*The Color Purple* 19).

However, Mr.——was intercepting the mail daily for thirty years, to stow away any mail from Nettie to Celie, therefore disrupting the only mutually loving relationship of sisterhood. By doing this, Mister wants to prevent Celie from having a sense of belonging. He feels that the two sister's connection is a threat to him, depriving Celie of her sister's letters, Mister makes Celie emotionally dependent on him .In addition to this, Celie was economically dependent on him as well.

#### **II.4.2. Physical Violence**

Along with psychological violence, Celie the fourteen year old child was physically oppressed. The novel begins with the admonition: "you better not never tell nobody but God. It'd kill your mammy" (*The Color Purple* 1) This warning comes as Pa rapes Celie Celie's step father raped her, scholar Christine Froula writes that Pa warning robs Celie "in the name of her mother, of her story and voice" (Froula 638).

It is significant then to say that Pa rapes Celie when her mother was in a visit for her sister and another reason was that her mother was sick and unwilling to sleep with him as Celie revealed. She referred to him as Pa, but later he was revealed to be named Alphonso.

Celie's step father impregnated her twice, and her mother was aware of her daughter's pregnancy, but she thought that she has gotten pregnant by some local boys. As she was dying she asked her about the father, and Celie simply replied that God is the father. Emotional violence also appears when Pa, as Celie calls him, takes away her first child (later revealed in the novel to be a girl named Olivia), she thought that he killed her and threw her in the

woods or rather sold him in the nearby town of Montello. The same thing re-happened to her second child(Adam) to whom Celie gave birth shortly after her first child.

Celie was more worried about her sister and wanted to protect her from her step-father sexual abuse. At some point, all that Celie wanted is to stay alive, she was treated as an object for men to use and dispose of when satisfied, and she was never able to fight back. She grew up distancing herself from men for her step-father constantly tells her that she is ugly, and has the ugliest smile. Not only Celie who endured violence, Sofia was beaten by Harpo because his father Albert taunts him by saying that Sofia's resistance makes him less of a man.

#### **II.4.3.Domestic Violence**

It is an established theory that woman, irrespective of her age, is to do all the home work on her own without man's help. Collins writes that "Work as alienated labor can be economically exploitative, physically demanding, and intellectually deadening—the type of work long associated with Black women's status as mule" (Collins 48).

Celie, accepts this position of enslavement to Albert and does all the household works. One of Albert's sisters, Kate, who visits Celie, feels sad for her and asks Harpo to help her, who sarcastically replies that it is woman's job. Further, he says that he is a man and has no part in domestic work: "women work. I'm a man" (*The Color Purple* 20) at roughly the same time, the writer addresses domestic incest and rape, starting with Fonso's violation to both: his wife and step-daughter, and extends to Albert's treatment to Celie that reveals lack of respect to women. Celie as an innocent woman tolerates the inhuman behavior of her husband when he beats her, and says: "'cause she my wife, plus she stubborn. All women good for" (*The Color Purple* 23) unfortunately, this model of false manhood is passed down through generations, according to patriarchal norms, older males possess power over younger and make them conform, to brutal control being regarded as measure of manhood.

Mr.—organizes all his relationships(except the one with Shug) in terms of paternalistic power, he represents the dominative masculinity when subjecting his wife and children to his will. As he tells his son Harpo, ‘‘ Wives is like children. You have to let’em know who got the upper hand. Nothing can do that better than a good sound beating’’ (*The Color Purple* 36).Apparently, Shug is the only female character who is not a victim of oppression or domestic violence, none of her male partners has ever beaten or mistreated her, she displays a masculine sense of autonomy within her community.

#### **II.4.4.Racist Violence**

Racial discrimination was endemic in the United States. Although the law granted black people the right to equality, in practice they still experience racial discrimination, and treated as inferior to white people. Throughout the novel, there is white American racism that segregated black women and separated them from the white women’s world. *The Color Purple* addresses the complex issue of racism and its horrors. It depicts slavery in a realistic, disturbing, and horrific manner. However, Alice Walker demonstrates that her female characters are so intimidating that they cope with hostile situations and establish their identity despite all odds.

In Celie's instance, it is demonstrated that black people can be racist toward one another in the same way white people are toward them, in contrast to the well-known racism where white supremacy discriminates against black people, when Celie was a little girl, she was frequently mistreated and told that she is ugly, her father frequently sexually assaults her, her kids are taken from her, and she is married off to a man who wants a servant, not a wife. She determines that remaining silent and inconspicuous will allow her to survive , Celie’s letters to God are her only outlet and means of self-expression the protagonist Celie explains the way she is discriminated against by the clerk in the store who shows no respect to Celie

since she is black, Only fifty years have passed since slavery was abolished, and Celie lives in a country where the economic and social systems that supported it have persisted, albeit in more moderate versions.

Nettie lives in a village called Olinkas, where Europeans were trying to transform it into a more urban area, Nettie questions whether the Europeans are there to "modernize" and rebuild the area or to obliterate it. In an article entitled *Intersectional discourse in Alice Walker's The Color Purple and Toni Morrison's The Bluest Eye*, the author states that the construction of a road through the Olinkan hamlet is a sign of modernity, but its underpinning is one of facilitating the exploitation of the locals' natural resources and the erasure of their culture. To serve the British Empire, the Olinkan village is completely destroyed. Any civilization the West cannot relate to is considered to be primitive. Both the Olinkans and them in *The Color Purple* demonstrate the propensity to define the other in terms of the self.

The missionaries make an effort to defend their presence in Africa and provide an explanation of their frustrations with converting Africans to their western religion.( Ajibogwu 8)

Now the engineers have come to inspect the territory. Two white men came yesterday and spent a couple of hours strolling about the village, mainly looking at the wells. Such is the innate politeness of the Olinka that they rushed about preparing food for them . . . And the white men sat eating as if the food was beneath notice (*The Color Purple* 196).

Mainly due to thier belief of supersiority and that they can manage the village more effectively, this is related to racism, and her sister Nettie was afraid to bring Olivia and Adam(Celie's Children) back to America, where they will suffer from racism.

On her trip to New York, Nettie describes in a letter to Celie how blacks are treated in the train: "What can I tell you about New York - or even the train That took us there! We had to ride in the sit-down section Of the train , but Celie , there are beds on trains ... Only White people can ride in the beds and use the restaurant. And they have different toilets from colored." (*The Color Purple* 126)

Moreover, racism is illustrated in the story of Sofia in particular, she is the one who almost dies after rebelling against the town's mayor, According to Fanon, the colonial system's intrinsic violence is what leads to native aggression. Because violence is the primary language used in colonial relationships, it is ingrained in the master-slave dialectic and is the only way the dehumanized slave has to achieve selfhood. According to Fanon, only through violence can the colonized come to terms with themselves and regain their subjectivity, yet Sofia is the character that suffers from the racist system the most,because she reacted violently ad refused to be the mayor's wife maid.

When the white mayor slapped her, and jailed her for no crime, except voicing a blunt opinion, and he could get away without being punished, Sofia asserts her freedom to refuse to serve as a white woman's maid: "... All your children so clean and she say, Would You like to work for me, be my maid?" (*The Color Purple* 53)

Sofia refused her proposal by saying 'Hell no' The mayor, who believes that Blacks have no right to turn down pleas from whites, is unsatisfied by her objection. "Mayor look at Sofia, push his wife out of the way. Stick out his chest. Girl, what you say to Miss Millie? He slaps her." (*The Color Purple* 86).

The situation is worsened when police came along : "The polices come, start stinging the children off the Mayor, bang they heads together. Sofia really start To fight. They drag her to the ground." (*The Color Purple* 86) According to Fanon, colonialism is violent in its fundamental form.



In other words, he views violence as colonialism's defining trait. The zone of the settlers and the zone of the natives, he believes that there are two compartmental zones that make up the colonial world. These zones are divided by barracks and police stations. The settlers' minds are rife with narcissism and Chauvinism. They believe that mankind only exists within their region. So, it is impossible to claim to speak for the civilized human species if one does not reside in that realm. (Chuka 4)

Even Sofia's children were not spared by the cops. Their skulls collided with one another. At this point, Sofia requested that the prizefighter take the kids home with him. Racism went beyond individual animosity; it is tolerated because it is supported and upheld by institutions and the government, Violence and repression are used to uphold colonial rule. Fanon claims that violence is the "natural state" of colonial power, emphasizing that colonial control "is the bringer of violence into the household and into the mind of the native. " The colonial subject is thus "dehumanized" by colonialism to the point where he is considered as an animal." The colonizer will then utilize violence because the dehumanized colonial subject won't react to anything else in the colonial setting. (Pallas02)

When Sofia was in jail, she was tortured and treated violently by the police who :'' crack her skull, they crack her ribs. They tear her nose loose on one side. They blind her in one eye. She swole from head to foot. Her tongue the size of My arm,...She can't talk. And she just about the color of a eggplant. ''(*The Color Purple* 87). The image inside the prison shows how the Black captives suffer greatly there and how they are treated worse than animals : "the jail that Sofia is held is a metaphor for all black people caged by racism. For others, though they do not serve in a literal prison and instead and confined to servitude and domesticity within their homes" (Priya53).

Sofia in the novel represents the rebellious woman, who rejects both black and white oppression, she never accepted to be a subservient black wife nor a compliant black maid. In order to suppress traditionally feminine characteristics in favor of independence and unassailability.

Sofia stands apart from other disadvantaged black women who are easy to manage and obedient to the black community in general and white men in particular. Strong Black women, or superwomen were portrayed favorably by African American writers as opposed to negative stereotypes such as the Jezebel, the mammy, ...consequently: "the Strong Black Woman icon emerged, replicated by African American writers for the last 150 years, both deliberately and inadvertently (Perry19)

Many African American women, according to Melissa Harris-Perry, have assimilated the Strong Black Woman stereotype into their sense of self; they have drawn inspiration and assurance from an idol: "whose irrepressible spirit is unbroken by the legacy of oppression, poverty, and rejection" (Perry 184).

Because Black women could carry out culturally defined "man" jobs and suffer hardship, pain, and privation under slavery, White men spread the idea that Black women were masculine. This undermined the patriarchal myth that women are biologically inferior to men. It's ironic that Sofia's value for fighting back is what keeps her from living a self-sufficient life. Because of her resistance to injustice, she is beaten, sentenced to twelve years in jail, her refusal to be a white woman's maid is eventually crushed, and she is forced to work, first, without pay in the prison, doing laundry, and then, with pay, as the white mayor's family maid, losing much of her strength and dignity, and becoming a stranger to her own children: "I'm at they beck and call all night and all day. They won't let me see my children.

They won't let me see no mens. Well, after five years they let me see you once a year. I'm a slave, she say.”(*The Color Purple* 101)

The experience scars her, but it does not break her spirit's determination to remain independent. Sofia is a symbol of a strong black woman whose courage lies in her resilience and determination to survive in an unjust racist world. However, Harris In her essay collection, *The Sisters are Alright: Changing the Broken Narrative of Black Women in America*, she write : ‘‘The most radical thing African American women can do is to throw off the shackles forged by the strong black woman [paradigm] and regain a full and complex humanity that allows them to be capable, strong, and independent but also to be carried and cared for. Allowing for physical and emotional vulnerability is not weakness ‘‘ (Harris NP) Harris, exhorts African American women to embrace their vulnerability and let go of unrealized notions of strength.

Another illustration of racism appears when the mayor’s wife, Miss Millie, went shopping and kept Sofia outside the shop waiting for her, as an attempt by whites to keep blacks away from them, In one of Nettie's letters to Celie she mentions: "The mayor's wife was shopping –going in and out of the stores- and her maid was waiting for her on the street and taking the packages " (*The Color Purple* 123). In a different position, Miss Millie, refuses to sit next to Sofia saying :’’have you seen a white person and a colored sitting side by side in a car, when one of 'em wasn't showing the other one how to drive it or clean it?’”( *The Color Purple* 101-102)

Another illustration of racist violence appears when Mary Anger, asked for help from her white uncle, he thought of abusing her sexually, because he was sure that he will never be charged for raping a black girl. Having been separated from her children for twelve years, leads Sofia to refuse giving her approval for the baby of Eleanor Jane named Reynolds, though an innocent baby, but Sofia she was afraid that he, like most white men, will be her

oppressor. For her, he represents everything she despises about the white race, and she is unable to offer him love.

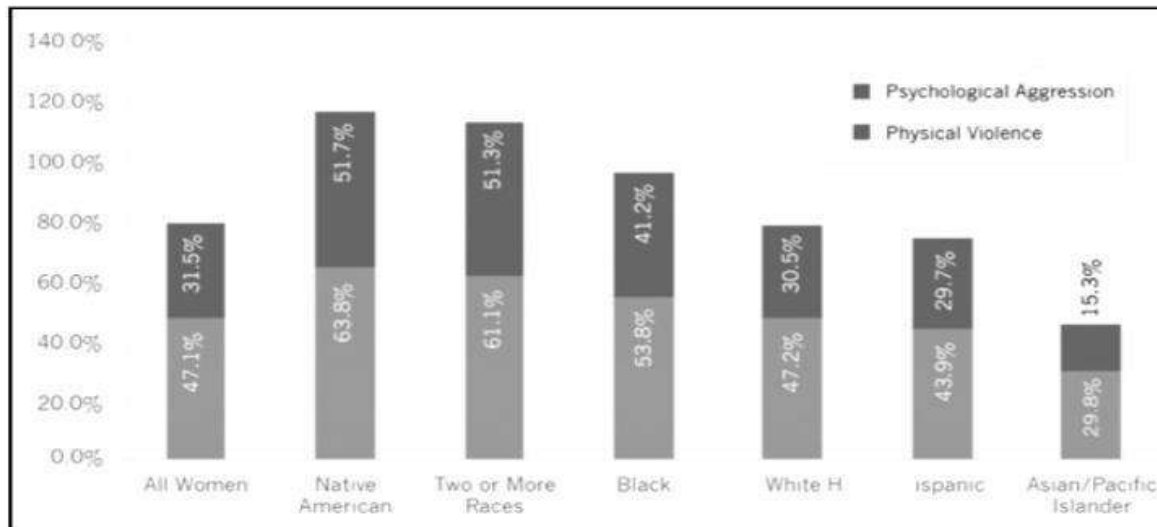
In terms of racist violence, there appears that men, who supposedly represent the patriarchal husbands and fathers, happen to be victims of racist violence of white culture. Eventually, imitating that violence in their relationships, and torturing the women in their lives, they turned their frustration and anger on their wives, partners and family members, therefore doubling women's oppression; firstly by white men and secondly by their husbands, partners, and other black males, because they were adequate victims.

In this regard Celie's husband insults her for being black and ugly, as if he was white, he constantly uses the white domination, racism, authority and prejudice over her. However, by the end of the novel those men have undergone a significant transformation that implies the renunciation of male prerogatives and traditional roles of dominance. Anachronistically, Walker created Harpo, who unlike his father Mr.— represents the model of new masculinity. This new man does the dishes willingly, and is not ashamed to acknowledge the feminine side of his personality.

Judith Butler the author of *Gender Trouble*, believes that people should view gender and sexuality as a variable or fluid, she believes that instead of viewing gender and sexuality as merely masculine and feminine, gender and sexuality should rather be viewed as a fluid or variable. People can work to shift the world toward justice and equality between the sexes, breaking down the barriers imposed by gender norms. Butler believes that in order for the world to be a better place, people must work together. To address the issue of gender inequality, we must first redefine the term woman. Women have traditionally been stereotyped and defined as a Womb, a stereotype that limits their capacity.

Feminists' continual categorization of women as different from men has done more harm than good. Negative attitudes against the other gender in the name of progress merely widen the gender divide. A concrete means of transforming gender identity would be to challenge standard beliefs about gender and sexuality. The way society has come to interpret gender roles is at the heart of gender inequity. Over time, taking small actions to change how society views gender roles would have a significant influence. Without any conventional duties for either gender, a woman may hold a major governmental office while the guy stays at home caring for the children, and society would not think that strange.

Walker, also demonstrates the savagery of racial prejudice by revealing that Celie's natural father, the original owner of the store, was lynched by a white racist mob. Lynching was common in the South from the 1880s to the 1930s, and Celie's father was murdered because his business was seen as a financial threat to white-run businesses, stealing black customers from white stores. When the successful enterprise 'Folkspants' is based there, it is ironic that a black man (Fonso) benefits and later a black woman (Celie) will. Lynching retaliation went unchallenged until the United States Congress attempted to pass an anti-lynching law in 1937. Southern senators effectively killed the bill by not allowing it to be debated in the Senate.



**Source:** Breiding et al.2014. compiled by the Institute of Women's policy Research.

#### II.4.5.Psychological Aggression and Physical Violence against Women –Bar Graph 1-

##### ➤ Results and discussion

Violence of all kinds, be it verbal or physical, is not limited to African American women only, all women can experience it, however women of color are often more likely to witness a substantial amount of psychological aggression and physical violence. According to a national intimate partner and sexual violence survey (2011) approximately one in three women (31.5 percent) undergoes physical brutality by an intimate partner, rape (8.8 percent), or other sexual violence estimated 15.8 percent. The bar chart shows that in general, psychological aggression against women is at the rate of 47.1%, while physical violence is at 31.5%. Continuing this further, the bar chart exhibits that the psychological aggression in the Black race is at 53.8%, while the physical violence is at 41.2%. On the other hand, the psychological aggression in the white race is at 47.2%, while its physical violence rate is at 30.5%. It is interesting, however, to find out that the psychological aggression in Hispanic people is at 43.9%, while its physical violence rate is at 29.7%. Lastly, the bar chart shows that the psychological aggression in Asian/Pacific Islander race is at 29.8%, while its physical violence rate is at 15.3%. (Bougofa, Bacher 8)

In striking contrast to the convergence between black community and other communities, higher rates of violence against women cannot be explained by a single motivating factor, economic insecurity, combined with racism and discrimination, shape how women of color experience violence in addition to the imbalance of power, poverty black women who live in impoverished areas have a three-fold chance of experiencing domestic violence as those who live in other areas as it is the case with the ugly, poor, uneducated Celie, who unlike her intellectual sister, Nettie, is continually abused by her step-father and her husband. (Bougofa, Bacher 8)

### **II.5. God, the Abusive White Male**

Religion is meant to help people achieve or discover their own self-identity. However, after 'finding one's self,' one is required to deny one's self in the name of a white 'God,' notably in the Euro-influenced Christian religion. 'Humble yourself and lay your cares on God,' they advise, since "He will right all wrongs." However, one must logically inquire... What interest does the white God have in black people, as depicted in *The Color Purple*, is it a continuation of patriarchal values? if the Christian bible is influenced by white man, what interest does, the God it portrays, have in black women?

The thoughts and complaints of the protagonist Celie are structured as letters to God, Celie has no way else except to write letters to God, as she was threatened by her step-father not to tell anyone that he had sexually abused her: "You better not tell nobody but God. It'd kill your mummy." (*The Color Purple* 11). Celie's letters to God constitute a form of resistance as she finds it difficult to show anger at both: her abusive father and domineering husband. In a conversation between Shug and Celie, Shug asks Celie of how her God looks, she replies: "his big and old and tall and graybearded and white. "He wear white robes and go barefooted" She adds that: "he has bluish gray eyes with white lashes" (*The Color Purple* 176).

This reveals that Celie's perception of God is mainly influenced by the racial and sexual oppression that permeates her world which means that God for her is racist and sexist and even abusive just like her father. And when her mother asks her about her pregnancy she replies that the kid she bears is God's, as for her God is associated with the abusive actions done to her by her step-father: "I say God's. I don't know no other man or what else to say" (*The Color Purple* 12).

Even when her mother asks her about the place of the baby, Celie associates its disappearance with God: "I say God took it. He took it while I was sleeping." (*The Color Purple* 12). In this regard, Jeannine Thyreen says: "As Celie had no choice but to be obedient to Pa, she now has no choice but to obey her husband; this is the same type of relationship she associates with God, one in which she must endure the hardships that the patriarch imposes upon her." (Thyreen 52, 54).

This explains how Celie's image of God is affected by her miserable life, therefore it is vital to understand that Celie's perception of God is intrinsically related to the socio-historical context in which it finds its origins, the violent actions are transposed onto God a reason why Celie conflates her male abusive actions with the role of God in her life, by the end of the novel, when Celie finds out that Pa is not her biological father, she angrily writes to God: "You must be sleep. Rouse yourself, why do you sleep, O Lord? Awake, do not cast us off forever. Why do you hide your face? Why do you forget our affliction and oppression?" (*The Color Purple* 163).

Celie says she stopped writing to God because he gave her "a lynched daddy, a crazy mama, a nasty dog of a stepfather, and a sister [she] definitely won't see again." Celie is suspicious of a white man God who does not listen to "poor dark women." Shug pushes Celie to reject "religious doctrines that support sexist and racist dominance" and to prioritize "a



spiritual existence." Celie will undoubtedly encounter a white God if she seeks God in a white church or a white printed Bible, so she must look for guidance in her local surroundings.

Celie then adopts Shug's philosophy that 'God is inside you and everyone else.'

This resistance is a step towards a new chapter in Celie's life, when she finds her voice, she stopped writing to god, and started writing to her sister Nettie. However, it is through these letters that Celie comes to a new understanding of God. Her sister told her that there were black people in the bible, and that God is not white as she thinks. Also through her conversations with Shug, Shug says: "God ain't a he or a she, but a it ...it don't look like nothing...it ain't a picture show. It ain't something you can look at apart from anything else, including yourself. I believe God is everything...everything that is or ever was or ever will be. And when you can feel that, and be happy to feel that, you've found it"(*The Color Purple* 177-178). She adds: "I think it pisses God off if you walk by the color purple in a field somewhere and don't notice it" (*The Color Purple* 178).

This conversation with Shug, allows Celie to end her letter with a religious expression "Amen" and addresses God once again in her last letter when she says: "Dear God. Dear stars, dear trees, dear peoples. Dear everything. Dear God."(*The Color Purple* 249). Jeannine Thyreen in this regard states that: "the novel thus abandons a fixed, patriarchal notion of God for one that is more free, recognizing the divine in all of creation and claiming the spirit within the individual"(Thyreen 65). She adds: "Celie's ensuing actions reveal that her understanding of God has undergone a significant transformation...she discovers her own God, not one forced on her by whites or one she associates with her oppression as a woman ; it is rather a God that is everything."(*The Color Purple* 63)

This transformation endows Celie to face her husband Mr—, for the first time and calls him with his name: Albert, thus the relation is no more that of victim and oppressor, but rather, of two equal human creatures.

## **II.6. Celie's Body Aggression; Culture of Dissemblance**

One of the less analyzed themes in black women history, is black women's sexual vulnerability and powerlessness as victims of rape, incest and domestic violence, as already discussed in the first chapter. Though *The Color Purple* is a fictional work but it represents the real life of the black community. In her *Gyn-Ecology*, Mary Daly explains the way one ideological group can engrain its traces on the bodies of other people when invading them, and *The Color Purple* illustrates the way in which the human body is made to submit to this authority. Throughout the novel, Celie expresses her hatred toward herself, and her feeling that her body is a constant source of exploitation, she has no desire to get to know her body, she suffers from an overpowering sense of incest. She describes herself at the beginning of her story as numb and incapable of interpersonal connections because she refuses to touch or be touched intimately by other people, in both the physical and emotional connotations of the word (*The Color Purple* 23) a patriarchy maintains power by pushing the female body into a powerlessness position, therefore, denying the women's ability to have an identity. Celie has never been loved by any man, she has been only beleaguered and abused, and in order to survive, she decides to annihilate her body, as well as her soul.

According to Rojas in *Women of Color and Feminism*: "Women are traditionally taught to fear the erotic, to interpret the pulse of the emotion it inspires with shame. At the same time, men have used the erotic to control female sexuality, redirecting it so that women believe their sexuality is tied to please men." (Rojas 136) in one passage of the book, Shug asks Celie to look at her vagina in the mirror.

Looking at her body, Celie improves her ability to cope with her fears and anxieties as a result of living in a sexist and mostly male society. According to Daniel Ross, the finding of Celie's body represents one of the fundamental missions of modern feminism [which] has been to restore women's bodies. Women have learned to fear or even detest their bodies since they are the most exploited target of male hostility. As a result, women frequently imagine their bodies as torn or fractured, as shown in Walker's Celie. Confronting the body means confronting not only an individual's abuse, but also the abuse of women's bodies throughout history; as an external emblem of women's enslavement, this abuse serves as a reminder of women's degradation and consignment to a lower position.

Confronting the body entails confronting not only an individual's abuse, but also the historical abuse of women's bodies; as an external symbol of women's servitude, this abuse acts as a reminder of women's degradation and consignment to a lower status." The mirror passage introduces Celie's sexuality discovery, Celie informs Shug that Mr. hits her for not being Shug, her face is filled with pain and sadness.

Shug and Celie have opposing viewpoints despite having sexual connections with the same man. Both of them are seated on the bed, conversing. Shug admits to having a crush on Mr\_ during the conversation. "I know he's a bully, but there are other things about him that I admire [...] I had a thing for him, and if I was ever going to have a husband, he'd be it. Aside from that, she admits to enjoying her intercourse with him. Celie, on the other hand, maintains that despite their sexual interactions, she has never felt loved or desired by her husband. Celie responds to Shug's question regarding her sexual interactions with Mr. by saying: "He never asks me how I'm feeling, never asks me about myself, he simply climbs on top of me and goes about his business," Celie says. Shug: Are you going to take care of his business? Celie, Miss Celie: Shug, you sound like he's about to go to the bathroom on you. (*The Color Purple* 150)

Shug reveals to Celie the sexual experience, and encourages her to love her body, this lead Celie to gradually liberate herself and develop a love for her own body. When Shug asks the way her body looks, she answers immediately as if she has found something beautiful: “it’s mine, I say.” Celie is surprised to find out that she is pretty and beautiful. The importance of recapture the control of one’s own body for asserting one’s self is outlined by Daniel Ross in these terms:

The female body is the most exploited target of male aggression, women have learned to fear or even hate their bodies. Consequently, women often think of their bodies as torn or fragmented, a pattern evident in Walker’s Celie. To confront the body is to confront not only an individual’s abuse but also the abuse of women’s bodies throughout history as the external symbol of women’s enslavement. (Ross70)

## **II.7.Stereotypical Perception**

### **II.7.1.The Matriarch**

The role of the Black woman as the head of the slave family was exaggerated during slavery. After slavery, a government report in the 1960s created the Matriarch image. The Matriarch image describes a woman who is “overly aggressive, unfeminine, and who emasculates black men” (Gillium 3). Her primary role is depicted as emasculating Black men by verbally assaulting them in a “loud, animated, and verbose fashion” (Gillium 3). Not only does the Matriarch emasculate Black men verbally, but also by taking the leadership role in the family. In *The Color Purple*, Alice Walker molds a distinctive Matriarch persona, Sofia. Sofia is one of the characters who is adamant about asserting her independence by opposing

traditional notions of a woman's place in African-American society. Her initial appearance in the novel, when she arrives to Albert's house carrying Harpo by the hand as if she is 'going to battle,' symbolises the nature of her connection with Harpo.

Despite remaining in the home sphere (rather than pursuing a job like Shug), she effectively becomes the house's boss. Sofia has a natural aptitude for 'manly' things such as heavy outside work and home repairs, and she makes all of the domestic decisions, defying the traditional male-female hierarchy that existed in not only African-American, but many white houses at the time. Sofia is not just determined to be independent but also has the physical strength to exert her control over her husband Harpo. Asserting her independence in her defiance of her husband and father-in-law is Sofia. Sofia derives her courage or strength from her close bonds with her five sisters, and she is aware that strong female relationships are a strategy for overcoming sexism.

having grown up in a male-dominated environment where she and her sisters had to practically fight against their father, brother, and relatives. When Harpo tries to beat Sofia, Sofia is more than capable of fighting up for herself and inflicting the same amount of damage on her husband. They adore each other from the start of their relationship, but their marriage collapses because Harpo is too traditional to accept Sofia's independent attitude as Sofia declares: "A girl child ain't safe in a family of men. But I never thought I'd have to fight in my own house. She let out her breath. I loves Harpo, she say. God knows I do. But I'll kill him dead before I let him beat me." (*The Color Purple* 42)

Sofia's difficulties are highlighted in the story when her rage leads to a lengthy prison sentence for assaulting the town's white Mayor after he slaps her for being impolite to his wife. Sofia is motivated by hatred and violent ideas during her years in captivity, both in prison and at the Mayor's home, Sofia's grit and sass demonstrate the negative consequences

of the strong black woman stereotype: She is more exposed to both internal conflict and external aggression as a result, but she learns from Celie's example to submit and dissociate herself from what is going on. In this way she keeps her fighting spirit and dignity.

### **II.7.2.The Jezebel**

Walker ,crafts a fresh version of the Jezebel archetype: Shug Avery,the unholy Blues singer of the small town,known also as Lillie, or the Queen Honeybee who has a reputation as a woman of dubious morals who dresses scantily, and has some sort of “nasty woman disease,” Her parents reject her, and she is shunned by her own family. Which are already instances of the Jezebel archetype as established in the bible as a figure who is described as a murderer, prostitute, and God's enemy, Jezebel has been saddled with a distasteful reputation as the “bad girl of the Bible, the wickedest of women,” (Gaines).The authors of *Breaking The Chains: Examining The Endorsement Of Modern Jezebel Images And Racial-Ethnic Esteem Among African American Women* articulate the Jezebel as one of the most pervasive, negative stereotypical images of black women, perpetuating the false perception of them as promiscuous, the community's harlot, and sexually permissive(Brown et al 525).

Shug's original concept of God, especially when juxtaposed to Celie's limited concept of God, is one of the things that impresses us most strongly about her. She builds an outspoken character that finds the strength within her, and She also mobilizes her personal moral compass from sexual behavior to self-reliance and accountability

### **II.8.Power of Women Resilience in the Color Purple**

In a male-dominated society, freedom from oppression occurs only if women support each other, and Walker makes women's communal empowerment a primary focus of her novel. Celie the protagonist of the novel, is ugly, black, poor and uneducated female, her story

illustrates personal transformation and empowerment, by fighting back against adversity Celie managed to discover selfhood and free her spirit from the bondage of oppression. The epistolary style of this novel according to Lare Assogba helped in bringing those isolated women together as she declares:

It enables isolated women to connect with one another within a patriarchal structure, since the protagonist's energy is directed inward, letters give the reader the opportunity to access the characters private thoughts, emotional real and their psychological development. Walker effectively uses letter writing to convey her female protagonists' desire to break with the oppressive situations. (Assogba 51)

Throughout the novel, Walker describes female friendships as a method of liberation from oppression in the lives of female characters, these friendships acquire many shapes: some are between mothers and daughters, or sisters. In Celie's life there are a few close friends like her biological sister Nettie, and non-biological ones: Shug Avery and Sofia, all of them are victimized by the same patriarchal values. The strong relationship between these women can be a threat to patriarchal order. Celie's strong bond with Shug, enables her to break free from oppression and become a self-assured female that can be independent and self-sufficient.

When Celie and Shug first met, the mood was uncertain, since Shug had the misconception about Celie as an ugly person. Fortunately Celie never heard of what Shug thought of her, and when Shug felt ill, she provided her with care. Tending to Shug was Celie's way of filling the void of sisterhood left by her sister Nettie. Shug, is a representation of the sexual stereotype placed on women, after realizing that Celie has no feeling toward men, including her husband, Shug takes it upon herself to teach her about her body, and here Celie gets to know that sex is never associated with submission. The reader's first impression of Shug is negative, she has a status of woman with questionable morals who dresses

inadequately, and is despised by her own parents, however Celie's point of view was completely different. When she came across Shug's picture, Celie was fascinated for she reminded her of her mother. Being a: "vivid and determinedly independent blues singer, whose pride, independence and appetite for living mesmerize Celie, Shug Avery becomes a medium for Celie's transformation." (Hajare 39).

Shug also helps Celie adopt "the new meaning to life and the approach to overcome the stereotypes accorded her by patriarchy" (Agede 27): "Man corrupt everything, say Shug. He on your box of grits, in your head, and all over the radio. He try to make you think he everywhere, you think he God. But he ain't" (*The Color Purple* 197). The relationship between Shug and Celie is significant for Shug as well, with Celie's help, Shug is able to deconstruct the isolation caused by the discrimination of the black community towards an independent woman who works as a bar-singer.

Moreover, Celie managed to liberate herself with the aid of her sister Nettie. They both exhibit the protuberant symbol of sisterhood. The endearing sisterhood dispenses a promise of continuance even when they are separated from one another. Nettie imparts moralistic help to Celie as she strives with the brutal rapist Alphonso, and the cruel husband. She was Celie's tutor with reading and spelling, and through writing Celie experiences oblivion in the grave situation during her sister's absence. Nettie also informs Celie about her two missing children who are living with her and obtaining good education. Celie acknowledges tranquility with her sister beside her, she was sure that eventually they will reconcile.

Though Walker focuses on Celie's private life story, Nettie's letters widen the perspective of Celie's condition by providing a transcultural, ethnographic description of the black woman's situation in Africa. The racial and cultural struggle Nettie comes across in



Africa are similar to the abuses that Celie encounters in Georgia, they develop the storyline and illustrate the oppression of women by men, of blacks by white and even of blacks by blacks. Nettie also reveals to Celie through her letters that Alphonso is not their real father, and that their biological father was lynched by the white men who burnt his successful store. Due to the circumstances, their mother suffered a mental break-down and Alphonso married their mother so that he could take control over her wealth.

In reciprocation, Celie represents the alternate mother to Nettie and braces her by prohibiting her from getting molested by her step-father and in lieu prefers herself. After the death of their mother, Celie becomes a watchful of her sister Nettie, though she could not protect herself from the sexual violence of her step-father, and although her mother could not protect her from such abuse, Celie who is little more than two years older than her sister, sacrificed herself to save her.

For her part, Nettie bears witness to Celie's pain and abuse, she was present when Pa repeatedly sexually violates her sister. In this way she returns the maternal nurturing that Celie provided her with. Bell Hooks, in this regard, argues that by emphasizing sisterhood Walker displaces "motherhood as central signifier for female being", adding "it is the recognition of the self in the other... and not self in relationship to the production of children that enables women to connect with one another"(Bloom 226).

Unlike Celie and many other black women, Harpo's wife Sofia was the woman who defied the odds, she fought her father, brothers and uncles from an early age, she had a belief in her mind that a woman is never safe among a group of men as revealed in the novel when Sofia speaks to Celie: "A girl child ain't safe in a family of men (*The Color Purple* 42). Even with her husband beating her constantly, she never gave up. Sofia's strong relationship with her sisters encouraged her to fight, they were determined not to live as their mother lives, and they

fought to defend themselves against the physical and sexual violence. Sofia, was of the characters Walker used to illustrate female resilience and women empowerment.

Sofia's relationship to Celie constitutes the non-biological sisterhood for both. The two meet when Harpo, Mr.—'s oldest son, brings a pregnant Sofia home to announce their plan for marriage. At that time Celie is around twenty-five years old and Sofia is fifteen. For her part, Celie remarks that Sofia speaks back to Mr.— something that she was unable to do, as Henderson writes: Celie, unlike Sofia accepts a theology which requires female subjugation to father and husband''(Bloom 71). Sofia Butler is a sturdy young village girl who teaches Celie to stop being afraid and stand up for herself, she is not afraid to counter the oppressive patriarchy to achieve her own goals''(Martin 30)

As the relationship of Celie and Sofia develops, Sofia tells Celie that she grew up in a household where her mother was under the rule of her domineering father, she said: ''She never say nothing back to him, she never stand up for herself. Try to make a little half stand sometime for the children but that always backfire'' (*The Color Purple* 43) Sofia continues: ''More she(hermother) stand up for us, the harder time he give her(*The Color Purple* 43). And when at the age 15, Sofia explained to Celie that she was tired of fighting: ''All my life I had to fight. I had to fight my daddy. I had to fight my brothers. I had to fight my cousins and my uncles.( *The Color Purple* 42)

Both Sofia and Nettie have a crucial role in Celie's life development, they helped her recognize the importance of being assertive and independent. They both symbolize defiance since they are not influenced by men when making their decisions. Celie's transformation to a lady who is conscious about her gender, manages to humble Mr. Albert who treated her as an object. Thanks to the strong bond between those women, misconceptions about sexuality and gender role broke down. In all odds, norms and gender inequalities were defied.

This female bonding which occurs over an extended period of time, enables Celie; a depressed survivor, victim of parent loss, emotional and physical neglect, rape, incest, trauma, and spousal abuse to resume her arrested development and continue development of processes that were thwarted in infancy and early adolescence. (Proudfit 13)

Celie starts the journey as a timid girl who writes letters to god and then reaches out to god, peoples and everything. The essays in Dear God...Dear Peoples...Dear Everything examine her journey transformation. Celie has endured various forms of trauma throughout her life, her trauma from racism ; her trauma from her mother and her step father and her trauma from marriage and through the healing process, she eventually makes significant attempts to overcome her trauma, and in the end, she succeeds by creating a black identity and establishing relationships with black people.

### **II.9. Meaning of Purple: Color Psychology and Symbolism**

In terms of positive associations, purple has long been associated with wealth and royalty, it balances the simulation of red and the calm of blue, it also refers to bravery and independence. As it can denote feelings of unsettlement and therefore uncomfortable. The color purple is therefore a mixture of red, usually associated with energy and strength, and blue that represents spirituality and integrity, having the shades of purple(violet and lavender) mixed together , signify the union of body and soul. However, in the novel Walker uses the color purple to symbolize issues she addresses.

In the novel the color symbolizes an indomitable female spirit, it appears several times in the novel, one can suggest that it refers to Celie's transformation from a naïve girl and innocent girl to a mature woman. As Walker writes in the preface: purple is always a surprise but is found everywhere in nature. From the very beginning of the novel, Celie reveals her

possession with the color purple when she asks Kate to buy her purple clothes and shoes, but they are too expensive to be bought. Furthermore, the color was present in Shug's explanations: "I think it pisses God off if you walk by the color purple in a field somewhere and don't notice it" (*The Color Purple* 196). Basically, the color purple is: Continually equated with suffering and pain, Sophia's swollen, beaten face is described as the color of eggplant. Purple is the color of Celie's private parts: the site of her sexual violation. Nettie's description of Africans as blue-black suggests that suffering is already marked on the flesh of a historically oppressed race. (Fiske 153)

Walker compares womanism to feminism as purple to lavender, conveying the spirituality (purple being a color that represents the spirituality, vibrancy, and strength of black women's unique experience). Despite being abused and abused physically, emotionally, and psychically on a daily basis, they have risen from the abyss of daily duress like Phoenixes(Purkayastha 6)

### **II.10.Black Subjectivity in *The Color Purple***

In all her works, Walker expressed with a devastating clarity, the degree of freedom black women have in their community, her main concept was sharpened by her use of the history of black people in America especially in the south where they were most brutally enslaved and marginalized. The novel traces the liberation of the African American woman from traditional patriarchal order. In the intersectionality of race, class, and gender. The following quote explains the way all black women were considered and mainly Celie, when she spoke back to her husband he said: "Who you think you is? You can curse nobody. Look at you. You're black, you're poor, you're ugly, you're a woman...you're nothing at all".-Mr. to Celie-

However, Celie, in a world already defined for her, fights for her self-definition and goes through three main stages: subordination, transformation, and liberation.

### **II.10.1.Subordination**

Historically speaking, when slavery was abolished, racism took its place as demarcation line between black and white people which ultimately lead to the exclusion of one group based on the naturalization of difference and therefore institutionalizing racist imperialism and sexism in colonial patriarchal US. In this regard, Hooks asserts that the practice of sexism and the act of racism did not stop with the abolition of slavery.

Enslaved people accepted the patriarchal definitions of male-female sex roles and reproduced them after slavery ended. The first part of the novel shows the illiterate, poor, black, fourteen year old girl being raped by her step-father from which she has two children, who were given away to protect him. This is the part where Celie lacks power and will to resist brutality imposed on her, and her psychic confusion reaches to a climax through the picture of an iguana :’’ it all I can do not to cry. I make myself wood. I say to myself, Celie, you are a tree. That’s how come I know trees fear men’’(*The Color Purple* 23). This is a telling example of a black woman’s proximity to the passive and suffering agony of nature.

In the spring of 1990, her step-father forces into marriage with Albert, who abuses her and beats her constantly but she remains docile and passive, just as she did when she was raped though she was supported by her sister Nettie to resist: ‘’Don’t let them run over you...you have got to let them know who got the upper hand...you have got to fight Celie, you have got to.’’ In response, Celie explains why she cannot: ‘’I don’t know how to fight. All I know how to do is to stay alive’’(*The Color Purple* 26), ‘’ I don’t say anything. I stay where I’m told. But I’m alive.’’ Her subordination is also expressed non-verbally when she remains silent to insults by her husband and her step-father

Celie, is well embedded within the traditional male-female sex role, she lives up to the ‘‘cult of true womanhood’’ (Hooks 48).

The letters that Celie writes visualize her hopelessness, unfortunately she never tries to free herself, she even suffers without getting angry, because she is afraid that her rebel against Pa and Mr.—would cause her more troubles. Therefore, she prefers to remain a victim and accepts her condition as her fate. Celie also believes that she is obeying god when she is silent: ‘‘ I can’t even remember the last time I felt mad. Couldn’t be mad at my daddy cause he my daddy. Bible say, honor father and mother no matter what. Sometime Mister git on me pretty hard. I have to talk to old maker. But he my husband. I shrug my shoulders. This life be over, I say. Heaven last all ways.’’ (*The Color Purple* 44) Furthermore, she helps in reproducing the traditional order when she asks Harpo to beat his wife Sofia, by doing this she rebels against the few independent women in her life.

Women around the world face similar problems like those of Celie. Peter S. Prescott presents an opinion of Andrea Ford in a news week review: ‘‘...for Walker, redemptive love requires female bonding. The bond liberates women from men, who are predators at worst, ideal at best.’’(Prescott 50). Like Zora Neal Hurston’s *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, Walker’s novel focuses on the quest for identity and wholeness. Both writers feel that this problem is common to all black women. Therefore, both of them writes similar concepts to give voice to the oppressed black women.

### **II.10.2.Rejuvenation**

Celie’s liberation starts when she meets Shug Avery, the blues singer and her husband mistress, in the beginning Shug treats Celie as subordinate just like Albert does, as the first utterance from Shug to Celie reveals : ‘‘you sure is ugly...’’( *The Color Purple* 20). However, when Celie supports Shug during her illness, Shug develops empathetic feelings for her and writes a song

for her, this would ultimately provide the basis for the contact between the two women which subsequently leads to the liberation of Celie, who adopts Shug as a role model. The song contains a message from Shug to Celie asking her to value herself: "I am something, and I hope you are something too" (*The Color Purple* 115).

### **II.10.3.Independence**

Shug continues to teach Celie how to enjoy being a woman, she forces her to look in the mirror and smile without covering up her teeth by saying: "girl, you need a smiling lesson... Well, miss Celie I do believe you have a beautiful smile." She also invites her to try her dresses on, this fosters Celie's love for herself. As such Celie starts to become a self-defined woman, especillay when she finds out that her husband is the reason in her separation with her sister : "you took my sister Nettie away from me. You knew she was the only somebody in the world who loved me." And Albert, when Celie states that she is leaving, threatens her: "You are not getting any of my money, not one damn dime." Celie replies; "Did I ever ask you for anything? I never asked you for nothing, not even your sorry ass hand in marriage." And when trying to prevent her from moving to Memphis with Shug, Celie warns him that she is more like a tiger now and roars: " You a lowdown dog is what's wrong I say. It's time to leave you and enter into the creation. And your dead body just the welcome mat I need" (100). Celie continues to Harpo: " If you had not tried to rule over Sofia, white folks never would have got her."

Sofia left Harpo after he tried to beat her and relinquished her anger on the mayor when his wife asked her to be a nanny, and then she is severely punished, the thing that stopped her from being rebellious against any subordination. By doing this, Celie challenges both: the domination of male over women and the domination of white over black. Eventually, Celie's life becomes a public testimony of the possibility of subverting

oppression, by the aid of many African American females the order of patriarchal system is confronted.

Economically speaking, Walker has turned the poor Celie into an economically contended woman, who started exhibiting her talent in sewing and making pants. Initially for herself and Shug only and later for others too. Celie becomes a successful seamstress, She moves in with Shug in Memphis, where she expanded sewing pants into a successful business after seeing how much demand there is for them among both men and women, McKeever-Floyd writes that:

sewing, the stitching together of disparate parts into an aesthetically pleasing whole- is an appropriate metaphor for the final stage of her transformation. Celie has faced her demons, self-loathing, lack of self-definition and despite the odds has created a new life tapestry. (Floyd 431)

but Celie is faced with the final hurdle on the road to full self-fulfilment when Shug leaves her for a nineteen-year old boy. As the book comes to a climax, Celie finds peace with herself as she reconciles with Albert and makes an odd friend in him, Shug comes back to her, and she is reunited with Nettie and her children after being apart from them for thirty years.

### **II.11. Trends of Womanism in the Color Purple**

The novel is a neo-slave narrative through which the author shows how African American Women suffer the adversity of oppression and as a method of emancipation Walker, throughout the novel insists on female friendships as a way out of oppression. Celie, the protagonist of the novel, appears to be at the bottom of America's social cast, she is- according to her oppressors- ugly, black, poor and uneducated female, her story illustrates



personal transformation and self-discovery as it also fulfills the need of a female hero. "A Black Feminism or Feminism of Color", Walker launches *The Color Purple* as a womanist novel not a feminist. Though Feminism jumps over three waves, nothing could be considered as an empowerment of the marginal. As a reaction, Womanism was coined by Alice Walker who suggests that: "Womanist is to feminist as purple is to lavender." Walker narrates black women's experiences in opposition to those of white females. Thus, Womanism and Feminism are different.

Walker proves that by revealing the history of the American racism which ultimately makes of white women: feminists, and black women: womanists. What distinguishes Alice Walker from the other female writers is her aesthetic ability to promote the black female consciousness both in theory and practice. In this regard Udoette argues that exploration of female consciousness in Alice Walker's *The Color Purple* will follow the womanist criteria rather than the radical feminist approach" (Udoette75).

### **II.12.Black English Vernacular as a key to Identity**

It is obvious that language is crucial in piqueing readers' interest in literary works; yet, many English and American authors have used the epistolary approach in their narrative discourse, mostly as a method of character communication. In *The Color Purple*, however, Walker uses such mechanism to: "explore the momentous issues that are hidden in the letters and the development of the protagonist character of the novel" (Zafar 5).

Walker employs such a method in order to discuss topics that affect all individuals, as she sees suffering among humans as a universal problem. Walker aims to make her womanist characters prevail over all forms of tyranny by writing in a way that keeps them connected, both stylistically and thematically. Consequently, the novel's narrative style is essential in

elevating female awareness. Walker speaks in both formal and spoken languages. In the latter, black English or vernacular is used.

Each of the author's feminist characters is given an expressive linguistic tool on purpose. For instance, Celie's vocabulary is folksy, but her sister's is more formal. Celie cannot speak in normal English, for instance she says: "My mind run up on a thought, git confuse, run back and sort of lay down" (*The Color Purple* 215). The grammarian function here is not used properly due to the traumatic experience of rape that Celie has been through, in addition the writer refuses to allow her main protagonist into "the linguistic system of white people because she wants to keep her own autonomy" to use the words of Pi-Li Hsiao (Hsiao 97).

Further analysis in the novel reveals that certain words in vernacular exercise final consonant cluster reduction like: find, kind, and which are reduces to: fine, kine, an. Other transformations occur with pronouns: them, my, yours, this, that reduced respectively to: em, ma, yourn, dis, dat. Plus the double negation like : I don't say nothing, I don't bleed no more and the S for the irregular plural nouns: mens, womens or the absence of S for third person singular: he do it to me anyway, she don't look at him. A particularly used observation is that "been", is used as the perfective instead of: have been and had been. (Kadi 06).

Walker chooses to use vernacular to convey a linguistic mash-up that reflects some social divisions well within narrative. The incorporation of a vernacular, such as consonant reductions, deletions at initial, medial, and final positions, contractions, double negations, etc., assorts writings with validity and provides it with the local color with producing an authentic environment of the main characters. Also, Walker uses the black vernacular to highlight the sociocultural background of her people since the uncommon variants highlight the character's low social status and educational attainment. (Kadi 07)

According to Ives, authors purposely use dialects to give their works an artistic touch: “ The dialect characters are made to speak a language that has unconventional features of pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary. Pronunciation features are suggested by systematic variations from the conventional orthography, or phonetic respelling...words are employed that are not commonly found in abridged dictionaries...the author is an artist, not a linguist or a sociologist, and his purpose is literary rather than scientific(Ives 201-202)

### **II.13.Criticism**

A literary text can be read from many different perspectives with different, sometimes conflicting interpretations. *The Color Purple*, has been the subject of much scholarly analysis and the object of literary controversy, it has been approached as social history, psychoanalytic case study, love story and a fairy tale. The effect of the novel’s popularity has created a cadre of spectator readers. These readers who do not identify with the characters and do not feel their pain, considered the events of the novel as a circus of black human interactions that rivals anything Daniel Patrick Moynihan concocted, the spectator readers came to the conclusion that the novel reinforces racist stereotypes. *The Color Purple*, reflects the proliferation of scenes of violent interaction between black males and females. Critics of Walker have stated that she has portrayed black men as cruel in her works, which has sustained stereotypes of black male violence. Black women and black men were offended by the imagery of monstrous black masculinity, especially that the story received international attention.

#### **II.13.1.Vilification of Black Masculinity**

Some black men who read the novel did feel vilified. As revealed in the *New York Times* interview referred to by Mr. Reed and David Bradley who had a conversation with

Walker, wrote that despite her high level of enmity toward black men, Walker writings were troubling. Bradley also wrote:

Some of the hurtful criticism is demonstrably true: Black men in Alice Walker's fiction and poetry seem capable of goodness only when they become old like Grange Copeland, or paralyzed and feminized, like Truman head. If they are not thus rendered symbolically impotent, they are figures of malevolence.(Bradley 34)

In a letter to the editor, writer Ishmael Reed wrote that the novel fosters the perspective adopted by a minority within a feminist movement, in this regard Reed deplored:

Ms. Walker's shrill attempt to boycott black male writers whose female characters don't adhere to her notion of what an ideal female character should be...presumably a tortured, neurotic, unhappy, hateful person, full of hostility towards people whose only crime is that they were born male.(La GroneXIV)

In her autobiography, *The Same River Twice: Honoring the Difficult*, Alice Walker explained that she was accused by many critics of hating black men and attacking black family and that the story in the novel refers to her own personal life. But Walker emphasized in her autobiography that she was bisexual and Celie was a lesbian, and by doing this Walker meant to directly contrast the many white gay male coming out stories that mourned the loss of white men privilege.

Walker adds that much of the controversy over *The Color Purple* focused on black male abuse when at the same time a little attention was given to the white male mayor's physical abuse and his wife emotional and spiritual rape of the black female Sofia, who was known for her proud and self-empowerment the thing that was affected by the mayor and his wife abuse.

Not only this, Sofia's children were as much affected as their mother was. Watching this abuse happening to their mother would lead them to disempowerment and figuring out their low position in the American society especially when their mother was unable to win the white society. In addition to this, Walker was mainly criticized for confusing historical reality with fantasy. She did not deny that the novel is a realization of a private fantasy, and that she rewrote her grandmother's story based on the character Celie.

### **Conclusion**

*The Color Purple*, is one of the influential novels in the 1980's, it contributed strongly in the re-shaping of traditional black aestheticism, by introducing black femininity into the male centered discourse. Black women were excluded from all the liberationist discourse including black cultural nationalism and Women's Liberation movement. This exclusion was ironically expressed by the emblem: All the women are white, and all blacks are men. In this regard M. Dubey states:" Black women's novel, in the 70's do not simply oppose to contemporary nationalist discourse on black identity. They imagine black feminity as an absence, and draw attention to the textual effects of this absence"(Dubey 30).

Basically, Walker has amply demonstrated how racism and male patriarchy place black women in danger and under oppression. The black woman had to deal with the reality of racial and sexual discrimination. The black woman had no idea what the concepts of identity and freedom even meant, with the appearance of *The Color Purple*, the black intellectual consciousness was widened through the female plot that presents the inner drive to assert selfhood and the quest for personal freedom within the cultural legacy and the framework of black community. '*The Color Purple*, is the triumph of one woman's crusade against racism, sexism and socially imposed traditions'" (Abraham 275).

Conclusively, the novel ends the conventional picture of the male-dominated southern community with the complete change of the main character as she “grows from a shy young woman to one who has the confidence to stand up for herself, eventually becoming one of those women whose tongue hurls words of self-defense” (Tanritanir and Boynukara 289), the main character with the aid of her female companions rebelled against the stereotypical roles: house wife, black servant, sexual tool. Celie's personality is characterized by its resilience, capacity for unconditional love, and unceasing pursuit of the truth. Celie's fortitude results from people believing in her, despite the fact that she occasionally doubts her value, and from her relationships with others, despite the fact that these connections are occasionally shaky.

Despite experiencing sexual, physical, and emotional abuse from youth into adulthood, Celie has remained a kind and kind spirit who finds it simple to love when she feels loved. Her tenacity is genuinely extraordinary and honors humanity.

The feminist literary approach is well described through three different black women: Celie, the one who was criticized for her appearance. Sofia, who was criticized for being controlling and demanding. And Shug Avery, who represents the ultimate feminist symbol through her liberal approach to life.

Friends who are able to mother the mind pull oppressed women out of the surrender of extinction of their identity in uncongenial heterosexual relationships. A woman ushers her friend into a journey of self discovery, Walker's female characters collect their inner strength and learn to raise their voice against their oppression and become source of inspiration for other females also.



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## **Chapter Three: Intergenerational Effects of Historical Trauma**

## Introduction

“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.”(*The Bluest Eye* 15).

Having the categories of gender, race, and economics enmeshed in determining the fate of black people in general and black women in particular is not something new; segregation laws in the Deep South(1961), the Civil Rights march on Washington by Martin Luther King Jr.(1963), the passage of the Civil Rights Act(1964), the Watts Riot in LA and the murder of Malcolm X(1965), racial rioting in New Jersey and Detroit(1967), the murders of two leaders of the black separatist movement by FBI(1969), women’s rights movement and the discussion of rape as a social issue provoked writers to talk about the horrors that American racist system had spawned. Noted for her examination of black female experience, Toni Morrison ,aiming at restoring some balance, wrote her first novel: *The Bluest Eye* in 1970 through which she explores the suffering of black Americans in an unjust society, the novel employs the theme of beauty as an unreachable physical quality for black women in a racist white society, the standard of beauty causes fracture in the lives of her black female characters who suffer the prejudice of white class and thus destroying them and leading some of them to their madness since they can never satisfy neither society nor themselves by having a clear identity.

Pauline Breedlove, Pecola, and Geraldine are of the female characters who are imprisoned in silence, sexual oppression and despair trying to conform to the ideal of femininity ultimately despising their blackness and hating themselves. Morrison’s upbringing in Ohio, influenced her writing by positioning her firmly within the crosswinds of the politics of color and the social construction of race.



### III.1.About the Author

During the early years of great economic Depression Chloe Ardelia Wofford, a second of four children, was born on February 18, 1931 in Lorain, Ohio, to George Wofford and Ella Ramah Willis Wofford. Seeking refuge from the Jim Crow segregation of the South, her family migrated from Georgia in reaction to hostile, racist culture that included lynchings and other oppressive acts to a small town in Ohio, a Midwestern industrial center where most of the residents lived on meagre incomes. In 1949, Chloe left Ohio and moved to Washington D.C. where she attended Howard University and changed her name to Toni for reasons never fully disclosed. After Howard, Morrison studied at Cornell and after her graduation she took a job teaching literature at Texas Southern University.

Toni was married to an architect from Jamaica named, Harold Morrison with whom she had two sons Harold Ford and Kevin Slade and divorced while pregnant with the second child. While in New York holding the position of an editor, Toni Morrison joined a small group of writers where everybody was required to write something and hand it for critique. She immediately wrote a short story about a black girl who dreamt of having blue eyes. Several years later, following the end of her marriage in 1964, and leaving her position as a teacher at Howard University because she did not have a PhD, she obtained a position as associate editor in 1965 at L.W. New York, for a random house company and in 1968 her career as editor flourished; she became the senior editor for Random House, and was the only African American to hold such position.

In 1970, Morrison expanded this story of the girl who dreams of having blue eyes to make of it her first novel, entitled:*The Bluest Eye*. Followed by *Sula* in 1973, nominated for a National Book Award in 1975 and then *Song of Solomon* in 1977 for which Morrison won the

National Book Critic's Circle Award and the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters Award.

Then came out her fourth novel *Tar Baby* in 1981 followed by *Beloved* in 1987 for which she won the Pulitzer Prize, this novel was based on the story of Margaret Garner, who fled from slavery in Kentucky to Ohio, and ended up killing one of her two kids to save him from the horrors of slavery and for whom Morrison again wrote a libretto for an opera, *Margaret Garner*. In addition to other novels like: *Jazz*, *Paradise*, *Love* and *A Mercy* Morrison wrote a play called *Dreaming Emmett* in 1986 where she engaged in high-profile political issues to talk about the unsolved murder of Emmett Till. Morrison is a well-known African-American woman writer of modern age who has won several literary awards. She is the first African-American author ever to receive both the Pulitzer and the Nobel Prize for Literature.

In 1989 Morrison became a professor at Princeton University where she produced *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the literary Imagination* in 1992. Morrison continued with her great achievements in different fields and receiving many awards until she passed away at Montefiore Center in The Bronx, New York City, on August 5, 2019, from complications of pneumonia. Morrison is of the greatest writers who succeeded in giving a voice to the black girl in "reviving her after being killed by the American society and neglected by her family. Toni Morrison exhorts: I write for black women. We are not addressing the men, as some white female writers do. We are not attacking each other, as both black and white men do. Black women writers look at things in an unforgiving, loving way. They are writing to responses, rename, re-own (Nellie 64).

A significant contribution to the growth of Black feminist ideals and Black women's writing is made by Morrison's novels, which were released in the late 20th century.

### III.2. Overview of the novel

The *Bluest Eye* was written during the 1960s, a period that Morrison herself describes in the, afterword added to the novel in 1993, as "a time of great social upheaval in the lives of black people" (*The Bluest Eye* 208)

Toni Morrison's masterful first novel received accolades in *Kirkus Review*, which called the book a "quiet chronicle of garrotted innocence." *The Bluest Eye*, written during the civil rights decade and published in 1970, is Morrison's first novel that was not out of print until 1974, Morrison claimed that her novel was treated like her main character; dismissed, slighted and misunderstood. In a conversation that took place in 1981 with Charles Ruas, Morrison spoke about the source of the story, that was mainly based on a conversation she had had with her friend about the existence of god, her friend did not believe in the existence of god as he did not fulfill her wish for having blue eyes, Morrison said :'' I looked at her and imagined her having them...I began to write about a girl who wanted blue eyes and the horror of having that wish fulfilled; and also about the whole business of what is physical beauty and the pain of that yearning and wanting to be somebody else.''(Bloom 95-96).

She adds in another conversation with Claudia Tate in 1983:'' I wrote *Sula* and *The Bluest Eye* because they were books I had wanted to read. No one had written them yet , so I wrote them.''(The New York Times Archives)

Now this story is taking center stage by way of playwright Lydia Diamond's theatrical adaptation, in performance at the Huntington Theatre Company's Calderwood Pavillion. Morrison made an exception for Diamond, despite her aversion to having her works altered.

Diamond told Open Studio's Jared Bowen that the privilege and responsibility of translating *The Bluest Eye* weighed heavily on her mind. Diamond is still wrestling with the

reality that this investigation of race and class is as pertinent today as it was when it was first released in 2022. modern audiences may discover themselves in this story, she added, which is both beautiful and heartbreaking.

The Bluest Eye is set at the end of the Great Depression(1929-1939), and its effects are still felt by the characters. The Great Depression (1929-39) was the deepest and longestlasting economic downturn in the history of the Western industrialized world, By 1933, the national unemployment rate had climbed to 26.6 percent and those who did manage to find a job were underpaid. President Franklin D. Roosevelt developed the "New Deal" programs to create jobs and encourage economic recovery in the United States in the hopes of providing relief. However, the economy would not fully recover until after 1939, when World War II shifted American industry into high gear.

More than six million black individuals from the South moved to the North between 1916 and the 1960s. The Breedlove,one of the two families around which the novel rotates, like many other African Americans who flocked to Lorain and other Midwest communities, left the rural South to join this trend. Lorain, like many other northern industrial towns, was part of the "Great Migration." Following the outbreak of World War I in Europe in 1914, manufacturing cities in the North, Midwest, and West experienced a labor crisis, since the war halted the continuous flow of European immigrants to the United States.

Recruiters urged African Americans to travel north as war production ramped up, much to the dismay of white Southerners, Black newspapers ,particularly the widely read Chicago Defender, published advertisements touting the opportunities available in the cities of the North and West, Approximately 1 million blacks had fled the South by the end of 1919.

Between 1910 and 1920, the black population of major Northern cities such as New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, and Detroit rose by considerable percentages. Many newcomers

found work in factories, slaughterhouses, and foundries, where working conditions were sometimes difficult and dangerous. Many blacks ended up constructing their own cities within big cities as a result of housing pressures, supporting the formation of a new urban African-American culture. The most famous example was Harlem, a historically all-white neighborhood in New York City that by the 1920s had 200,000 African Americans.

When the country fell into the Great Depression in the 1930s, black migration slowed significantly, but resumed with the outbreak of World War II. When the Great Migration ended in 1970, the demographic impact was unmistakable: where nine out of ten black Americans lived in the South in 1900, and three out of four lived on farms, the South was home to less than half of the country's African Americans in 1970, with only 25% living in rural areas. The novel is now often taught in high schools and universities; but with its popularity comes criticism. The novel appeared on the American Library Association's "Top 10 Most Challenged Books" list as recently as 2014.

### **III.2.1.Synopsis**

The *Bluest Eye*, was written in 1970, a few years after the end of racial segregation and the gradual acquisition of civil rights by African-Americans, about the origin of the novel, morrison says that :

The novel lay in a conversation I had with a childhood friend. We had just started elementary school. She said she wanted blue eyes. I looked around to picture her with them and was violently repelled by what I imagined she would look if she had her wish. The sorrow in her voice seemed to call for sympathy, and I faked it for her, but, astonished by the desecration she proposed, I "got mad" at her instead(*The Bluest Eye* Forword)

it rotates around the story of two black families, Macteers and Breedloves. The two families are poor but the Breedlove family is worse because the MacTeers are better placed as they migrated to the industrial state Georgia in search for jobs. In the progress of the story, we travel through the traumatic life of Pecola Breedlove, and reach to the bedrock of her sufferings. Pecola, the 11 year old black girl yearns for having blue eyes because she sees herself and is considered by everyone else as an ugly girl: "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. (*The Bluest Eye* 46)

Pecola, who was raped by her father Cholly, went insane and thought she had the blue eyes she had always wanted. The standard of beauty that her peers subscribe to is represented by the white blue eyed actress, Shirley Temple. One might have difficulties in defining what beauty means, though there is no rigid and fixed definition, yet it thoroughly depends on the dominant society and on the way this society shapes and perceives such standards.

Ultimately, the supposedly inferior groups will automatically rate themselves on their ability to conform to those standards, i.e. the white beauty standards. The text describes physical beauty as an idea that has: 'originated in envy, thrived in security, and ended in disillusion.'"(*The Bluest Eye* 122) .

White is the opposite of black which means that blackness is unfavorable connotation; black is evil, black is sin. The novel was written in 1960 when the "Black is Beautiful" movement emerged. The novel starts with a prologue divided into two sections, the first one tells the story of a typical family in a beautiful house in the form of school story named Dick and Jane, while in the second one we find that the story of Dick and Jane is repeated for the second time.

### III.3.Racial Hegemony Reflected in *The Bluest Eye*

If we want to really define the word Hegemony, we need first to talk about its Greek origins from the word hegemonia which means authority or hegemon which means leader. African Americans due to their skin color were considered as the subordinate group in a white society upon whom the standard of beauty is based; having a light skin, blue eyes, slim body, fair hair,...etc. Paul C. Taylor explains the side effect of those standards on the life of blacks:” A white dominated culture has racialised beauty,[in] that it has defined beauty per se in terms of white beauty, in terms of the physical features.”(Taylor 17)

Theoretically speaking, to understand this phenomenon, Antonio Gramsci proposed the theory of hegemony as a means to understand the position between superior and inferior groups in the society. Through his theory, Gramsci meant to explain that the superior group imposes its values and norms over the inferior one without any force but rather through coercion and consent. Literary speaking, Makaryk tried to bridge society and literature using hegemony as a tool for analyzing the relation between the two, in other words, literary works are the product of society with the practices of hegemony.

On the other hand, the french philosopher Althusser in his “Ideology and Ideology State Apparatuses” describes the state as a force of repression that responds to the ruling class's commands as ideological state apparatuses ISAs and repressive state apparatuses RSAs. The former depends on the manipulation of individuals to accept certain behaviors and ideas such as: educational system, legal institutions, arts as the civilities of society, in other words, ISAs avail on the apprehension of what Du Bois has delineated as double consciousness, which is the yearning to see one’s self through the eyes of others, to ascertain what comprises allowable behavior. Consequently, when a child’s cognitive abilities are developed, ISAs set in, and forms his thought process. While the RSAs are the repressive means by which the state execute its force such as : military, police and courts.

The concept of beauty is one of these practices though beauty is something relative, the obsession of African Americans for having a white beauty standard, consequently causing harm to themselves and great alienation.

The blue eyes are the eyes through which Pecola and Pauline Breedlove, and most of the other black characters see themselves: in other words, the blue eyes symbolize the dominant group, the color through which black characters perceive themselves. According to the psychiatrist Frantz Fanon, in his book *Black Skin, White Masks*, non-white people will suffer mentally if they imitate European culture. Because white skin is equated with beauty across all media, including novels, and other outlets. Eventually When non-Europeans adopt western culture, it indicates they are reinventing themselves in the image of their former colonial rulers. Fanon argues that “Black African women are not only bleaching their skin but they also seek for white skin. ” (Fanon 29) and that “Africans living all around the world are following denegrification (Fanon 83) and they believe in whiten the race, save the race (Fanon 33).

#### **III.4.Black is Beautiful**

Despite the fact that the story takes place in 1940–1941, when the United States entered World War II, its ideological foundations are "presentist," having their roots in the 1960s, when the phrase "Black is Beautiful" first became part of the cultural lexicon.

The Black is Beautiful movement was based around a fight for an equal perception of the black body to help undo all the negative ideas brought about by a history based in white supremacy.

Stephanie M. H. Camp, "Black Is Beautiful: An American History", Morrison considered the phrase to be shallow and toxic, especially If people only care about as a way



of success, it might destabilize them. In *The Bluest Eye*, Morrison probes the phenomenon of the hegemony of white beauty standard in America and shows the backlash of such practice, and she's written about it in her 1974 *essays* "Rediscovering Black History," saying: "...when Civil Rights became Black Power, we came up with the slogan "Black Is Beautiful...., the phrase was nevertheless a full confession that white definitions were important to us ...we had convinced everybody, including ourselves, of our beauty, then, then .. . what? Things would change? We could assert ourselves? Make demands? White people presumably had no objection to killing beautiful people." Morrison was acutely aware of the interplay of race, gender, and class, as well as the extent to which African Americans were neglected and exploited by white people.

Friere has argued, "Indeed , the interests of the oppressors lie in changing the consciousness of the oppressed, not the situation which oppress them... for the more the oppressed can be led to adapt to that situation, the more easily they can be dominated"(Friere47).

One example of the intangible power of hegemony of white beauty standards is illustrated through the main character Pecola, who believes that she is an ugly girl and invisible.

Beauty is a central focus of many women. However, because the ideal of beauty is and has been mainly depicted as a woman with light skin and blue eyes, it is even more difficult for women of color to achieve this ideal than it is for white women. According to C. Taylor , "a white dominated culture has racialised beauty, in that it has defined beauty per se in terms of white beauty, in terms of the physical features that the people we consider white people are more likely to have" (Taylor17).

Therefore, in the process of trying to achieve beauty, as Taylor further argues, “the experience of a black woman differs from the experiences of ... Jewish and Irish women” (Taylor 20).

The assimilation policy was successful, and the consequences caused identity issues, An African American who was born in American territory and brought up in accordance with American values and culture was never accepted as an American and was instead labeled as the "other." African Americans are therefore compelled to create a new identity because their old one has vanished in the context of culture, society, and language, For female African Americans, this process of forming their identities became increasingly difficult. Women were physically deprived of their liberty in more severe ways than males when they traveled to another country, and they had to deal with more challenging circumstances.

This problem according to Pecola, could only be solved If she manages to have one of the white beauty standard; the blue eyes. Having blue eyes would bring equal treatment to Pecola by Americans and African Americans as well and would make of her a visible girl, an instance that intensifies Pecola’s invisibility appears at the grocery when she went to buy Mary Janes candy, and the store keeper, Mr. Yakobowski, a white immigrant, ignores her presence: “The total absence of human recognition, the glazed separateness.”( *The Bluest Eye* 36 ) Mr. Yacobowski who looms over the counter, hesitantly draws back as “he senses that he need not waste the effort of a glance. He does not see her, because for him there is nothing to see” (*The Bluest Eye* 46) It's more likely that the white storekeeper sees Pecola despite the fact that she is a child yet he ignores because she belongs to the Black race. Yacobowski's objectification of and denial of Pecola sweets serve to buffer and reinforce his whiteness because, as an immigrant, he has likely experienced discrimination. Durrant explains:

The traumatic memory of slavery and the Middle Passage opens up something resembling an internal *differend* within Morrison's work, one that marks the gap between the subjective act of narration and the traumatic experience of racial oppression in which one is the object rather than the subject in one's history. (Durant 19)

In *Black Bodies, White Gazes*, George Yancy describes this hesitant reach for money from the hands of a black girl as resignation within a "high white mediated semiotic space, his hesitation to touch her hand reduces her to an epidermal Blackness, something to be avoided" (Yancy 188). Pecola's response to his hesitant touch is inexplicable shame (*The Bluest Eye* 48), which wells up as she senses his distaste for her blackness.

The fact that the white storekeeper sees her despite the fact that she is a youngster matters less than the fact that he does because he knows she is Black. She gets racialized and branded as black right away. His whiteness, which is contrasted with blackness, influences and mediates this meeting.

Pecola is further publicly shamed as she is made to sit alone at a double desk in school where she is ignored (*The Bluest Eye* 43). At school, her teachers were trying not to look at her even though she sat in the front seat (*The Bluest Eye* 45). Her classmates avoided her and sometimes made her as an epithet to insult another student (*The Bluest Eye* 46).

This is a consequence of black's undermining their race and their strong belief that there is no beautiful race except the white one, this is shown when Geraldine teaches her son that colored people were clear and neat while niggers are dirty and loud.

Another illustration appears through Pecola's mother, Pauline Breedlove. The latter is

A black woman with small eyes set closely together under narrow forehead. The low irregular hairlines, which seemed even more irregular in contrast to the straight, heavy eyebrows which nearly met. Keen but crooked nose, with insolent nostrils...high cheekbones, and ears turned forward.( *The Bluest Eye* 38).

Pauline,embraced the ideal white beauty standards with open arms through her efforts to adjust herself with white people by dressing like them and wearing make up like them, she was absorbed by the: ‘’ cultural icons portraying physical beauty: movies, billboards, magazines, books, newspapers, window signs, dolls, and drinking cups’’(Gibson 20).

Furthermore, Pauline was happy for working to a white family and instead of providing her children with love and care, she did that to the Fosters’ children to the point that she abuses her child Pecola physically and verbally when the latter spills the blueberry pie prepared for the Fishers’ little girl as Claudia said when describing the scene:’’... with the back of her hand knocked her on 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.’’ (*The Bluest Eye* 109) “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 smoking berries, and we backed away in dread. (*The Bluest Eye* 109). It was different from the way she treated her mistress’s daughter. When her mistress’s daughter cried, Pauline would help her as soon as she could.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.” (*The Bluest Eye* 109)

The lack of self-confidence that Pauline had, affected her children negatively, she did not love her children, she treated them badly as she thought of them as unworthy of any good feelings. Consequently, creating in them a self-hatred and despise for blackness, hence

internalizing feelings of inferiority and self- contempt. This reveals that racial minorities experience trauma as a result of the cruelty inflicted by the dominant group so they themselves become oppressors, and unconsciously they reproduce the values of the hegemonic group of which they are already victims.

Another example of how worshiping whiteness and cleanliness can deform a black life is Soaphead Church. He is labeled as a type, a misanthrope (or people-hater) His mixed ancestry gives him a false sense of superiority, which he upholds with delusions of grandeur. He was raised in a family that believed their academic and intellectual achievements were due to their mixed blood, so he developed habits that distanced him from all African things. His language skills and deception have enabled him to pass himself off as a minister and faith healer. Indeed, he convinces himself that he can perform miracles and has direct access to God. His disdain for human physicality isolates and lonely him, leading him to direct his sexual impulses toward young girls.

Pecola Breedlove, however, has a one-of-a-kind request: blue eyes. Surprisingly, Soaphead finds her request logical. To him, she's a "pitifully unattractive" child, and blue eyes would help improve her appearance. He feels sorry for Pecola, but not because she has been duped into believing she is ugly; he is simply sorry that Pecola is an ugly child who is doomed to eternal ugliness due to her African features.

Maureen comes to symbolize a different kind of black family, a "high yellow dream child", as Claudia calls her, Maureen is a mulatto girl from a wealthy family. She moves to Loraine in the winter. She wears nice clothing and brings large, healthy lunches to school. She is treated with special kindness and respect by her peers, and feels she is superior to others. Maureen is thought to be a "high-level dream child with sole green eyes." Though she has

flaws, such as a "dog tooth" on the upper jaw and "sloe eyes," her fellow black students are enslaved by the white qualities she possesses.

Maureen inquires if Pecola has ever seen a man naked. Pecola replies that she has never seen her father naked. Frieda and Claudia tell Maureen to stop talking, yet Maureen keeps pressing the subject. She responds, "What do I care about her old black daddy?" Claudia reacts by inquiring as to who she is referring to as "black." Claudia shouts, "You think you're so cute!" and swings at Maureen when she says "you." When she swings, she misses Maureen and instead hits Pecola in the face. Maureen dashes away, yelling back that she is adorable. She then returns home, calling the girls "ugly, black e mos." The girls walk home after saying their goodbyes to Pecola, pondering Maureen's remarks. (*The Bluest Eye* 71)

The term 'black' was used as an insult, implying that Maureen was raised to believe that being 'black' or darker was not desirable. Despite the fact that Maureen is half black, she was taught that she was "better" than the other black children. Maureen then becomes agitated and proclaims: "I am cute! And you are ugly! Black and ugly emos. I am cute!" (*The Bluest Eye* 73.) The arrival of Maureen, a light-skinned black girl, supports the Shirley Temple cup's prior message that whiteness is lovely and blackness is repulsive. Maureen also emphasizes the link between race and class by being lighter-skinned and richer than the other black kids.

The novel's race issue is complicated by Maureen's arrival. Maureen demonstrates that whiteness is a spectrum that is defined not only by skin tone, but also by class, education, and family. The way her peers treat her demonstrates that the black community has largely accepted the values of the oppressive white culture, just as Pecola has. Yet, Claudia describes how she and Frieda feel after fighting with Maureen: "And all the time we knew that Maureen Peal was not the Enemy and not worthy of such intense hatred. The Thing to fear was the Thing that made her beautiful, and not us."

Morrison's condemnation of a particular form of internalized racism and middle-class scorn for the impoverished is reflected through another black female character named Geraldine, who stresses on decorum and cleanliness. The worship of whiteness is related to cleanliness throughout the book, and Geraldine's loathing of dirt and disorder is essentially linked to her hatred of "niggers" and, of course, is a form of self-hatred. Because she despises her own blackness, she scapegoats poor, dark-skinned black children—in this case, Pecola. Fear fuels this scapegoating: fear of not being able to tell the difference between respectable "colored" people and "niggers," and fear of the agony she sees in the eyes of black girls like Pecola.

### **III.5.Racism Internalization through Education**

#### **III.5.1.Dick and Jane's textbooks**

Dick and Jane exposes the perverted standards and circumstances that have been placed on people by society and that have been encouraged by the school system. In his work *"Racism and Appearance in The Bluest Eye"* Jerome Bump underlines the importance of education in shaping children's thinking methods, which will define their behavior and cognitive structures in response to events and concepts (Bump 148).

The Dick and Jane, originally published between 1930 and 1965, is a series of textbooks, that were primarily created to teach children how to read based on a "look-say", texts and illustrations for the Dick and Jane primers were intended to work together to help young readers understand the story. The texts introduced a repetitive pattern of words, the illustrations provided visual reinforcements to help convey the meaning of the words, but they are more than just a collection of words and phrases; they tell a tale and express a specific narrative.

The fact that this primer was frequently taught in public schools back then in the United States of America must be noted; as a result, children there inadvertently learned what "the norm" for an American was from an early age. Those who did not fit this description felt cut off from society since they were subtly persuaded that they did not fit the stereotype of an American. Critics of the Dick and Jane readers began to point out biases, class, gender, implicit discrimination, and flaws in content and illustrations in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Characters of color do not appear in the series until 1965 (the final year of new Dick and Jane books). This is in response to the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and during second-wave feminism

The novel opens with three iterations of the same excerpts from the Dick and Jane reader to create an epigraph. Then comes an introduction in which Claudia, Pecola's childhood friend, is introduced as the main narrator. Then there are four seasonal sections, each recounted by Claudia in the first person, and seven primer sections that track other protagonists.

The first iteration is grammatically correct: "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..."(*The Bluest Eye* 1) the second one, however; is written without any punctuation marks which makes of it a less comprehensible passage: "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..."(*The Bluest Eye* 1) while in the last one all the letters run together without any separation: "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..."(*The Bluest Eye* 1)



The first perfect passage indicates the white people with ideal house and ideal life, this version correlate to the fisher family. The second one indicates the unattainability of white standards by black people and those who cannot identify with white ideals are subsequently the others, this excerpts correlate to the McTeers, and the last excerpt that correlate to the Breedloves who has no room available for them within a white society and this is clearly shown in the last excerpt were all letters are attached to each other.

Every element that makes up the primer has been chosen in opposition to anything that might have suggested the presence of African-Americans, implying that their very existence was not worthy of representation. This perfectly illustrates how black characters are neither given a place nor a voice in this idealized image of America.

The Dick and Jane mandates a system which ranks individuals in order of power and importance, Smith Valerie states: " ...it also serves as an ironic comment on a society which educates and unconsciously socializes its children like Pecola with callous regard for the cultural richness and diversity of its people." Everything is effected by racism, because of the educational system. Pecola and all the black children are mistreated in school by their peers. as the following quotation shows: " ... long hours she sat looking in the mirror, trying to discover the secret of ugliness that made her ignored or despised at school...she was the only member of her class who sat alone at a double desk... her teachers never tried never to glance at her." (*The Bluest Eye* 45). This clearly shows that the educational system has an important role in exercising hegemony and oppressing the victims to make them internalize the white standards voluntarily.

Toni Morrison tackled the latent racial doctrine dangers exposed by educational literacy texts. A Dick and Jane story appeared in each chapter of *The Bluest Eye* novel. The white family's cohesiveness is portrayed in Dick and Jane's story. In two stories, Morrison

juxtaposed white and black existence. The characters in *The Bluest Eye's* black circumstances contrasted with the white characters. According to Werrlein (2005), the depiction of the "Dick and Jane narrative" is an imbedded type of satire regarding the common discrimination towards black children. The narrative is attempting to indoctrinate African Americans and their descendants, It was designed to dampen the black community's will to fight and to present stereotypical threats. In the story, Toni Morrison interpreted Pecola's misfortunes, such as being bullied, isolated from classmates, and intimidated by the teacher.

Morrison implicitly opposed the doctrine of educational literacy which was reflected in the story "Dick and Jane". In each chapter of *The Bluest Eye*, she included a bit of Dick and Jane's story. On the one hand, the Dick and Jane story depicted a happy white family; on the other hand, the Breedlove family had a difficult life. Morrison stated that Dick and Jane's story had harmed the black community's dignity.

### **III.6. Intergenerational Trauma**

Of the many issues that enslaved Africans and their descendants have faced and continue to face today is "multigenerational trauma with continued oppression and absence of opportunity to access the benefits available in the society" (DeGruy121).

Intergenerational trauma refers to trauma that is passed down through generations. Other terms for the same concept include transgenerational trauma and multigenerational trauma. People who have been exposed to intergenerational trauma may experience emotional and psychological symptoms as a result of the trauma experienced by previous generations. If a parent was abused as a child or experienced adverse childhood experiences, the effects of that trauma will be passed down through generations and thus influence parenting.

Intergenerational trauma can also be the result of oppression, such as racial trauma or other forms of systemic oppression. It is therefore essential to comprehend intergenerational trauma, acknowledge the impact of what the parents, grandparents, ancestors..etc. went through that resulted in their maltreatment of their own families, Linda O'Neill, a trauma specialist, asserts that "The core of intergenerational or historical trauma is the ripple effect of victimization where the systemic effect of personal trauma often extends beyond the actual victim and can have a profound effect on the lives of significant others" (O'Neil 174)

In her last collection of essays, 2019's *The Source of Self-Regard*, Morrison says :

Certain kinds of trauma visited on peoples are so deep, cruel, that unlike money, unlike vengeance, even unlike justice, or rights, or the goodwill of others, only writers can translate such trauma and turn sorrow into meaning, sharpening the moral imagination. A writer's life and work are not a gift to mankind; they are its necessity.  
Israel Daramola August 6, 2019.

The novel's protagonists, Pecola and other characters namely her parents, to a certain extent, suffer from individual and communal trauma, expressing complicated trauma symptoms. Pecola's trauma is the result of family divarication and community rejection, her father Cholly is psychologically damaged as a result of his early tragic experience, Although Morrison has been criticized of absolving Cholly of responsibility, she is only providing insight into the situations that led to his behavior. The only one who was able to comprehend the misery of the constant, pervasive, and intrusive white civilization was, he never took his frustrations out on the white people who ridiculed him.

### III.6.1. Pauline Breedlove

while her mother Paulie is traumatized by family violence and community disdain. Both parents are doomed to fail, as they proved throughout the novel their inability in requesting a true identity and integrating their past with their present, yet they only transferred hatred and self-loath to their own children, The young girl's self-hatred comes as no surprise because she is extremely similar to her mother Pauline, who is so attracted by Hollywood films that she attempts (and fails) to look like the white women she sees on the screen by copying their haircut: "There I was, five months pregnant, trying to look like Jean Harlow, and a front tooth gone." (*The Bluest Eye* 96) Pauline, while each trauma causes her to experience an identity crisis, she embarks on a journey to find an identity in order to overcome her trauma. In doing so, she ends by dissimilating herself from her own family in an attempt to assimilate within a white society.

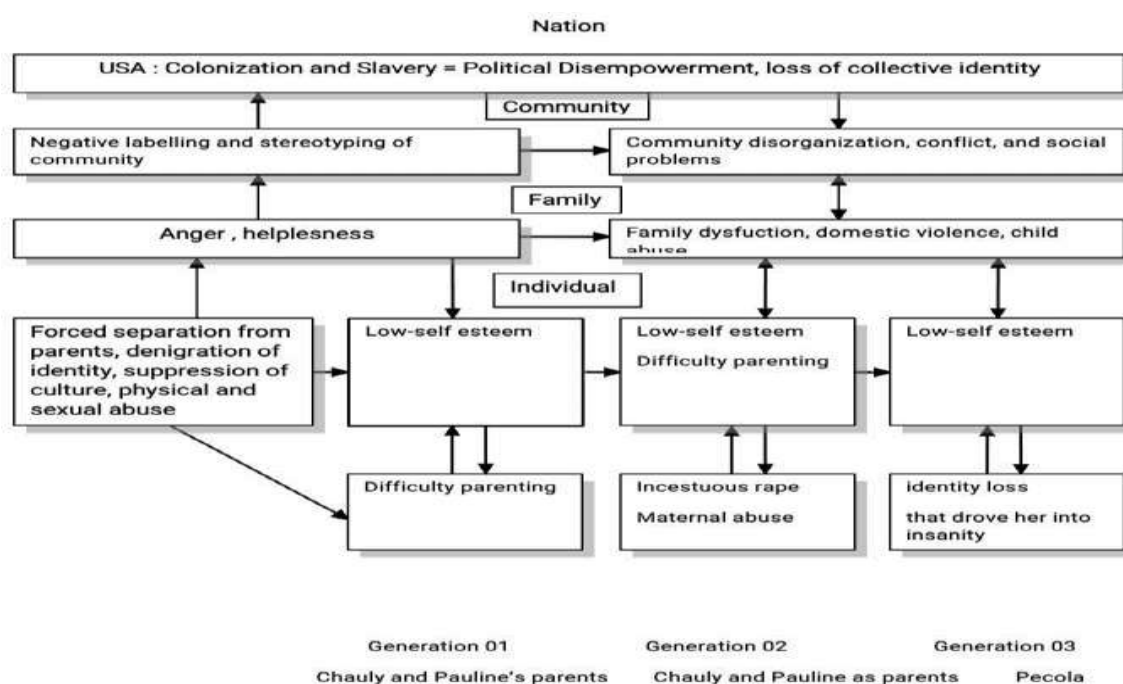
### III.6.2. Cholly Breedlove

Cholly, on the other hand drinks excessively and abuses his daughter sexually shifts back and forth between the protagonist's father efforts to internalize those horrific events from his own past and the more difficult process of healing the scar of African American history which has always been ruled by prejudice as discussed by Christelle Ha Soon, in her article *Silencing the Minority in Toni Morrison's The Bluest Eye* that Instead of retaliating against white people, black characters end up abusing members of their own community.

Pecola's parents go from being victims to becoming tormentors by abusing one another and hurting their kids. The majority uses the divisive disputes of black people pitting themselves against one another to keep control over the minority and prevent it from gaining power. When the dominated cannot deploy their "latent force" against the dominators, they misdirect it on their own people, which strengthens rather than weakens their enemies.

Individual identity is said to be negotiated within the collectively shared past. Thus, while there is always a unique, biographical memory to draw upon, it is described as being rooted in a collective history. Here collective memory provides the individual with a cognitive map within which to orient present behavior (Eyerman 65)

**III.7.Graph 02 : Transgenerational Transmission of Historical Trauma**  
 uploaded by **Laurence J. Kirmayer**



**III.7.1.Discussion**

A person who has been colonized is regarded as inferior by the dominant groups, when an actual colonial regime has ceased to exist, the self loath internalization continues to grow, as the colonized has adopted the diametrically opposed values of the colonizer. Laura

Brown argues that many conventional images and understandings of trauma have been overly narrow and constructed within the experiences and realities of society's dominant groups (Brown 102)

Brown considers both the social context in which a person lives and their own experience within that context when analyzing psychic trauma in order to : "include as traumatic stressors all of the everyday repetitive, interpersonal events that are so often the sources of psychic pain for women" (Brown108).

In *The Bluest Eye*, an omniscient narrator (who must be distinguished from Claudia) exposes the reader to the Cholly's biography before revealing the incestuous rape, emphasizing attention one incident that seems to have moulded not only his life but his family's.

When he was a young boy, two white males interrupted his first sexual encounter with the black girl Darlene by holding a gun to his head and threatening him. In response, the terrified Cholly says "Sir" and tries to follow instructions. Eventually, violence and disgrace will eternally tarnish Cholly's sexuality, and a displacement of sexuality will continue to appear later on his innocent young daughter ,There stood two white men. One with a spirit lamp, the other with a flashlight. There was no mistake about their being white ; he could smell it. Cholly jumped, trying to kneel, stand,and get his pants up all in one motion. The men had long guns...the other raced the flashlight all over Cholly and Darlene : "

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

"Sir ? said Cholly, trying to find a buttonhole.

"I said, get on wid it. An' make it good, nigger,make it good."(*The Bluest Eye* 146)

In this regard Dr. Brave Heart , an associate professor of psychiatry, found that Trauma brought on by unresolved sadness, anguish from being denied one's rights, and unresolved internalized injustice may persist for many generations, as it happened with Cholly, the time he was trying to prove his masculinity, whites emasculated him but he never dared reacting against them : “never did he once consider directing his hatred toward the hunters. Such an emotion would have destroyed him.”(*The Bluest Eye* 148) instead his hatred was transferred to Darlene : ‘ he hated her. He almost wished he could do it-hard, long, and painfully, he hated her so much.’(*The Bluest Eye* 146) “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 flashlight”( *The Bluest Eye* 149)

This hatred is later transferred to his wife, more so after he lost the traditional male roles of protector and provider, which changed the dynamics of the family and caused the male to take on the oppressor position, to his daughter and to his son. In his essay *Black Skin, White Masks*, Fanon explains that oppressed people instead of reacting and fighting their oppressors, they simply inherit and repeat their traumatic experience on someone who is lower in the social hierarchy than themselves, which is in this case, Cholly's daughter ; Pecola. According to DeGruy,

There is a phenomenon known as "survivor syndrome" or "survivor guilt" that relates to persons who have survived a catastrophic experience over others. Stress, self-doubt, increased anger, and numerous psychological and interpersonal interaction issues with family members and others are among the symptoms (Burrowes 15).

As related to the above chart, the Nation which is the USA, has already oppressed blacks physically and psychologically, hunted them, sold them as if they were animals,

starting from the 16th century, with African enslavement in the Americas, and ending with the ratification of the Thirteenth Amendment and emancipation in 1865. Following emancipation, there were another 100 years of institutionalized slavery thanks to the passing of the Jim Crow laws and the Black Codes, which have continued to traumatize subsequent generations.

In her book "Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome – America's Legacy of Enduring Injury and Healing" Dr. DeGruy argues that low self-esteem, continued rage, and internalized racist ideas are some of the symptoms of intergenerational psychological trauma among African Americans that are brought on by the experience of slavery in the United States paired with ongoing oppression and prejudice. David Aberbach writes in *Surviving Trauma* that "trauma can damage a survivor's power to fantasize, severely reducing spontaneity and originality, the cessation of feelings; survivors frequently deny all sectors of emotion which are locked off in response to Trauma" is the defense against feelings that threaten to overwhelm (Aberbach 9)

The "reason" provided by the story for Cholly Breedlove raping his own daughter most emphatically demonstrates the connection between racism and rape. An omniscient narrator takes care to establish the perpetrator's biography before exposing the reader to the incestuous rape, paying particular attention to one incident that seemed to have defined his life in its severe racial humiliation.

In his book *Trauma and Race*, George Sheldon, states that African American identity is conflicted due to the terrible legacy of slavery. While this identity is charged with representing a people engaged in a continuous battle for social equality, the idea of race itself, which underpins this identity, exposes the African American subject to both racism and the suffering that results from this past, for African Americans, race has become a problematic component of identity. The primary function of race in American culture is to mediate a relationship to what we might refer to as a transhistorical jouissance of the past—a



traumatizing excess of pleasure and pain that originates from slavery—in order to organize both personal identity and the larger American social sphere, slavery is therefore a term that denotes a period of history when white Americans could manipulate the pleasures and sufferings of being human. (Sheldon 13)

Rape, therefore, serves to highlight how humiliation is passed down through generations, beginning with the white nation that subjected black people to slavery, torture, and even rape, followed by the community who handed the practice on to the subjugated, whose minds are still colonized, and in response, turned this rage and hatred toward their families, which is exactly the case with the breedloves, where the father represents the reemergence of structures of enjoyment that link individuals to both racist ideas and actions, African Americans suffer the trauma of slavery repeatedly as a result of the conceptual connection between their identity and this past.

For African Americans, race facilitates a psychoanalytic repetition process that causes them to experience the Real's psychic trauma once more. Therefore, maintaining that slavery has left behind a historical legacy that is both cognitive and psychical.

### **III.7.2. Incestuous Rape and Paternal Abuse**

Rebecca Degler has shown that *The Bluest Eye* is represented “an ugly or deformed person was chosen to take upon himself all the evils which afflicted the community” and was then sexually abused and killed

Incest, refers to a sexual activity between people in a consanguineous relations (blood relations), or between those related by affinity, step family or adoption. Children and even adults depend on their parents or caregivers because for them they are the primary source for security and love, the patriarchy has it that women and girls are weak and need protection, that

can be provided only by men who are themselves the perpetrators of aggression towards them.

As a child Pecola has been subjected to abuse by both her parents be it mother or father, the theme of child abuse is fully described throughout the novel and how it causes trauma to the self and might lead the victim to insanity.

Toni Morrison displays "...the emotional violence heaped, upon children by parents as a special concern" (Bloom13). Pecola is the representative of both psychologically and physically abused girl." *The Bluest Eye* delineates how Pecola is repeatedly exposed to psychological violation, and how physical violation completes the psychological destruction" (Kubitschek 30).

The World Health Organization defines child abuse as:"all forms of physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment." Rape is among the many sensitive issues tackled in the novel, with incestuous rape being the primary focus in the novel and how destructive it is to a child. Prior to this novel there was "no major treatment of incest in literature before" (Barnes 3).

Robin Field, explores in his work entitled: "*Writing the Survivor* " that "The Bluest Eye" inaugurates a new genre of American fiction called the rape novel, most depictions of rape in American fiction before 1970 showed the offender delighted in the violence and anguish he inflicted upon women. Instead, the rape novel depicts rape as a violent crime that causes physical and psychological harm to the victim-survivor. By focusing on the victim of the violence rather than the perpetrator. The novel presents a disturbing account of Pecola being raped by her father Cholly, who himself had a traumatic life starting with his abandonment by his mother when he was only four days old.

Cholly's mother left him to die by railroad tracks then his aunt Jimmy ,with her female friends who heap affection onto him, raised him until she died."Abandoned in a junk heap by

his mother, rejected for a crap game by his father, there was nothing more to lose. He was alone with his own perceptions and appetites, and they alone interested him” (BE160).

Cholly was also rejected by the man he believed to be his father, this would ultimately make of him a free man, a man who does not have anything to lose, ‘’ this type of freedom is what allowed him to turn to his daughter out of a confused longing for what is missing in his life’’(*The Bluest Eye* 120).

Morrison devotes two chapters of the book to Pecola's parents' formative and disastrous moments, exhibiting how their experiences as sexual abuse victims and minorities in racist environments are transferred and absorbed by Pecola, Cholly imposed sexual shame on his daughter in order to control her and relieve his feelings of inadequacy. The way Morrison narrates Cholly's childhood makes the reader sympathetic to him the backstory of Cholly explains the anger that stems from his failure to communicate pain, he never knew how to look after his family or how to provide them with love since he never experienced any kind of such bond or love due to all the traumas inflicted upon him; abandonment, emasculation he achieved a negative form of freedom and fatal form of love, the love he provided his daughter with when he decided to give her something of himself, and touch her in a wrong way. “the traumatic event is not assimilated or experienced fully at the time, but only belatedly, in its repeated possession of the one who experiences it” (Freed1)

According to Chasshot, Morrison's term of rememory, in which the prefix denotes both recurrence and revision, illustrates the "tension between a compulsive return to and return of historical traumas and a creative engagement with the past" (Chasshot 27)

Cholly, ruins the innocence of his daughter, and reduces her to a mere object that is made even weaker under his destructive force. Objectified and sexually abused, Pecola is not only impregnated by her father, but later suffers a miscarriage.

To be sure, the onus of Pecola's negativity rests initially with her family's failure to provide the socialization, identity, love, and security that are essential to healthy growth and development. The emptiness of her parents' lives and their own negative self images are particularly hurtful. Their perception of themselves as ugly isolates them further, offering evidence of self-hatred. This self-hatred is the most destructive element in their lives; the central element they lack is self-love. (Samuel 13)

Pecola, falls prey to the sadistic gaze of her father, Cholly Breedlove, he rapes his daughter and impregnates her twice, and no one would ever defend her or support her emotionally, she only received hatred from both communities, black and white, for carrying her father's child even her mother, the person who is supposed to be the closest one to her, neglected her complaints. Pecola dealt with the pain her father brought in a different way. "She struggled between an overwhelming desire that one would kill the other, and a profound wish that she herself could die" (*The Bluest Eye* 43)

In addition to Cholly, Soaphead appears to be another perpetrator of child sexual abuse, a pedophile, who declares himself as a "Reader, Advisor, and Interpreter of Dreams" who Pecola asks to give her blue eyes: "...He abhorred flesh on flesh. Body odor, breath odor, overwhelmed him. .. all the natural excretions and protections the body was capable of – disquieted him. His attentions therefore gradually settled on those humans whose bodies were least offensive – children..., and since little boys were insulting, scary, and stubborn, he further limited his interests to little girls.. (*The Bluest Eye* 166-167)

Lacan's clinical analysis of perversion aids in demonstrating how Soaphead's rejection of the Law of the Father structures his pursuit of jouissance, of "getting off" on his violations of social norms by sexually abusing girls. Soaphead's belief that he has the right to offend and

violate his victims stems from his belief that his white heritage exempts him from the law. This perversity theory can help us understand the persistence of white supremacy by using a psychoanalytic framework that takes into account the difficulty of changing irrational beliefs that are sustained by sexual drives. Soaphead Church, was raised in a mixed-blood family. His family has a long history of academic and political ambition, as well as corruption.

Family members have always attempted to marry other light-skinned people and, if unsuccessful, married one another. Soaphead Church's father was a sadistic schoolteacher, and his half-Chinese mother died shortly after his birth.

Soaphead married a woman named Velma, but she left him two months afterward. Soaphead is still hurt by Velma's rejection, who left him "the way people leave a hotel room." In a letter to God, he expresses his affection for young girls' newly developing breasts (he is a pedophile). He recalls Doreen and Sugar Babe, two girls who let him touch them in exchange for money and sweets. He informs God that he did not touch Pecola and boasts that he has outdone God by fulfilling her wish. Soaphead, molested more girls than Cholly did: I gave them mints, money, and they'd eat ice cream with their legs open while I played with them. ” (*The Bluest Eye* 181)

As we progress through the novel, we meet the primary characters and discover exactly how nasty Morrison's male characters can be.

### **III.7.3. Henry Washington**

Also called Mr. Henry is another sexual predator. He is a boarder at the MacTeer residence. He has a reputation for being a quiet, hardworking man. He is amicable with the MacTeer girls, but this friendliness masks an underlying and perverse element of his nature that is centered on young girls, this is clearly revealed when Mr. Henry tricks Claudia and

Frieda into touching his body. This scene foreshadows Mr. Henry's attraction to young girls, which is reinforced later when he assaults Frieda.

Mr. Henry makes sexual advances at eleven-year-old Frieda by touching her breasts, Frieda fled from the house to seek her parents in the garden, where she alerted them of the incident. When she returned to the house with her parents, Henry had vanished. They waited for Mr. Henry to return, and when he did, Mr. MacTeer hurled a tricycle at his head, knocking him off the porch, and Mrs. MacTeer attacked him with a broom.

### **III.7.4. Maternal Abuse**

The blacks have suffered due to their status in society, as a poor, marginal group. The black women, like the black men were also working women. The black women had to work on plantation farms as laborers and also as —mammys or maids in the kitchens of the white households. They were generally looked upon as menials (Seraman 38).

The concept of motherhood as explained by Adrienne Rich in his book : *Motherhood as Experience and Institution* is both: an experience and an institution, Determined by who exercises authority. Experience, or the aspects that include love and pain are possessed by mothers themselves, while the social institution of motherhood according to Rich is much less individualized, and women's growth is limited and confined to mere nurters, hence motherhood when turned into a social and historical institution is subsumed by patriarchal control.

The day Pecola was born was one of Pauline's major life problems, Pauline represents the bad image of the bad mother, it is commonly agreed that the black woman is the binary opposite to what is known as good woman, which is usually the Euro-American, according to Jordan-Zachary the good woman is the one who stays at home and looks after her family, and

unfortunately this can never be the case with a black woman who needs to financially support her husband and nurture her kids, therefore she cannot attain respectability or embody the definition of the good woman.

Pauline and Cholly as parents and due to the isolation and trauma that life had imposed on them could do nothing to their children but affecting their lives negatively. Pecola has inherited the insecurities of her parents, her father is abandoned soon after birth by his mother, and by his father as well even before his birth, he has no ability to identify his ancestral part, his great aunt told him that his mother threw him on the junk heap before giving him a name and before even completing his nine days.

Like Cholly, Pauline, experiences another forms of humiliation. She was fired by a white employer and treated as an animal when she was giving birth to Pecola, by white doctors, when the doctor tells a group of students that black women are like horses and they do not feel pain so she starts to treat her daughter Pecola with the same contempt. Feeling humiliated by her broken tooth and lame leg, in addition the violent relationship with her husband confirms her belief about her ugliness and that romantic love is reserved for the beautiful ones.

Pauline resents her family for such life. Pauline failed to provide her daughter with solace when she told her that she has been raped by her father, instead she beats her and almost killed her, Pecola informs Mrs. Breedlove of the incident of rape, yet after her negligence, Pecola must now understand the futility of trying to communicate with Mrs. Breedlove since she does not want to hear and does not want to believe.

As a result, Pecola doesn't tell anybody about Cholly's second rape; instead, she enters her own little realm of quiet and lunacy. Pecola's self "becomes fractured and crazed that she has invented an imaginary buddy and has dialogues with herself. when Pecola complains to

her imaginary friend she says: "... why didn't you tell Mrs. Breedlove? I did tell her. I don't mean the first time. I mean the second time when you were sleeping on the coach...she didn't even believe me when I told her.'" (*The Bluest Eye* 36).

In her essay "*In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens*," Walker describes how a black woman was seen ever since the times of slavery: "Black women are called, in the folklore that so aptly identifies one's status in society, 'the mule of the world,' because we have been handed the burdens that everyone else—everyone else—refused to carry." Walker adds that they have also been called "Matriarchs," "Superwomen," "Mean and Evil Bitches," "Castraters," or "Sapphire's Mama. She depicts the harsh situation faced by African American women, stating that they are who they are as a result of the hardship they have been through. The fact that Pauline is constantly oppressed forces her to become violent toward her own kids and her self-hatred makes her resembles The Matriarch and the Mammy; as discussed in the first chapter are sexist images of black women, created to exclude black women from society.

During the time of slavery, racial caricatures were created and disseminated, particularly through minstrel shows, which is how the Mammy stereotype originated. Black women who were in slavery worked as domestic servants with great competence and showed their masters unwavering loyalty by providing care and advice. The mammy icon according to Jordan-Zachery is kind, loving and non-threatening, so that white families can accept black women as workers for them. She is not burdened by her work for the white family, instead she proves to be loving and caring: "cold and callous, even neglectful of her own children and family while being overly solicitous toward Whites" (Billings 89). Ladson Billings equates the character of the Mammy as being similar to the character of "Aunt Jemima," who is the iconic maternal figure on the pancake box (Billings 89).



While the matriarch according to Danial Moynihan as published in his 1965 paper entitled "The Negro Family," in which he made the claim that the economic deprivation and poor social status of black people were caused by the matriarch's incapacity, hiding the underlying societal inequalities in terms of both politics and economics, simply because black women were too feisty and negligent in their responsibilities, notably in taking care of their children. (Moynihan39-124) Report.

while hooks explains:

The matriarchy myth was used to discredit black women and men. Black women were told that they had overstepped the bonds of femininity because they worked outside the home to provide economic support for their families and that by doing so they had de-masculinized black men. Black men were told that they were weak, effeminate, and castrate because 'their' women were laboring at menial jobs. (Hooks 75) she adds "Few black women, even in homes where no men are present, see themselves as adopting a 'male' role' (Hooks73)

An incident in the novel illustrates the two images, when Mrs. Pauline is at work collecting laundry , Pecola accidentally knocks over a blueberry cobbler, her mother hits her and calls her a crazy fool before she goes to comfort the Fisher girl" who were they, Polly? Don't worry none, baby."She whispered and the honey in her words complemented the sundown spilling on the lake."(*The Bluest Eye* 85).

Pauline was called Polly by the Fisher's girl while her daughter only called her Mrs. Breedlove, this signals mother's preference for the white girl. Hooks states that this stereotypical image was designed to epitomize:" the ultimate sexist-racist vision of ideal black womanhood-complete submission to the will of white."(Hooks 84). While Hill Collins states that this image of the mammy was created to justify exploitation of house slaves.

Polly's strong desire to be like white women is destined to failure thus she becomes more violent and therefore, she is the angry black woman or the Matriarch or what is known as violent and outspoken and a male-like. Critic Gurleen Grewal writes:

Surely the novel goes well beyond replicating stereotypes, the black man as rapist (Cholly Breedlove), the black woman as mammy (Pauline Breedlove), or the black Family as fragmented. Rather, in confronting those stereotypes, it goes to the heart Of the matter: to the race based class structure of American society that generates its own pathologies.(Bloom118)

Polly works for a white family whose house is described by the narrator as a beautiful white mansion with many flowers in a wheelbarrow, the one that Polly considers as her own house. When the white family's girl sees Polly wearing a white uniform at work she describes her as beautiful and glowing. The white uniform symbolizes the whiteness that Polly embodies and her belonging to the white family. When Frieda and Claudia were eeking liquor, which the girls mistakenly believe will "eat up" fat "They went in search for Pecola, as "Her father is often drunk and she'll be able to obtain some for us." They track her down in Lake Shore Park, where her mother, Pauline, works for the Fisher family, a white family. They see Pauline inflict a lifetime of hatred on her daughter after Pecola drops a pan of blueberry cobbler on her young legs, severely burning them.

"The familiar violence rose in me. Her calling Mrs. Breedlove Polly, when even Pecola called her mother Mrs.Breedlove seemed reason enough to scratch her."(BE 82) The Fishers' daughter is loved and comforted by Pauline, who is cruel and rough with her own daughter. They're well aware that Pauline's own youngster is in desperate need of comfort. When her daughter, Pecola, accidentally drops the blueberry pie on the floor, she unconsciously screams: "my floor, and starts beating her daughter."( *The Bluest Eye* 107)

Mrs Breedlove's aggressive reaction to her daughter is now revealed in front of the white girl, this aggressiveness or the Matriarch image for white people is similar to a watchdog who is supposed to protect his owners from outsiders, in Polly's case, she is supposed to protect the white family from dangerous black people. The matriarch Polly, fails at being a true woman, she acts as a man and ends up driving her male partner off and this is due to the fact that black women are not financially secure which is a condition for a matriarchy to exist, in this regard Jordan-Zachery write:" but the Matriarch goes beyond being responsible for the failure of the man in her life to being responsible for the failure of her entire family. Why? Because she is both: Sapphire and a mother along the lines of Mammy." (Zachery 42)

Polly, is non-chalant about the side effects of her fights with her husband on her children Sammy and Pecola. The boy, Sammy, run away from home twenty seven times and one time he stayed away three months. His sister, Pecola, on the other hand was raped by her father and because she is a girl she cannot run away as her brother did, she keeps having morbid phantasies about her death and her parent's as well, but Polly remains indifferent and violent to them to ease her own pain, in this regard Amanda Putnam writes that violence is a way:" to refuse socialized gender and racial identities that attempt to constraint them" she adds:" violence is merely a rejection of the oppression that they suffer.

By acting out their frustrations of being handed this cloak of ugliness, black women redefine themselves as compellingly dominant women." In other words, the blame for black women's actions is to be put on the American society.

The trauma that black women experience is caused not only by society, but also by their families, both physically and mentally. Black slaves were considered the private property of slave owners during the era of slavery. The rape of female slaves not only satisfied their sexual desire, but also served as a means of increasing their property.

Furthermore, the children born to female slaves remained slaves and the property of the owners. In turn, black men transferred the oppression, rage, and violence inflicted on them by white men to their wives and children. As a result, black women faced double oppression and suffered serious physical and mental harm

Morrison believes that racism has destructive effects on the lives of black people who are obsessed with the American standards of beauty that lead to their self-hatred, in this regard Susan Willis states:” the concept of physical beauty as a virtue is one of the dumbest, most pernicious and destructive ideas of the western world (Morrison Quotes) .

Geraldine, a black female character from a small, rural town in the South, is another black female character. She pays careful attention to her appearance and clothing. She attends a land-grant university and learns how to execute the job that has been assigned to her, caring for and feeding white people, with grace and good manners. She marries and bears the children of a man who trusts her to look after his home and his belongings. She is, nevertheless, a tyrant in her own house. She solely has affection for the household cat, who has black fur and blue eyes and is as neat and quiet as she is.

She rubs and cuddles the cat in a way that she refuses to do with her own son Junior who eventually became sadistic and cruel, especially toward the cat, Instead of directing her rage at the overt racism, Geraldine, directs it at her own family through her coldness. Meanwhile, she misdirects her affectionate tendencies toward the family pet, her son Junior, who despises his mother for her coldness, directs his rage at the cat and Pecola.

“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 quiet; niggers were dirty and loud... 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”

Unlike Mrs. Breedlove, and Geraldine, Mrs. MacTeer loves her daughters fiercely, when her daughter Claudia, the narrator fell sick she remained by her side looking after her. Though the MacTeer’s family live in almost the same bad conditions as the Breedloves Describing their lives Claudia says:”being a minority in both caste and class, we moved about 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.”( *The Bluest Eye* 17) despite their poverty McTeers family succeeds in sharing love and warmth. Brought up in such a family ,Mrs. MacTeer proves to be a loving mother and harsh at the same time, this balance of emotions has made her daughters:Frieda and Claudia strong and confident while Pecola who receives nothing but neglect from her mother ended up insane. As Claudia says, to be put outdoors by a landlord was unfortunate but to be put oneself outdoors or to put one’s own kin outdoors was criminal.

In this context, Fulton writes:” the crucial difference that enables Claudia to challenge white ideological values while Pecola is systematically destroyed by them is the degree of stability and self-love fostered within their home environment.”(Fulton 32-33) She adds:” Claudia learns to love herself, and defy white ideology, by her mother. Claudia tries to teach Pecola to also love herself but it is unfortunately too late.”(Fulton 33). Claudia, unlike Frieda, picks up some rebellious views against racism and classism, “I destroyed white baby dolls. But the dismembering of dolls was not the true horror.

The truly horrifying thing was the transference of the same impulses to little white girls .What made people look at them and say, “Awwwww,” but not for me? (*The Bluest Eye* 22) But for Pecola nothing could brace against classism and racism – neither parental care nor her self-understanding. Pecola finds temporary respite, maternal care and love

With three prostitutes namely Poland, China and Maginot Line. They live on the principle that life is a matter of adaptation and survival rather than resignation and death.

The reader might come to the conclusion that even though the two families are black, and poor but the Breedloves are not emotionally connected like the MacTeers who share the responsibility of parenting with each other. Cholly never supports his wife Polly, she instead acts as a mother and a father while her husband is always drunk and abusive, this lack of familial love shows the irony of the Breedlove's family name who never breed love to each other and end up internalizing self-hatred and become delusional and dissatisfied with their sense of self and ultimately Pecola's descent into madness.

### **III.8. Pecola's Anxiety and coping mechanism**

The pathology of trauma was founded in the 1870s by Jean Martin Charcot, whose first research subject was hysteria. Sigmund Freud expands on Jean-Martin Charcot's theory, pointing out that hysteria is a condition of psychological trauma, and that something that was unbearably traumatic in the past leads to patients' inability to relate to reality. When the patient makes traumatic memories reappear by talking and expressing the resulting intense emotion, the symptoms can be alleviated, which is the source of "talk therapy".

Freud referred to the general decline in mental function and mental dysfunction caused by serious accidents as traumatic neurosis in his book: *Beyond The Pleasure Principle*. Freud considered post-traumatic stress symptoms as the result of widespread destruction of the protective barrier.

The environment in which a person lives can either stifle or encourage these struggles. Disturbing people's feelings can stem from a variety of sources, including fathers, mothers, social relationships, inferiority, rights, ...etc. On the basis of Freud's trauma theory analysis,

the American scholar Cathy Caruth, who coined the term trauma theory, has further thought about psychological trauma. In her book: *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative and History* she defines Trauma theory as "a sudden, disastrous, unavoidable experience," and people's reactions to the event are frequently delayed, uncontrollable, and repeated through hallucinations or other intrusions she adds on Trauma: "the response to an unexpected or overwhelming violent event or events that are not fully grasped as they occur, but return later in repeated flashbacks, nightmares and other repetitive phenomena."(Caruth 91)

Cathy concretely analyzed psychological trauma through this definition. as the process of revealing reality or truth through narration The awakening of the individual of these different stories demonstrates a simple decoding of the past trauma theory through separation, breakdown, and anxiety. An important founder of trauma theory, Judith Herman, believes that "the recovery of trauma is based on the regaining of victims' rights and the establishment of new social relationships, thus Reviewing trauma and then understanding trauma is an important part of trauma treatment.

Dori Laub and Judith Herman, two well-known trauma theorists and therapists, both believe that one cannot face trauma alone and that recovery is only possible "through establishing new relationships." Then in this way can the traumatized establish a safe living environment and restore psychological needs such as confidence, stability, affection, and identity. And this is applicable to Pecola who creates an imaginary friend, someone who will listen to her ramblings about her new blue eyes as her mother is always absent and angry :

My Mother's anger humiliates me; her words chafe my cheeks, and I am crying. I do not know that she is not angry at me, but at my sickness. I believe she despises my weakness for letting the sickness "take hold". By and by I will not get sick; I will

refuse to. But for now I am crying. I know I am making more snot, but I can't stop.

*(The Bluest Eye 9)*

Pecola attempted to seek refuge in a fantasy world as a means of coping with her inability to cope with struggle and pain. Her fictitious world is a survival strategy. That is why, when she questions her alter ego about why she did not arrive earlier, it responds: "You didn't need me before" (*The Bluest Eye* 154).

Pecola, believes that she has such bright blue eyes that people are forced to look away when they see her, but the main reason why people avoid her is the stigma of incest. her fantasy that she now has blue eyes makes up for the nightmare memory of the horrible episode in the kitchen when Cholly forced himself on her, as well as the second time, when she was reading on the couch. Pecola has drowned in insanity. She has been destroyed by a cultural perversion that completely dismisses the hopes and dreams of black-skinned, brown-eyed people (especially girls) who do not fit into the blonde, blue-eyed American myth. Pecola's strange and erratic behavior caused people to either look away or laugh aloud; Claudia and Frieda simply avoided her : " ostracized from the American dream by virtue of her blackness and from a black community too much corrupted by the values of the white culture, she (Pecola) can only succeed in her insanity, having borne the effects of a devastating fall. (Terry 9)

The destructive power of racial contempt and self-hatred has caused Pecola to literally self-destruct in her pursuit of love, self-worth, and identity. "The death of self-esteem can occur quickly, easily in children, before their ego has "legs," so to speak. Couple the vulnerability of youth with indifferent parents, dismissive adults, and a world, which, in its language, laws, and images, re-enforces despair, and the journey to destruction is sealed." (Morrison Quotes)



According to Kasschau in his *Understanding Psychology*, anxiety refers to people who are deeply anxious and doubt all the time. They often find difficulties in freeing themselves from worries and fears as well as they express their emotion that lead them to “unrealistic images” (Kasschau 369).

### **III.9.Patriarchy and Feminist Trends**

Pauline and Cholly's abuse to their daughter does not occur in a vacuum, therefore to understand this abuse one must understand the backstory of both characters who lacked physical beauty and turned it into physical violence, Caruth explains that “The historical power of trauma is not just that the experience is repeated after its forgetting, but that it is only in and through inherent forgetting that it is first experienced at all” (Caruth 17)

Morrison depicts the life of black people in America and construes the sources behind the failure of marital lives, under the patriarchal system the men-women relationships are in a complete disorder where the man is superior and socialized into the concept of manhood that is based on the sexual conquest and economic domination of women” (Staples 6) while women dream of men as a strong shoulder to lean on, however for men they are just an object that fulfills their needs, they can even utilize other women than their wives to satisfy their sexual desires, this has created a huge hiatus in the marital relationship.

Pauline meets Cholly who ignores her foot deformity, they both try to fill each other's voids but in course of time the relationship ends up strained and meets unhealthy developments. Cholly is out of job, and the house they live in is too small; only two rooms with less household work for Pauline to do. Pauline feels strange in the middle of white people and also unable to mingle with black women who get amused by her ugliness, in addition her crippled identity to the economic dependency of her on her husband, who cannot afford for her needs.

Polly with her lame foot decides to work outside and earn money, but that hurts her husband's ego:" he was not pleased with her purchases and began to tell her so. Their marriage was shredded with quarrel...money becomes the focus of all their discussions, her clothes, her drink."(*The Bluest Eye* 116). It is clear that the novel demonstrates the black male-female conflicts over material issues, Pauline feels burdened with a poor husband, in reciprocation Cholly takes out his past and present frustrations on his wife and two kids: Pecola and Sammy.

When roles are reversed and Pauline became the primary breadwinner, Cholly felt weak and impotent thus internalizing self-loath and hatred toward his family, and to get rid of his old memories and frustrations he unconsciously repeats the same pattern to his family, first by abusing his daughter sexually, burning the house, and constantly beating his wife. This eventually leads to the destruction of the whole family.

However and due to patriarchal norms, Pauline remains loyal to her husband than to herself, this is revealed when the white woman whom Pauline works for as a servant asks her to leave Cholly for being alcoholic and abusive or to leave her work for the white family, Pauline chooses quitting the job:"she said she would let me stay if I left him. I thought about that, but later on it did not seem too bright for a black woman to leave black man for a white woman,"(*The Bluest Eye* 94).Pauline's loyalty to her husband means that she has no one to go to, and nowhere to go, it also explains the continuity of Cholly's abuse to his daughter .

### **III.10.God, the abusive white male**

Morrison's use of biblical images has always been done with a critical angularity, as she employs them to describe the Black experience in America. This appropriation is centered on an age-old tradition of appropriation, in which one culture appropriates items from another. Morrison seems to say "the Bible is the wrong book for blacks."

Job is a wealthy guy who lives in the country of Uz with his family. He is extremely cautious of doing anything wrong. Satan stands before God in heaven one day. Job's goodness is praised by God, but Satan counters that Job is only good because God has blessed him abundantly. Satan challenges God, claiming that if he is allowed to punish Job, Job will condemn God. God enables Satan to afflict Job in order to put this bold assertion to the test, yet he restricts Satan from taking Job's life. Job receives four distinct messages one day, each announcing that his animals, servants, and ten children have all died as a result of marauding invaders or natural disasters. Job despite his mourning, he blesses God in his prayers.

God grants Satan another opportunity to put Job to the test, this time Job is suffering from skin sores and his wife tries to persuade him to curse God, but he refuses. Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar, three of Job's friends, pay him a visit. Job speaks on the seventh day, starting a discourse in which each of the four men expresses their perspective on Job's tribulations. Job curses his birth day, equating life and death to light and darkness. Eliphaz Eliphaz feels Job's suffering is due to whatever sin he has committed, and he encourages Job to seek God's forgiveness.

Job must have done something wrong to offend God's justice, according to Bildad and Zophar, and he should strive to be more blameless in the future. Bildad believes Job's children killed themselves. Worse, Zophar implies that whatever crime Job has done deserves far more punishment than he has received. Job ended up lamenting God's inequity in allowing evil individuals to prosper while he and many other innocent people suffer. Job wanted to confront God and express his dissatisfaction, but he is unable to do so physically. He believes that wisdom is beyond human comprehension, but he vows to pursue it by honoring God and avoiding evil.

God, as Job complains, is invisible, and his ways are mysterious and beyond our comprehension. Furthermore, humanity will never be able to persuade God with their words. Job admits that he does not understand himself well enough to adequately argue his case before God.

Pecola's story can be read in relation to the myth of Job in the Bible, she is likewise the victim of what appears to be divine vengeance for no apparent wrongdoing performed on her part to deserve such treatment.

He knows he can't help her, but he instructs her to feed poisoned meat to the dog. He promises to grant her wish if the dog reacts. Pecola flees after the dog shakes uncontrollably and dies.

The church's original name was Elihue Micah Whitcomb. The use of such a first name reveals the novelist's intention to draw parallels between Job and Pecola; in the Bible, the adviser who actually helped Job understand the reason for his plight and suggested a remedy is known as Elihu.

### **III.11.Female Bonding**

Friendship is highly intriguing because having a friend gives one strength in themselves and their ideas. Pecola had significant friendships that influenced her life decisions. In the forward of the novel, Morrison states that :

it may even be that some of us know what it is like to be actually hated- hated for things we have no control over and cannot change. When this happens, it is some consolation to know that the dislike or hatred is just unjustified-that you don't deserve it. And if you have the emotional strength and/or support from family and friends, the damage is reduced or erased.( *The Bluest Eye* Forward)

### III.11.1.Claudia and Frieda

Pecola is a loner, teased by the majority of the other kids and taunted and harassed by black schoolboys, only Frieda and Claudia play and engage in social interactions with her.

When Pecola's father burnt the house, Mrs McTeer, told her daughters that there is a girl who had no place to go, and that they should be nice to her and not fight. When Claudia and Frieda discovered that Pecola has been impregnated by her father they feel sad and humiliated for her, and their grief is made worse by the fact that no one else in the adult world seems to feel the same way especially when her mother beat her to death and the neighborhood gossip never ends.

Claudia and Frieda don't care about the incestuous aspect of the tale, by sowing seeds to demonstrate that nature always offers rebirth and by using magic words and singing to demonstrate how lyrical language can heal a broken existence, Claudia and Frieda generously sacrifice their own wants in order to assist Pecola, The actions taken by Claudia and Frieda to preserve Pecola's infant while sacrificing cash and marigold seeds. The world is brutal, and in any event, nature cannot atone for human inadequacies. Claudia is also capable of exploiting Pecola selfishly to boost her own sense of value, Claudia's explanation of how she and the black community in general exploited Pecola as a scapegoat furthers that mystification: "All of our waste which we dumped on her and which she absorbed. ,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. (*The Bluest Eye* 205)

### III.11.2.The Three Whores

China, Poland, and Miss Marie, are the local prostitutes in Loraine, Ohio. They live together in an apartment above the Breedloves. Miss Marie is overweight and kind, China is

thin and sarcastic, and Poland is reticent. The prostitutes tease each other affectionately about their ages and bodies and treat Pecola with kindness, while the rest of the community treats her unrelentingly, Pecola loves them and enjoys their company because they impart a lot of motherly traits to her, unlike her own mother, who speaks at her, they speak and listen to her.

One day while Claudia and Frieda was looking for Pecola, they found her at the whores place and asked her : ‘‘your mama let you go in her house ?And eat out of her plates ? and Pecola replied that her mother doesn’t know, and that’’Miss Marie is nice. They are all nice.’’(The Bluest Eye 104)

Despite the fact that their job and living conditions are illegal, the prostitutes share a sense of belonging and family. Bayerman says that the prostitutes ‘‘are also primary folk figures in the novel. Even their names - Poland, China, Maginot Line - suggest largerthan-life characters.’’ (Bayermann 60) Maginot Line amuses Pecola by recalling tales of former lovers and the one to whom she never sold herself.

### **III.11.3.The Imaginary Friend**

Needing someone to talk to and comfort them when they're in trouble, is one of the key causes for which kids make up imaginary friends. An imaginary friend serves as an emotional outlet for them, and as a coping mechanism for distressing circumstances, whether it's because they're an only kid, don't have many friends, or lack a reliable adult to confide in, or maybe because they are growing up in a home that is full of abuse, be it physical or emotional.

The key motivations behind Pecola's creation of her imaginary companion were the lack of support from her family and the lack of outside approval. As opposed to Frieda and Claudia, whose parents "had the inner power to overcome the poverty and discrimination of a

racist society and to offer an atmosphere in which their children can thrive" (Klotman 124), Pecola is left alone because her parents are already too weak to defend her.

Now she's avoided by Frieda and Claudia. She has no friends, not even her mother, in chapter 11, Pecola is seen discussing her blue eyes with a different individual and expresses how jealous others are of them and how they avoid looking at her: "Everybody's jealous. Every time I look at somebody, they look off" (*The Bluest Eye* 195)

It becomes clear that she is speaking with a fictional companion who emerged along with her new eyes. The blue eyes, which are only visible to Pecola and her new imaginary friend, disintegrate and absolve the "ugliness" of Pecola's body. She is unable to discern between herself and others in her craziness and solitude. Possibly one of the most glaring and harmful presenting issues related to racist indoctrination is the famed fallacy of appearing white, or the so called Acting White Accusation, which goes deeper than surface looks. People of color frequently face the "acting white" allegation (AWA), a form of cultural invalidation that calls into question their ethnic-racial authenticity because they exhibit behaviors that are not typically connected with their ethnic-racial group (Myles 1)

Claudia goes on to tell us that once the baby died, Pecola's family deserted her and dumped all of their ugly traits on her, driving her insane in the process, Lack of self-appreciation breeds self-hate, and hatred of oneself can result in serious self-destruction, it is clear from Claudia's depiction of Pecola that she is no longer a rational human being.

Pecola has been able to create a new narrative about her life, However, this narrative serves to further Pecola's sense of alienation from the outside world rather than to bring her back into it. Her supposed new companionship does not shield her from her past pain or insecurities. Pecola's fragmented consciousness, broken sense of self, false subjective identity

and her inability to recover and acquire a distinctive life viewpoint is due to the lack female friendships in her life that would allow her to ground her orientation .

### **Conclusion**

Morrison (2008) expressed her worry that something would be overlooked amidst the predominantly racially upbeat tone of works being published at the time, mostly associated with the Black Arts Movement, in an interview about the motivation for *The Bluest Eye*. She continued by saying that it might be harmful if no one recognized how harmful a particular form of intra-racial racism can be, especially given that Black had not always been regarded as attractive.

Morrison wrote *The Bluest Eye* to depict the complexities of black life, from the agonizing past of slavery and racism to the present in which modern means of communication like: the press, television, and movies, and middle-class American notions of beauty have ingrained cultural and aesthetic ideals into the minds of black people leading to disastrous consequences on the forming of a young African American girl feminine identity in the early 1940s, not only Pecola, but the majority of black characters, her mother, her brother, her father,... struggle mightily to exist in a society that routinely rejects them due to their skin color, they are stigmatized for not being able to meet the conventional beauty standards that have been established by a dominating culture, they are unable to combat the racism that has become a part of their daily lives, where prejudice attitudes are fostered, minds are conditioned, and prejudice is a way of life.

Morrison, criticizes African Americans for viewing themselves through the lens of white culture and beauty standards, as she portrays black women as helpless victims who never achieve personal autonomy, not only due to the self-loth internalized by whites but also due to family ties that are never encouraging or supportive. Black people may be able to



imbibe harmful racial hegemony concepts through media's addictive nature, which whites tacitly hope will do so. Morrison wants black people to be careful about what they let into themselves and to maintain a healthy balance, especially when there are a lot of emotions swirling about from both the past and the present.

Toni Morrison believes that people are not born with the proclivity to hurt others; rather, they are taught to do so when they are hurt themselves, they are then encouraged to shift the trauma they are experiencing by harming others, specifically the most vulnerable members of their own community, because they are unable to combat the bigotry they are continually exposed to, they instead opt to develop a sense of dominance over inferior people, often subconsciously.

By examining how two families with the same cultural background end up with different outcomes, Morrison sheds light on the impact of parents' lifestyles on children's development and the impact of childhood trauma on an individual's behavior. The importance of the other family's existence is highlighted by the demise of the first family.



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## **Chapter Four: Deformed Motherhood and Incestuous Rape**

## **Introduction**

Black American Modernisms like: W.E.B Du Bois, Frederick Douglass,... predates mainstream modernism mainly the Make it new movement that was popularized by Ezra Pound in the early part of the twentieth. Richard Ruland and Malcolm Bradbury believe that the leaders of the American literary scene after 1975 are Maya Angelou, Toni Morrison and Alice Walker.

So when Toni Morrison and Alice Walker published their works, it was an addition to a large corpus of African American writers who had already punched their tickets to fame on the trajectory of Modernism. Both works are a break away from tradition to find new modes of expression . both novels are grounded in the theory of what Antonio Gramsci has called: Subaltern to refer to those groups in society who are subject to hegemony of the ruling classes.

Both authors are internationally recognized African American feminist writers who are deeply concerned about racial and gender issues. In addition to the psychoanalytical framework and story-telling pattern, they both are modernist novels in which hegemony, patriarchy and feminism converge to expose an obnoxious practice in America Both novels satisfy the requirements of realism as they portray African American women's life and vividly depict the sexism, racism, and poverty that turn life into a continuous struggle. Morrison and Walker 's works reveal the history of black people in America, and families that ask us about the making of an abuser.

Walker and Morrison have the advantage of depicting what it is like to be a woman of color in society because they are both colored women. It goes without saying that their slave ancestors

and the years of struggle for women's rights have given them the ability to create realistic characters in their works.

#### **IV.1.Similarities**

The writers' life experiences in the black community are their primary source of information about the suffering of black women. Walker and Morrison both have the opportunity of depicting what it is like to be a woman of color in the white culture because they are both colored women, their slave forebears and the decades of a long fight for women's rights, allowed them to make realistic characters for their writings and "...deepen our understanding of the limitations and possibilities of lives of black Americans..."(Bell 269)

##### **IV.1.1.The Bluest Eye and The Color Purple as Neo-slave narratives**

Undoubtedly, the Transatlantic Slave Trade had a negative impact on both European and American history. The issue of slavery is still a matter of time, despite the fact that it was outlawed in Great Britain in 1810 and the USA in 1865. Especially current events, like the Black Lives Matter Movement, show the significance of remembering the terrible history of slavery, in order to understand the anger and struggles of Black British- and Afro-American people. The United States currently has to deal with their problem of systematic racism in many institutions, like the police, the school system, and cultural conflict. (Narrative Strategies in "Blonde Roots" by Bernardine Evaristo)

After the Civil War in the 1860s and the Great Depression in the 1930s, the slave narrative genre remained one of the most significant literary forms. But as time went on, different slave narrative authors began to emphasize the fallout and social repercussions of slavery: "Neo-slave narratives are modern or contemporary literary works largely focused with describing the experience or the effect of new world slavery" (Rushdy 533)

For hundreds of years, antebellum slavery has been a recurring theme in literature, most frequently in the form of slave tales or, more recently, neo-slave narratives. The autobiographical account of the life of a former slave was the main aspect of the slave narrative's original genre. These accounts were frequently exploited by abolitionists to advance their cause. The neo-slave narrative is a significant development in American literary history that is fundamentally motivated by serious revisionist goals.

The genre has been shaped by modern African American women writers. In order to rewrite history from the perspective of the African American woman, these authors have created neo-slave tales. Although it is frequently fictional, the neo-slave narrative centers on the lives of former slaves in antebellum North America. Neo-slave tale writers frequently have ties to the Civil Rights Movement. ( Namradja 5) *Rewriting History: The Neo-Slave Narrative in the New Millennium*.

The neo-slave narrative removes the constraints of the original slave narrative by allowing the reader to examine more closely at the effects that slavery had on society throughout history. Additionally, the genre offers perspectives on slavery that the writers of the original slave narrative were unable to convey. Aside from that, fiction “will not give us the whole story about social justice, but it can be a bridge both to a vision of justice and to the social enactment of that vision” (Nussbaum 12). Telling the slave stories in neo-form provides a method to resist the injustice of maintaining errors in history, or forgetting history altogether (Sagawa and Robbins 1).

In reality, because the original slave narratives were written by former slaves themselves, who had not been able to talk about everything they had to endure, while being enslaved, the genre is capable of doing justice to African-American and Black British people and their experiences with slavery. Language problems are merely one reason for this

restriction; for someone who lived through slavery firsthand, enslavement is also an unspeakably awful reality.( OLEJNICZAK 3)

In order to make the antebellum slave story more readable for modern audiences, Walker and Morrison modify its format knowing that the abolition of slavery was not yet enough to make the African Americans 'full persons' (Vint 245). By integrating black males among the oppressors, Alice Walker's *The Color Purple* from 1983 updates the story of the black woman as a slave. Walker's protagonist in the book searches for purpose and identity while the black guys are fully immersed in the cultural perspective of the white male. Walker's protagonist, Celie, experiences racism and sexism as if she is a slave to white masters, but in reality, her slavery results from her stepfather and husband's male dominance. In addition to Celie, most of the female characters in the book—aside from her husband's mistress Shug Avery—have also experienced racism and sexism.

Toni Morrison and Alice Walker have frequently dealt with the unendurable weight of the past on the present, and closely identified with the history of African American enslavement

When the victim has experienced prejudice and injustice at home, the weight of that burden is tenfold increased, The main characters of *The Color Purple* and *The Bluest Eye*, each have a troubled background that is founded in racial prejudice and brutality against women, whose struggles for personal identification are deeply entwined with their local communities and cultural heritage. They have written on the suffering and struggle of black people in the United States, particularly black women. They stressed that someone who is a black woman is distinct from being a woman. *The Color Purple* by Alice Walker and *The Bluest Eye* by Toni Morrison both show how Black women may thrive in difficult situations.

A postcolonial feminist perspective can be applied to Toni Morrison's and Alice Walker's writings as they tackled the issue of black women in a postcolonial and imperial environment, and also the persistent tension and stiffness that black women experience. They both eloquently depicted the lives of African-American women, and the protagonists in both works have endured beyond what a human being can bear.

In both works, the authors juxtapose the negative impact of the past on the future, the past appears to take on the role of the future's biggest foe. The effects of slavery on society and the environment is investigated. While reading the two novels, we can detect reflections of the harm in acts like incest, rape, and racism. Reading these key books reveals the reasons for black women's suffering and the issues they face.

There have been numerous attempts to ban the books from libraries and schools due to the unflinching account of child molestation, sexual discrimination, and systemic racism. Because of its violent sexual content and depiction of violence and abuse, *The Color Purple* has been banned in schools across the country since 1984. *The Bluest Eye*, was similarly prohibited.

In 1998 due to its unpleasant language, violent themes, and its graphic sexual material. Both novels clarify the deep-seated inconsistencies that are rooted in identity discourse through their depictions of characters struggling to resolve the conflict of their multiple identities. The main protagonists in each of their novels have a traumatic history centered in racial prejudice and violence against women, and the novels reflect their path to, and ongoing struggle with, identity.

Walker and Morrison have the advantage of correctly showing what it means to be a woman of color in a culture that has a history of slavery, racial segregation, and

discrimination since they were born as colored women. They were able to construct realistic characters in their works as a result of this.

#### **IV.2.Mother Wound and Deformed Motherhood**

Children have little frame of reference outside the family, all the things they learn about themselves and others become universal truths engraved deeply in their minds. A child's sense of self is built by the kind of a relationship that they have with their mothers,our mothers mold us physically and emotionally. Attachment theory in psychology can be traced back to John Bowlby's seminal work (1958). John Bowlby worked as a psychiatrist in a Child Guidance Clinic in London in the 1930s, where he treated many emotionally disturbed children. Bowlby was inspired by this experience to consider the significance of a child's relationship with their mother in terms of their social, emotional, and cognitive development.

Bowlby (1958) proposed that attachment can be understood within an evolutionary context in which the caregiver provides safety and security for the infant. Attachment is adaptive because it increases the infant's chances of survival, this is demonstrated by Lorenz's (1935) and Harlow's (1936) work (1958). When infants are stressed or threatened, they have a universal need to be close to their caregiver, according to Bowlby (Prior and Glaser 2006).

The results of the study indicated attachment is about who plays and communicates with the child, not who feeds and changes him or her. As a result, it appeared that sensitive responsiveness to the baby's signals was the key to attachment.

But what happens if a mother had suffered emotional or physical abuse themselves, and was therefore unable to offer love and empathy to her children ? According to some psychoanalysts, the so-called "mother wound occurs.In racist societies, mothers pass on their own mother wound to their daughters. Women who have internalized stereotypical beliefs that



relegate women to second-class citizens are more likely to consciously or unconsciously transmit these beliefs to their daughters. Walker, and Morrison proclaim to their audience how the abusiveness of a parent can affect children tremendously and cause them to turn to help, as stated by and Clenora

Equally significant is the physical violence done to the black child by parents who are themselves confused about their identity, as is the case with Breedloves when Cholly rapes his daughter, it is a physical manifestation of the social, psychological, and personal violence that, together with his wife, he has put upon Pecola. (Mrs. Breedlove blames Pecola for the rape and puts her out. (Samuels 14)

African Americans are caught in a double-edged dilemma: Accept what white society has instilled in them, and perpetuate this type of relationship with their future children or fight for their own beliefs and aim for empowerment. The Color Purple starts and ends with a motherly vision. At the beginning of the novel, motherhood is depicted as constrained within the patriarchal family unit, This is illustrated when Mary Agnes and Shug abandon their children to pursue their singing careers and be free, demonstrating women's desire to be free of motherhood as well as their yearning for independence. Furthermore, black women were compelled to mother white people's children, other -mothering, a term was coined in the 1930's to describe the act of black women being forced to care for children who were not biologically their own, African American feminist scholars coined the term to help explain the various mothering strategies used by U.S. slave women to nurture and protect African American families who were purposefully separated, displaced, and exploited by white slaveholders.

A situation that is echoed with Sofia and the Mayor's children. Celie's mother however, is a minor character who is never named, after her husband (Celie and Nettie's natural father) is lynched and burned by a mob of white businessmen, she suffers a mental breakdown, She then marries a man named 'Fonso' or 'Pa,' and never tells the girls that Pa is not their actual father . Celie's mother has a number of children with Fonso.

Celie's mother becomes extremely unwell as a result of her repeated pregnancies, and she dies when Celie is pregnant with her second child. Celie never mentioned her mother as someone who has any influence on her. She only remembers a few anecdotes about her mother, none of which are filled with love, care, or attention. She didn't think her mother was beautiful and only spoke of her when she was sick and dying. Celie, who was still a child, took on the role of "othermother" to her sister Nettie after her mother passed away and then to her husband's kids.

#### **IV.2.1.In The Bluest Eye**

Instilling mental and emotional seeds in their children is something that parents do. These seeds will continue to grow at their current rate. It can contain seeds of love, respect, and freedom, or it can include seeds of fear, obligation, and abuse. Many parents are abusive to their children, and this toxic conduct becomes persistent and dominant throughout the life of a child. Abuse of children eventually leads to a poisonous home environment, which causes great emotional harm to an innocent young child. Toxic upbringing can lead to a lost childhood, despair, anxiety, severe feelings of guilt and shame, and poor self-worth,

When reading *The Bluest Eye*, it's worth noting how often the author analyzes the nature of mother-child relationships, particularly those between mother and daughter, delving into the darker side of this complicated relationship. Mother love, according to Morrison, is a powerful and complicated force capable of both creation and destruction. *The Bluest Eye*

revisits the darker side of mother's love, demonstrating how damaging it can be to a young girl's soul, feeling of self-worth, and, ultimately, her belief in her own worth and beauty.

The *Bluest Eye* is a literary inquiry into the subject of what causes an 11 year old child to develop such racial self-hatred. The story depicts beauty as a fluid, dynamic, and subjective concept whose meaning has been tainted by societal elements, particularly race, that has nothing to do with any actual definition of beauty.

The extent to which maternal influence influences a child's definition of beauty is possibly the most thought-provoking of all, and Morrison deals with the elusive concept of beauty in *The Bluest Eye*, particularly as it relates to Pecola Breedlove's relationship with her mother, Pauline, who plays the most significant role in shaping her daughter's beliefs and thoughts.

Pauline's contaminated, internalized definition of beauty is one she got from her obsessive viewing of Hollywood films, which obviously promote a socially constructed White beauty ideal. Knowing Pauline's reaction when she gives birth to Pecola and thinks her baby looks like a black ball of hair depends on understanding how much of her concept and measure of beauty derives from a White Hollywood standard, Pauline, who has determined to love her baby anyway, plainly makes a tragic aesthetic judgment upon Pecola's birth, one that has disastrous ramifications for her daughter's sense of value, Pauline muses: "But I knowed she was ugly. Head full of pretty hair, but Lord she was ugly." (*The Bluest Eye* 126)

When Maureen peal first met Pecola, she says "Pecola? Wasn't that the name of the girl in *Imitation of Life*? . . . The picture show, you know. Where this mulatto girl hates her mother 'cause she is black and ugly' but then cries at the funeral. My mother has seen it four times" (*The Bluest Eye* 67-68) Gary Schwartz noticed that the girl's name in the movie was Peola: Pauline's "conflated name is interesting . . . The name with the 'c' has some suggestion of

Latin peccatum (mistake, fault, error)" (122-23). Understanding the novel requires focusing on Pecola as a "mistake, fault, error," and shame is usually regarded as the central emotion, especially when incest is regarded as the novel's axis. ( Bump 8)

Pecola's story does not have a pleasant conclusion, Pecola's obsession to have blue eyes leading to her schizophrenia, and spends the rest of her life in her own world, the world of schizophrenia, which Morrison paradoxically depicts as a continuation of the stereotype that sees women as crazy and schizophrenic, the patriarchal society in America suppresses the potential of black people in general and black women in particular, leading to women becoming insane from adopting dominant culture ideas that are improper for black women.

The term "schizophrenia" means "divided mind" in technical terms, it was first used to define a disorder of mind and emotions in 1911 by the Swiss psychiatrist, Eugen Bleuler, He believed that the effect of this split was a fragmented mental process that manifested as social disengagement, apathy, incapacity to carry out daily activities, and psychotic occurrences such as hallucinations. Despite Bleuler's findings, schizophrenia was thought to be a psychotic reaction to poor parenting, particularly from, indifferent, perfectionist, and demanding women, rather than a condition founded in brain pathology. Pecola, suffers under the care of an unsympathetic mother, who appears to be emotionally detached from her own daughter. Pecola is "surrounded by, [and] immersed in a literal sea of, parental contempt, from which she derives a self-image of terrible ugliness that attributes to her negritude" (463)

Pauline's, feelings of malice towards herself and her family reincarnates itself as self-hatred, This type of identification whereby a child internalizes the world around them based on their parent's perceptions can be understood in view of Erik H. Erikson's suggestion that "children identify with parents over a wide range of deep human issues, such as existential security, sexuality, autonomy, shame, and guilt" (Weigert et al 6).

She is influenced by perceptual distortion, rational disorganization, emotional instability and loss of control. While society's perception of her and treatment of her as less than beautiful is very distressing, it may eventually be overshadowed by her own mother's belief that she is unattractive and, as a result, less valued and loveable than others, Pauline's sensitivity to racial standards of beauty is transmitted to her daughter and ultimately leads to her victimization. Pecola's relationship with her mother, Pauline, is ironically marked by a lack of love and emotional attachment, as well as apathy, irritation, and abuse. Pauline's violence stemmed from her difficult childhood in the same way. She came to believe that she was ugly, which led her to accept her assigned role on the color, beauty, and privilege hierarchy, this causes her to despise her own race and deny her own beauty.

Morrison demonstrated that children's dread of their parents stems from a breakdown in family relationships. To put it another way, children will be the outlet for their disappointment especially if mothers do not provide them with the adequate protection. According to Longefellow, Zelkowitz and Saunders (1982) stressed and depressed mothers, are more likely to be hostile and dominating and less responsive to their children's basic needs.

Pecola's relation with her father, Cholly Breedlove was also not close. As drawn by Toni Morrison, in the novel, Cholly was a bad father: "Having no idea of how to raise children, and having never watched any parent raise himself, he could not even comprehend what such a relationship should be." (*The Bluest Eye* 160)

The narrator in the novel, Claudia MacTeer, a young girl of the same age as Pecola, remembers with horror the time when, to the surprise and dismay of the community, Pecola was put 'outdoors' by her father. She recollects: Outdoors, we knew, was it the real terror of life... To be put outdoors by a landlord was one thing - unfortunate, but an aspect of life over

which you had no control since you could not control your income. But to be slack enough to put oneself outdoors, or heartless enough to put one's own kin outdoors - that was criminal. (*The Bluest Eye* 3) Outdoors marked the end of something, a physical truth that defined and complemented our metaphysical state. Cholly Breedlove's decision to bring his family outside is similar to the story of the "Ugly Duckling," who was forced to spend the winter in a pool.

Susan Forward wrote one of the first best-selling books, entitled :'' *Toxic Parents: Overcoming Their Hurtful Legacy and Reclaiming Your Life* about pestilent parents and how to overcome their negative legacy and reclaim your life. According to Susan, people have a tendency to repeat old emotions patterns, no matter how painful or self-defeating they are.

That is to say, children of toxic parents strive to repeat their terrible childhood experiences in adult relationships. Thereupon, a double harm is being done, Children of abusive parents tend to become their own abusers and soon abusers of others.

#### **IV.2.2. The Abuse of Samuel BreedLove**

Samuel, Pecola's fourteen-year-old brother, suffers the same abuse from his parents as Pecola. In contrast to his sister, Samuel is not afraid to get involved in his parents' arguments, and he even resorts to physical force. Unlike Pecola, he has freedom, as a male, to escape the Breedloves' miserable home life, he is known to have run away from home twenty-seven times by the age of fourteen.

#### **IV.2.3. The Maternal Abuse of Louis Junior**

A case of a neglected child who, in the absence of genuine affection from his mother, turned into other people's abuse is clearly illustrated through the character Louis Junior. Junior is a child neglected by his mother, decides to target Pecola, who is passing through the playground one day. She refuses to play, but he tempts her into his home by

promising to show her some kittens. Pecola is astonished by the house's beauty and cleanliness, especially the black cat with the blue eyes she longs for. Junior throws the cat in her face. Pecola tries to leave, but Junior stands on the other side of the door and shuts her in, the cat starts rubbing against Pecola.

As Junior opens the door, Pecola strokes the cat and Junior picks up the cat and swings it around by one of its legs. Pecola attempts to save the terrified cat. When she pulls Junior down, he lets go of the cat, which collides with the radiator and dies in a lifeless heap. Geraldine arrives home at this point, and Junior informs her that Pecola has killed the cat. Geraldine calls Pecola's a "nasty little black bitch."

Like Pecola, Claudia, an independent and strong-minded nine-year-old, is plagued by discriminatory beauty standards and financial insecurity, yet she is fortunate to have a loving and stable family. Mr. Macteer, Claudia and Frieda's father, is only mentioned a few times, but he appears to be a kind father who works hard to keep his family together. He is the book's only male character who goes against the trend. He, unlike his male predecessors, is fiercely protective of his family, as evidenced by his beating up Mr. Henry and firing a gun at him when he fondles Frieda. He was the only male character in the novel with a positive purpose or role. He portrayed a true role model, someone you could look up to or turn to in times of need.

Claudia doesn't let herself take any time off from criticizing the community in detail and in its whole, she is a brave girl who has not discovered her limitations, most importantly, she has not discovered the self-hatred that so many adults in her community suffer from, her vision is not blurred by the pain that eventually drives Pecola into madness, Because her life is solid enough to allow her to see clearly, Claudia is a vital guide to the events unfolding in

Lorain. Her presence in the novel reminds us that not all families are like Pecola's; instead of falling apart, they stand together in the face of adversity.

When Claudia is given a white doll she does not want, she dissects and destroys it. Her furious reaction to white dolls demonstrated that she can survive under an inverted world order that would educate her to hate herself.

Claudia resents and dismembers the stiff-limbed, blue-eyed, yellow-haired, pink-skinned dolls that are lovingly gifted to her at Christmas. Kenneth and Mamie Clark, psychologists, created and administered "the doll tests" to investigate the psychological consequences of segregation on African-American children in the 1940s.

The Dolls Test was an attempt by my wife and myself to explore the formation of a sense of self-esteem in youngsters," Dr. Kenneth Clark explained in an interview. We worked with black kids to examine how their skin color, as well as their perceptions of race and position, influenced their self-perception and self-esteem. We performed it to show our psychology colleagues how race, color, and socioeconomic class affect children's self-esteem."

To investigate children's racial impressions, Drs. Clark utilized four dolls that were identical save for color. Their subjects, children aged three to seven, were asked to identify the race of the dolls as well as the color they preferred. The white doll was favoured by the majority of the children, who gave it good attributes. The Clarks determined that "prejudice, discrimination, and segregation" caused African-American youngsters to feel inferior and harmed their self-esteem.

Dr. Clark asked a black child which doll looked the most like him while conducting experiments in rural Arkansas. "That's a nigger," the child smiled and pointed to the brown



doll. "I'm a nigger." This experience, according to Dr. Clark, was "more disturbing than the children in Massachusetts who would refuse to answer the question or cry and run out of the room."

The Supreme Court cited Clark's 1950 paper in the following passage: "To separate [African-American children] from others of similar age and qualifications solely because of their race generates a feeling of inferiority as to their status in the community that may affect their hearts and minds in a way unlikely ever to be undone. Dr. Kenneth Clark was disappointed that the court did not cite two other conclusions he had reached: racism was an inherently American institution, and school segregation hampered the development of white children as well.

Frieda and Pecola adore white dolls and Shirley Temple. When asked why she adores Shirley Temple, Pecola responds, "She's pretty and talented, and people adore her." Shirley Temple appears to be everything that Pecola is not, and Pecola adores her for it. Claudia, on the other hand, despises Shirley Temple as much as she despises the blonde, blue-eyed dolls she receives for Christmas, Claudia, on the other hand, despises Shirley Temple as much as she despises the blonde, blue-eyed dolls she receives for Christmas. Claudia doesn't understand why she should care about such a doll, so she dissects it instead.

Pecola was victimized and humiliated by a group of boys, some being dark-skinned just like Pecola, chanting on about her darkness and insults her father about supposedly sleeping naked. Claudia and Freida were walking with the newcomer, Maureen Peal, and they spotted this harassment. Freida leading, they shut down the torment that Pecola was receiving and invited her to walk with them, and when she hears of Pecola's pregnancy, she and her sister devise a strategy to protect Pecola's child from the community's rejection. Claudia, is the character through which the author tries to prove that if black families pull together in the face

of hardship things will not fall apart, Claudia and Frieda, Claudia's older sister, have received valuable life lessons from their mother. They've learnt how to be strong black females who can stand up to white and black women's ideals of beauty, rather than being overwhelmed and indoctrinated by them.

### **IV.3.In The Color Purple**

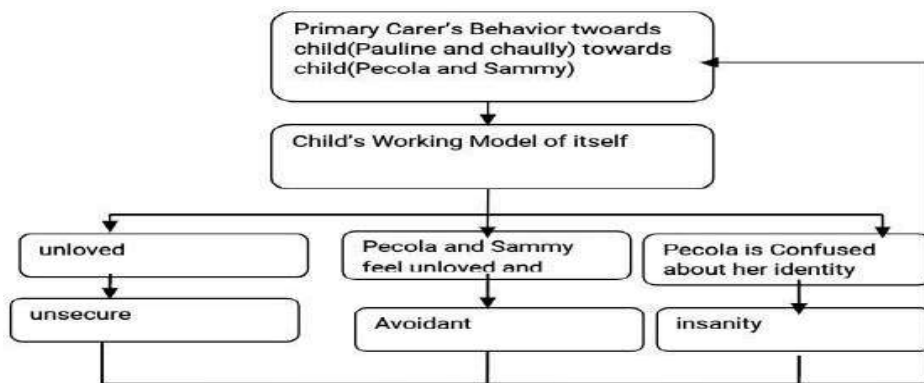
In *The Color Purple*, motherhood is revealed to be a devastating force and a type of slavery. After her father sexually assaulted her, Celie gave birth to two children before being married off at a young age. In letters to God and her sister Nettie, who has moved to Africa, Celie reveals the horrors she experiences as a mother and a bride. Celie will be impacted by the victimization as a child mother and as a daughter. Through the story of the main character as well as other catalytic characters like Mary Agnes and Shug, who abandoned their children to pursue their singing careers and be free in making their own decisions, and do so whether it's in their children best interests or not, gives the impression that motherhood is escape rather than a tie.

In an effort to escape poverty, Celie's mother after the death of her husband by whites who burnt his store, and lynched him, she marries another black man and subsequently abandons her daughter Celie, who was later raped by her step-father. Until Celie's mother's last moments, she repeatedly cursed at her and pressed questions about her children's father, but Celie refused to answer because she had already been threatened by Alphonso.

It's important to keep in mind that, when examining the two literary works, the institution of motherhood and the practice of mothering have played a crucial role in the lives of the main characters. In a society where black children are viewed as inferior, a mother's adoration of her child gives them the strength to resist and challenge racist discourses that normalize racial inferiority. However, in the cases of Pecola and Celie, both mothers make no

attempt to support their daughter as she attempts to live in a culture already rife with prejudice and racism.

As a result of their moms' failure to instill in them the love and affection required in a family environment, Celie and Pecola believe they are a burden to their families. Not just their mothers, but also their fathers, who continued to refer to them in a negative manner. Their fathers repeatedly violated Celie and Pecola, which has a negative impact on their physical and mental health. The below internal working model by the psychoanalyst John Bowlby, is a great example to illustrate mother-child relationship in both novels



#### IV.4.Graph 03: a- The child's Attachment Relationship with their Primary Caregiver

(Breedloves) (Bowlby, 1969) Source: <https://www.simplypsychology.org/bowlby.html>

##### IV.4.1.Discussion

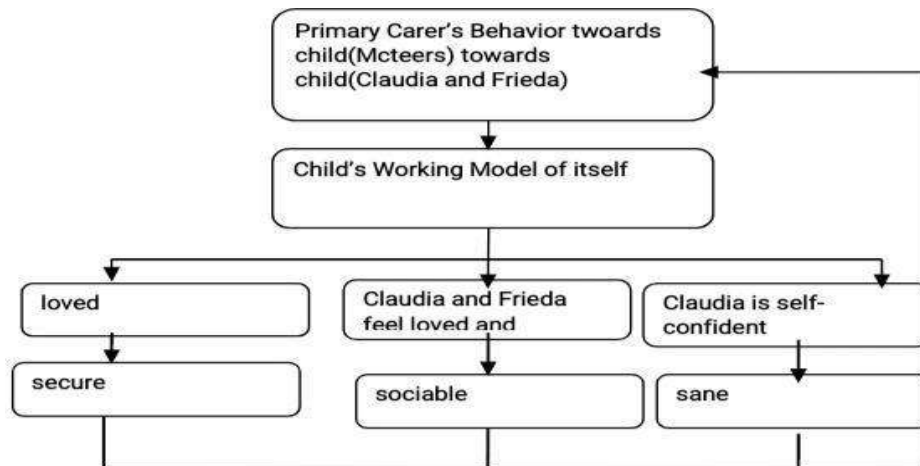
The concept of maternal love holds that affection can be founded on helping someone you truly care about. Pecola's relationship with her mother Pauline is the root cause of her initial sense of self-abjection, Pecola is nothing more to her mother than a collection of her own unfulfilled attempts to acquire white beauty. She incorporates this fear of being identified

as a woman by sighing for her unborn kid as a symbol of her own desire to be white. Pauline becomes more concerned with appearance as she moves from the South to the North, Pauline wants to mimic Western English pronunciations, dress like them, and style her hair like Jean Harlow did in a magazine photo, in an effort to attract the attention of other women (*The Bluest Eye* 92).

When Pecola is born, Pauline deems her a "Head full of hair, but Lord, she was ugly" (*The Bluest Eye* 100). She starts by calling her "ugly" (*The Bluest Eye* 98).

Pauline's response to being let down by her desire of having a white kid was to abandon Pecola for the Fisher's blonde teen who she worked for, in this regard Kristeva explains how the abject is prominently related to our primal repression; how it exposes us to "our earliest attempts to release the hold of maternal entity, Pecola learns that her mother does not love her and that the fisherwoman is the one who receives the motherly. However, Pauline continues ignoring her family and is extremely content with her position in the white family.

Racism and hegemonic culture have had a significant impact on Polly, due to the internalization of mainstream ideals and white culture in the United States, she has lost herself, her spirit and sense of identity, and eventually shattered her family. As the loss and distortion of mother love cannot ensure a child growing up in a healthy manner, Pecola eventually went insane.



#### IV.4.2. B- The child's Attachment Relationship with their Primary Caregiver (McTeers)

In contrast to Polly, however, Mrs. MacTeer, the mother of Frieda and Claudia, is a strict disciplinarian who constantly fusses over her daughters yet she is fiercely protective and adores her daughters, eventually Claudia and Frieda grow up like fighters because they have a stable and loving family. One day, after a trip to collect coal to heat their house, Claudia had caught a cold, Mrs. MacTeer, her mother, reprimands her for not having a cap on while outside one day after a trip to get coal to heat their home. Claudia is in bed and her mother, rubs "Vicks salve" (*The Bluest Eye* 6) on her chest while Pauline beats Pecola and calls her a "mad fool" when she knocks over the blackish blueberries, and comforts the Fisher girl as she starts weeping by saying, "Hush, baby, hush. "Come Here," (*The Bluest Eye* 85). Ironically, her own children refer to her as "Mrs. Breedlove" whereas this Fisher daughter refers to her as "Polly". Pauline would never leave the Fisher's kitchen until everything is perfect in reciporation she ignores her family. The significant disparities in personality and circumstances that allow one to become a boldly independent individual while the other is abused, marginalized, and

ultimately driven to insanity are highlighted by Claudia's self-construction and Pecola's (self)destruction.

Morrison clarifies the connection between the lifestyles of parents and their children's development and the effects of early trauma on an individual's conduct by comparing the outcomes of two families with the same cultural background. The death of the first family emphasizes the significance of the other family's existence.

#### **IV.4.3. Analysis**

According to Dr. Saul McLeod, in his *Bowlby's Attachment Theory* updated in 2017, Bowlby's attachment theory is based on a child's early attachment to any of the important figures in his life, which is usually A Mother. If there is maternal deprivation, according to Bowlby, deprivation coupled with ongoing disturbance of the relationship between the child and primary caregiver may cause long-term cognitive, social, and emotional problems for the child. The internal working model has three key components: a model of others as reliable, a model of oneself as valued, and a model of oneself as effective when engaging with others.

In *The Bluest Eye*, and *The Color Purple*, both protagonists' suffering is a result of not only society but rather the warped mother-daughter relationships. Pecola and Celie both grow up in families without any mother affection or care. And to make matters worse, their mothers severely hurt and mistreat them. Pecola has become insane as a result of her tortuous journey through identity confusion in a predominantly white culture and the hardships her family endures, the first thing she received from her caregivers be it mother or father was insults and rape, in addition to the harsh and unfriendly social setting where she is often the target of taunts because of her color. No one in her class wants to hang out with her at school, teachers avoid her, her peers, even with the same skin color tease her and sneer at her.

Collins , suggests that a mother can foster her children's oppression if she teaches them to believe in their own inferiority (Collins 50-51). The aftermath of negligence and maternal deprivation include a split self-identity. Other effects include a sensation of helplessness, panic, , nightmares, self-loathing, and social maladjustment. Pecola appears to be an extremely timid, anxious, and insecure person. Her sense of self is entirely destroyed when the baby she is carrying, after her father raped her, is born too soon and dies, further devastating her already deeply damaged emotional and psychological state, the story is primarily told by Claudia as a child and as an adult, and the reader realizes that we don't hear much from Pecola herself throughout the book.

In the same way, both white and black people dislike and ignore Celie. Tragically, her mother never shows her the proper maternal tenderness, even when she knew that her daughter has been raped and gave birth to two children. To mend the split caused by her sexual abuse and to piece together her fragmented identity, Celie initially writes letters to God as a way to maintain her sanity. Both Pecola and Celie are born into a male- and white-dominated culture where sexual abuse and exploitation cause them both great anguish.

#### **IV.5.Symptoms of PTSS in Both Novels**

Ron Eyerman and Evelyn Schreiber have argued that the traumas originating in slavery and the Middle Passage have constituted the kernel of collective memory and identity for most African Americans (2004: 60; 2010: 5)

The majority of Black Americans have been affected by a generational transfer of cultural trauma that has fueled their sense of rejection , according to a recent research titled "The Past Does Matter: a Nursing Perspective on Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome (PTSS)," 'slavery was a major stress event for black people in the United States, with trans-

generational effects that persist to the present, and that history has overlooked the potential for transgenerational effects of slavery on future generations.

In a work written by Smith Symphonie about PTSS, based on DeGruy work, he states that African American behaviors are the result of Transgenerational trauma caused by the historical tragedies of slavery and ongoing persecution. According to Smith three key symptoms are clear signs that someone has a PTSS: "Vacant Esteem, Ever Present Anger, and Racist Socialization." (Smith 10)

The first term known as Vacant Esteems, it is defined by DeGruy as: "...the state of believing oneself to have little or no worth, exacerbated by the group and societal pronouncement of inferiority" (DeGruy 125). It refers to the condition of having low or no self-esteem, due to the pain and injustice that African Americans have experienced throughout their common history. In contrast to individualistic experiences, this concept's impacts are felt in an environment that is largely collective for example African Americans trouble respecting each other only because they are black (Smith 10)

In *The Color Purple*, Celie's Pa, and her husband Mr- are constantly calling her Black and ugly, while they both are blacks too. The same thing for Pauline in *The Bluest Eye* when she cursed her daughter the moment she gave birth to, because she is a black girl.

The writings of Toni Morrison and Alice Walker can be viewed in the context of postcolonial feminism, they addressed the issue of black women in a postcolonial and imperial setting in their writings. Morrison and Walker incorporate the impact of the past that harms the future into their usage of the "time" idea in a variety of ways. The greatest foe of the future in their writings is the past which is slavery and the harm it does to society and the environment.

The second marker is Ever Present Anger, or chronic anger, this anger When anger is displayed with a level of vehemence that is not only out of proportion to the conditions giving



rise to it, but also more symbolic of the collective transgenerational trauma that African Americans have endured throughout history. In *The Bluest Eye*, Characters like Pecola's parents, vented their anger at their own families and blacks rather than against the white people who caused them pain and humiliation. They effectively oppressed one another and kept their rage in constant circulation.

Smith claims that "racial socialization," which Dre. Gruy defines as "the acquisition of the slave master's value system," is the final PTSS hallmark (Gruy 134). One of the results of internalizing these ideals and accepting a European standard of beauty that disregards the inherent characteristics of African Americans is insecurity over one's skin tone and hair texture. , As she moves from the South to the North, Pauline has grown increasingly self-conscious. In an effort to attract the attention of other women, she wants to copy Western English pronunciations, dress like them, and arrange her hair like Jean Harlow did in a magazine photo, in addition to Mary Jane and Shirley Temple, two white candy models who are in line with the superiority ideas of whiteness, black people in the USA are led to believe that they are the pinnacle of cuteness and that anyone who does not resemble them is ugly.

Pauline's family finally broke apart as a result of her assimilation of mainstream ideas and white culture in the United States; her daughter went insane; her husband passed away; and her son ran away.

Both Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* and Alice Walker's *The Color Purple* employ a method of linking rape to other types of oppression, implying that incest is caused by the dynamics of colonization and "othering." According to hooks, the devaluation of African American women on the basis of their sexuality remains pervasive after hundreds of years and continues to limit and restrain Black women (hooks 53)

Both works contain sexual abuse that can be attributed to the American slavery era, when Whites created and spread the myth of the Jezebel, the sexually permissive Black

woman, as a justification for raping and abusing Black female slaves, in the narratives leading up to the rape both novels indicate that incest is the outcome of colonization and "othering" dynamics. Both novels, depict colonization-related identity issues as a key element in becoming a rapist, As though the excluded community is driven incestuously inside by the dominant group's exclusion. In their tremendous self-hatred, these two fathers resort to their own flesh and blood, reclaiming it and simultaneously harming it.

Cholly Breedlove's rape of his own daughter, as well as her reaction to it, is depicted in *The Bluest Eye* as a symbol of the humiliation that comes with being black in a racist culture, Eyerman, agrees that

Individual identity is said to be negotiated within the collectively shared past. Thus, while there is always a unique, biographical memory to draw upon, it is described as being rooted in a collective history. Here collective memory provides the individual with a cognitive map within which to orient present behavior. (Eyerman 65).

A reason why Cholly has been trying to forget his traumatic experience mostly by drinking heavily, beating his wife, and eventually raping his own daughter, transmitting thus his own trauma to his family and offsprings as Burrowes states : ‘‘the exposure of trauma via environmental stimuli such as rape, torture, murder, and the like, caused a transmutation in the manifestation of the genetic makeup in which trauma victims experience. The trauma victims in turn pass on these transmuted traits to their offspring.’’ (Burrowes 14)

#### **IV.5.1. Incestuous Rape as a Product of Slavery**

As defined by Collins dictionary, Incest is the crime of two members of the same family having sexual intercourse, for example a father and daughter, or a brother and sister. Before the invention of writing, man was fascinated with incest. Incest has been one of the

most well-liked literary themes, with instances of it appearing in the mythologies of innumerable peoples, from Sophocles to Eugene O'Neill.

Edward Westermarck, Emile Durkheim, and Sigmund Freud: all three used the expression "the horror of incest." The history of human marriage was published in 1891 by the Finnish sociologist Edward Westermarck who believes that the prohibition against incest stemmed from a natural dislike to having intercourse with someone you've lived with since you were little. This was quickly refuted, particularly by Emile Durkheim and Sigmund Freud. In Leslie A. White's *The Definition and Prohibition of Incest*, she declares that Freud, based on Darwin's hypotheses about the primal social state of man and on what was then known about anthropoid apes, developed the following hypothesis: in the earliest stage of human society, people lived in small groups, each of which was dominated by a strong male, the Father. This thesis was. All the women in the group; mothers, daughters, were dominated by one person; The Father, who drove the young guys away as they matured sexually so that they wouldn't share his ladies with him when they grew older and become more sexually active.

The father was killed and eaten by the banished brothers, who then united to put an end to the father horde. Their animosity for the father has changed into love and respect now that he is deceased. They made the decision to not touch any of their Father's ladies and to start looking for partners outside of their family in order to give him the submission and obedience they had rejected in life, as a result of this commitment being passed down from one generation to the next, the institution of exogamy and the taboo against incest were created.

Freud's idea, however, would still fall short as it doesn't even try to take into account the numerous different ways that incest is prohibited.

Toni Morrison and Alice Walker argue that the dynamics of colonization and "othering" are at least partially to blame for incest. In both novels, Sex is associated with immorality, humiliation, and violence. Instead of being a pleasurable act shared by two people, sexual initiation scenes in both novels are violent and traumatising, leaving a lasting impression on the characters. Therefore, like race and beauty standards, sex functions as a form of oppression. Sex is used by men in both novels to subjugate women in their lives. They challenge long-held misconceptions about rape while also prohibiting a voyeuristic gaze that turns sexual violence into sexually explicit exhibitionism, and demonstrating that blaming the victim for her trauma is easier than trying to understand it .

The theme of rape in both novels has irritated many critics, Prior to this novel, although followed by a steady stream of others later, there was "no major treatment of incest in literature before 1975" (Barnes 3).

Walker was aware of how incest-based fiction would be received by critics and possibly publicists, therefore her response is direct and to the point, there is no gentle way to bring up the topic of rape: "This is the place where a woman is raped every three minutes," she continues, "where one out of every three women will be raped at some point in their lives, and a quarter of those will be children under the age of 12." While for Morrison, the theme of incest serves as a kind of restoration, an effort to rebuild a society where black people are traumatized due to old slavery. Yet, Morrison has never commented nor adressed the theme of rape, both in her interviews and in the paratexts that were included to the 1993 and 1998 versions. Samuels and Clenora state:

Although now a highly publicized topic, child abuse, including incest and rape, was once a socially unmentionable subject that remained unaddressed

though secretly known. It is readily exposed by Morrison, however, in her pioneering novel (Samuels 14).

In order to comprehend the experience of being female in a culture that sexually objectifies the female body. The objectification theory contends that women are socialized to internalize an observer's perspective as their primary perception of their physical self, According to Fredrickson and Roberts, objectification theory 1997 “many women are sexually objectified and treated as an object to be valued for its use. The sexual exploitation and victimization of African American women from the days of slavery to the present has led to media images and stereotypes of Black women as sexual aggressors and sexual savages.” (Fredrickson and Roberts 8)

The systemic oppression that the white members of society engaged in during slavery is illustrated by sexual abuse. Black women face discrimination mostly by the violent white civilization, because of their race and by the patriarchal institutions that govern society.

Morrison, forgoes the use of metaphor and presents us with the reality of a father abusing his daughter, she makes use of sexuality to demonstrate how a character's background and attitudes may be inferred from their sexual behavior, demonstrating how sexuality is a product of social and cultural creation. Cholly thinks that by raping his daughter and using her as a medium, he might recapture a younger version of himself.

When Pecola's drunken father stumbles into the kitchen, the eleven-year-old is still standing at the sink and working on the filthy dishes. Pecola's rape takes place inside her own home instead of being carried into foreign countries by Cholly, which heightens its inherent horror, the excluded group's incestuous inward movement is fueled by the dominant group's exclusion.

The traces of rape endured during enslavement are evoked by Morrison and Walker. Morrison is more interested with the communal suffering of the greater black community than the anguish of any one particular person.

Celie and Pecola's stories are similar in structure: after being abused by a male relative, 9 and 11 year old children experience extreme sensory loss that makes their whole identity in doubt.

#### **IV.5.2.Culture of Dissemblance**

Laws prohibited the prosecution of any perpetrator for the rape of a slave woman, therefore raping a Black woman was simply not a crime. The Equal Protection of the Laws was guaranteed by the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Amendments, which were proposed and adopted as such. Barriers to prosecution persisted after its implementation.

The term "the culture of dissemblance" was created by Darlene Clark Hine in her essay "Rape and the Inner Lives of Black Women in the Middle West." Where she defines dissimulation as "the behavior and attitudes of Black women that produced the illusion of openness and transparency but actually hid the realities of their inner lives and selves from their subjugation" (Hine 912).

Hine asserts that, cultural dissemblance was used as a survival tactic to help African Americans, mainly women, avoid being sexually attacked by White people. In essence, cultural dissemblance can be a reaction to institutional racism. On the other hand Evelyn Hammonds claims that not all black women, engage in the culture of dissemblance. In fact, the 1920s' blues musicians were outspoken about their sexuality and the prevalence of sexual assault in society (Hammonds 97). Which is the case of Shug Avery in the Color Purple and of the three whores in The Bluest Eye.

### IV.5.3.Enforced Silence

The slavery institution's restrictions on the creation of secure and lasting households, together with the abuse that black people experienced when they were separated from their parents' care and maternal love, have been internalized over many generations, as what Rachel A Feinstein refers to in her book: *The Untold History of Sexual Violence During Slavery* as the intergenerational transmission of white gender norms. Neither rape has not ended with slavery nor the imposed silence accompanied with it. Both works imply that the dynamics of being colonized and "othered" are to be blame for the incest in the tales leading up to the rape. Celie and Pecola represent the stereotype of black women as oppressed, helpless, and subservient. Anyone without a voice is obligated to look for one because a person's voice is one of their most valuable possessions.

The Color Purple starts with The protagonist Celie, warned by her stepfather early in the story, which silences her and denies her the ability to talk about herself with anybody but God. Swept up in the upheaval of her community's patriarchal society, the author illustrates how speaking up and refusing to remain silent are acts of salvation or healing, and she broadens this healing to be more inclusive. Celie leaned on the epistolary form and began writing letters to god, to whom she expresses all of her worries and concerns.

Pecola is reluctant to tell her mother that she was sexually assaulted by her father owing to victim blaming beliefs, and when she did, she was exposed to humiliation, abuse, and exclusion not only by her mother but also by her neighbors who blamed her of being responsible for the rape act.” Rape myths, which are mistaken attitudes and ideas about rape, rape survivors, and rapists, are connected to the idea of victim blaming. These beliefs excuse male sexual assault of women and foster an environment hostile to rape survivors.” (Lonsway & Fitzgerald 1994)

Pecola's mentality becomes fragmented, the cycle of silence increases as a result of Pecola's repeated attempts to tell her mother about her rape. Eventually, Pecola finds a voice through internal conversations with an imaginary friend.

For anybody whose once normal everyday life was suddenly shattered by an act of sexual violence— the trauma, the terror, can shatter you long after one horrible attack. It lingers. You don't know where to go or who to turn to...and people are more suspicious of what you were wearing or what you were drinking, as if it's your fault, not the fault of the person who assaulted you...We still don't condemn sexual assault as loudly as we should. We make excuses, we look the other way...[Laws] won't be enough unless we change the culture that allows assault to happen in the first place. - President Barack Obama, September 2014

In the US, there is an intersectionality between sexual assault and racism. Despite the fact that the feminist and women's liberation movements of the 1960s and 1970s gave rise to the anti-sexual violence movement, sexual assault centers were only established in the 1970s and they were exclusively designed to serve the needs of White women. Because black people have not had access to those programs, black women's voices and life experiences have been mostly ignored. These mechanisms were a barrier for survivors of color to disclose their victimization going forward rather than creating a resort to them. For a long time, racist persecution has been carried out through the tools of law enforcement and the criminal justice system as they were used as a rationalization method to black people oppression.

As a reaction to the unfair treatment imposed on blacks, Third Wave Feminism appeared in the late 20th and early 21<sup>st</sup>, placing a great emphasis on intersectionality and



holding that it would be difficult to address one specific social discrepancy or oppression without a comprehension of the ways in which several forms of oppression interact.

Recently a variety of methods have been suggested by West, Carolyn M. and Kalimah Johnson in their paper "*Sexual Violence in the Lives of African American Women.*" (2013), to help aid in reducing this imbalance and creating services that are culturally sensitive by mainly by providing employees with training on the history of sexual assault and historical trauma affecting communities of color, and by celebrating the resiliency of survivors of color and the communities they come from.(PCAR 2)

One must address all of the repressive structures that shape and constrain black women's life choices in order to affect health outcomes, according to the national Black Women's Health Project, which was established in 1981. The project specifically aimed to end "the conspiracy of silence" (Avery 1990) among black women, which prevented them from discussing their own experiences of trauma and injustice.

#### **IV.6. Concept of Beauty in both Novels**

According to anti-white supremacist Theodore Allen, who started his groundbreaking research on "white skin advantage" and "white race" privilege, the first African arrived in Virginia in 1619, and according to colonial records, there weren't any "white" people there at the time, and there wouldn't be any for another 60 years. However, the position of the Negro in Virginia and Maryland in the seventeenth century has been the focus of historical discussion on the emergence of racial slavery. Theodore, thinks that the transformation of English, Scottish, Irish, and other European colonists from being servants, into being the highly appreciated class that of whites, is what needs to be studied because it holds the key to understanding the paradox of American history, based on racial assumptions.

According to Hayley Curtiss on her writing entitled *Beauty Standards in America Put the Pressure on Millennials to Look "Perfect"*, she stated, "beauty is in the eye of who society as a whole perceives as beautiful" (Hayley 1).

In other words, black people cannot form themselves independently of whites as long as they are subject to their sight, henceforth marked invisible due to their objectification and rendered inhuman. According to Hegel, a person may only become conscious of himself after being recognized by another. However, there is a fight and a conflict when the desire for acknowledgment is obstructed. Whoever receives recognition without giving anything back becomes the master. The person who recognizes the other but is not acknowledged becomes their slave, not only does the master earn respect, but he also dehumanizes the slave by making him nothing more than a convenient tool for carrying out his wishes.'(Bulhan 134).

The common perception that dark-skinned women are unsightly and ugly has highlighted the thinking of former civilizations and how they relate to Western culture today, which puts black women in a perilous situation as a double minority. The two books serve as excellent examples of the two social strata that exist between blacks and whites. The characters experience the prejudice of the white ruling class and the unsettling sense of invisibility imposed on them, reducing them to the status of failures and outsiders, causing them to lose respect for themselves and for their own color because they can never satisfy both society and themselves.

How the darkness of your skin dehumanizes you by making you look like an animal and giving you animalistic traits, due to the same societal expectations that those with "fair" complexion are not only more attractive and desirable but also acceptable in society, the main protagonists.

The contrast between ugliness and beauty is one interconnected theme that appears often in both novels. Celie and Pecola illustrate ugliness, while Shug Avery, the blues singer, and Shirley Temple are good examples of beauty. Celie and Pecola, feel that they are ugly because of their dark skin. Shirley Temple, the 1930's child actress, has been described as "America's Little Darling" and Mary Jane, a logo for a piece of candy, who epitomize unadulterated beauty, are beloved by Pecola who overconsumes milk because she thinks the more she drinks, the more Shirley-like she will appear, this is a part of her quest to assimilate white culture's values: "Smiling white face. Blond hair in gentle disarray, blue eyes looking at her out of a world of clean comfort. The eyes are petulant, mischievous. To Pecola they are simply pretty. She... love Mary Jane. Be Mary Jane. (*The Bluest Eye* 50)

When Pecola eats a candy bar with the brand "Mary Jane," she thinks that eating the candy is like eating Mary Jane's eyes, Pecola tries everything to submit herself into "white beauty," and her desire to be accepted as attractive has grown into an obsession, to the extent that she truly thinks she has blue eyes by the book's end. Pecola has been brainwashed into the stereotypes that people in the mainstream culture project onto themselves if they want to succeed, as evidenced by the fact that she finally starts to believe she has blue eyes. Frigga Haugg, German socialist-feminist sociologist and philosopher, declares in a talk entitled 'Women – Victims or Culprits?

In 1980, She made an effort to develop a theory of the socialization process of women in order to demonstrate the part played by women in perpetuating their own oppression and to make the case that self-sacrifice and the subordination within are forms of the activity, she further states that :”As girls get older, they will be socialized into a process of producing femininity, this process involves the sexualization of specific body parts and the subjugation of other body parts as the focal point of various discourses about femininity.” (Tsu-ching Lu

12) This can be applied to Pecola, who never tries to change the negative opinions that the dominating white males have about black women. She gradually relegates herself to the role of the "others" and "Subaltern"

In *The Bluest Eye*, white women, despite not being characters in the book, have a significant impact on how the black people behave since they are viewed as role models. The first repeating character for white women is that of the movie star. This role reflects an unreachable standard of beauty because it is manufactured and only partially grounded in reality when compared to the lives of black women, like Mrs. Breedlove did when she became fixated with movies and started to reject her look as a black lady by straightening her hair and wearing makeup like white ladies. Her ideals of feminine beauty, condition, and role became those portrayed in popular culture. and in some ways, so does Pecola, the main character's daughter, due to the fact that she is black, poor, and deemed ugly by everyone she knows, including the students at her school, the proprietor of the market where she buys candy, and even by her mother, whom she refers to as Mrs. Breedlove, Pecola is raised in shame; her only escape is to chase beauty.

Pecola, believes that her physical flaws are to blame for her family's lack of affection and their ongoing arguments. In her fantasies, she says that Cholly and Mrs. Breedlove might change if she had a different, more attractive appearance. They could have said, "Look at pretty-eyed Pecola." We won't act inappropriately in front of those attractive eyes." (*The Bluest Eye* 40). To alter how other people perceive her, Pecola begs for a white girl with blue eyes.

By the end of the novel, Pecola seeks assistance from a man named Soaphead Church, a light-skinned West Indian man, is a self-proclaimed misanthrope. After failing as a preacher, he declares himself a "Reader, Adviser, and Interpreter of Dreams" and offers

advice to members of the community. He despises the human body, believing it to be filthy, and only wishes to touch the bodies of children, whom he regards as clean.

Pecola approaches him to request blue eyes. This request moves him; his attraction to whiteness makes it understandable, Morrison says she needed someone like Soaphead who would accept the monstrous wish of Pecola as natural and agree to "help" her. Soaphead finds her request for blue eyes "the most fantastic and the most logical petition he had ever received. Here was an ugly little girl asking for beauty" (*The Bluest Eye* 174), Morrison tells us that his outrage "grew and felt like power. For the first time he honestly wished he could work miracles" (*The Bluest Eye* 174) and "How to hang on to the feeling of power. Pecola completely loses all sense of reality after meeting him because she thinks he can make her fantasy come true.

Mary Jane and Shirley Temple, two white candy models, convey to the black population in the USA that they are the epitome of cuteness and that everyone who does not look like them is ugly. African slaves in the American south who won their freedom during the American Civil War (1861–1865) started to imitate the way of their powerful invaders because they developed inferiority complexes and were dissatisfied with their forebears. Now that Pecola can recognize herself in Shirley Temple and her blue eyes, she begins to exhibit signs of madness. Morrison demonstrates that Pecola is unaware of this and that she has been trained to despise her condition as a black young girl, which society has forced upon her. Pecola is not alone in associating black features with the word "ugly"; everyone seems to feel the same way, with the exception of Claudia and her older sister, Frieda. We've met Maureen Peal, Geraldine, and now Elihue Micah Whitcomb, three black people who make it their life's work to deny their blackness.

They've all thought Pecola was ugly, and they've all victimized her because of her African features, as a pathological response to an oppressive environment, many external

influences or societal institutions, such as the media, families, and peer groups, regularly spread the idea that Black women are less beautiful. Collins points out that Morrison illustrates the internalized oppression that can result from everyday attacks on a kid's sense of self. A youngster will face shame because her peers, community, and society do not appreciate her dark complexion.(Sharma 5)

Morrison addresses the desire of black people to transform into whiteness in order to conform to the hegemonic ideal of their "oppressors."not only pecola who suffered due to her blakness Celie is another victim of this stereotypical perception in her society in South Georgia.

Celie's dark complexion and skin pigmentation were the root causes of the majority of her problems, Like any woman who loses confidence in herself and her beauty, she becomes subordinate to a man. From the beginning of the novel, the word ‘ugly’ was often repeated on Celie's hearing by her father first and then her husband, until she became certain that she was actually ugly and that was the catalyst behind Celie's conversion to homosexuality.

The coloured Africans, who become subaltern as a result of internalizing the Western conception of beauty, must decolonize their brains in order to avoid developing an inferiority complex since their fascination with whiteness is damaging.

#### **IV.7.Surviving Trauma**

“Trauma and recovery are complicated, layered processes for all individuals because both personal and cultural memory reactivate past experiences stored in bodily circuits.”

Both works' plots clearly indicate the authors' literary intention of showcasing a wide range of traumas that almost systematically affected black women in the twentieth century. Ron Eyerman and Evelyn Schreiber have argued that the traumas originating in slavery and

the Middle Passage have constituted the kernel of collective memory and identity for most African Americans (Schreiber 5).

Beyond simply presenting characters suffering from intergenerational Trauma, Morrison's and Walker's texts offer compelling perspectives into the possibility routes to Trauma recovery. Judith Herman, a professor of clinical psychiatry at Harvard University Medical School and a founding member of the Women's Mental Health Collective, in her *Trauma and Recovery* 1992, asserts that critical steps for victims to recover from trauma can be approached only by the aid of the community and effective speaking.

In a book entitled *Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome: America's Legacy of Enduring Injury and Healing*, written by Dr. Joy DeGruy . The term P.T.S.S is : “a condition that exists when a population has experienced multigenerational trauma resulting from centuries of slavery and continues to experience oppression and institutionalized racism today.” (Burrowes 2) or as defined by : Pouissant and Alexander it is “the persistent presence of racism, despite the significant legal, social, and political progress made during the last half of the twentieth century, [which] has created a physiological risk for AA people that is virtually unknown to EAs” (Pouissant & Alexander 15).

In her book, Dr. Joy DeGruy examines how racism, trauma, violence, and American chattel slavery—which was predicated on the premise that African Americans were genetically and inherently inferior to whites—interact and influence African descendants in the United States. As a result, racism has been institutionalized

One of the recurring features of sexual and domestic abuse, according to Herman, is a culture of societal neglect, in which the victim is rendered invisible and rejected. Celie Harris, the despised black girl at the center of *The Color Purple*, exemplifies attempts at coping mechanisms for the family trauma she faces, she takes control of her own destiny and

becomes an active agent. A black, poor, uneducated girl who was raped by a man she thought is her father, her beloved sister was taken away, she lost her two children, and then married to a cruel man who treats her more like a slave, yet, her survival instinct, and struggle to hold on are stronger than she herself can realize. According to Herman, The trauma recovery process :” occurs in stages which require the victim of trauma to escape the dangerous setting and escape to a safe environment for the trauma responses to be mitigated (Burrowes 13).

#### **IV.8. Writing as a Means of Escapism**

Walker uses an epistolary style “as one of the cultural products in which imagination plays a great part for "it is imagination that gives it color and shape" (Traversa, 168).

having the main character Celie converse with God about things that she cannot say out loud, Celie's ability to articulate her thoughts and feelings, both of which are crucial for the formation of an identity, is made possible by the narrative and voice power. Writing is in itself a therapy. According to the International Expressive Arts Therapy Association (IEATA 2019), “The Expressive Arts utilize the visual arts, movement, drama, music, writing and other creative processes to foster deep personal growth and community development. It is an evolving multimodal approach within psychology, organizational development, community arts and education” (IEATA 2019)

Both Celie and Nettie send letters to one another and to God. Writing letters allows for self-expression and remorse, which gives both sisters peace and resilience

According to Herman, the trauma healing process happens in stages, and each stage necessitates that the trauma victim flee the perilous situation and enter a secure setting in order to lessen the trauma symptoms.



#### **IV.9. Women Empowerment**

Toni Morrison and Alice Walker, are well-known modern African American feminist writers who care deeply about issues of race and gender, associate the Negro two-ness with womanism and its conceptual and practical implications, in black feminism (Collins 93) highlights the fact that African American women writers—of both fiction and non-fiction—have provided a “comprehensive view of Black women’s struggles to form positive self-definitions” in the face of multiple oppressions. In *The Bluest Eye*, Pecola Breedlove embodies a womanistic two-ness combined with a personal search for identity, self, and humanity. During her quest, she develops an uncritical submission to white beauty values and abandons black culture.

Celie's "transformation" after years of being defined by her husband and her step father represents empowerment via emancipation: when she refuses to accept the subservient role that was assigned to her under patriarchy, she freed herself from the oppressive force of sexism with the aid of other female characters.

When she met Shug, her husband's mistress, and Sofia, her daughter-in-law, they both taught her how to stand up to men, as well as how to combat prejudice and injustice. Despite the racist and sexist world they live in, strength in female friendships shown through those women caring for one another provided possibilities to the three of them to continue growing. Throughout the novel Celie, Shug, and Sofia mourn together, laugh together, and share one another's joys. They live together in a world Celie could never have thought existed until her husband, ironically, brought his mistress home.

Celie, with the aid of women around her; her sister, Nettie, her daughter-in-law, Sophia, and Shug Avery, discovered what it's like to love and be loved as she interacts with and develops friendships with them. She came to understand that she deserves more than she

has so far been given, she practically needed half of her life to ultimately accept who she was and discover her true passion, her psychological transformation confirms the assert that victims heal from trauma only by the assistance of the community. Unlike Walker, Morrison brought attention to how society's disempowerment of people, actual or perceived, is also at the basis of recurrent horrific events occurring within particular familial systems, which can endure decades.

Pecola, the protagonist in *The Bluest Eye*, falls prey to the suffocating barriers of her race, age, and gender, her life is getting less and less protected, slowly drifting into insanity after being violently molested by her own father and cruelly belittled by her society. Morrison tries to highlight how society and community are just as much, if not more, to blame for Pecola's rape as her parents were as stated in the forward of the novel : ''.. it is some consolation to know that the dislike or hatred is unjustified that you don't deserve it. And if you have the emotional strength and/or support from family and friends, the damage is reduced or erased.''

However in Pecola's case, she herself failed to acknowledge her trauma, thus leading herself to insanity :

Trauma is ultimately an expression of human vulnerability; when African American women are allowed to acknowledge the role trauma plays in their lives, they are freed from the expectation of unfailing durability. It then becomes much easier for African American women to accept support, encouragement, and relief from their families and communities (Harris 2015 n.p.)(Folabomi L. Ogunyemi1350)

By giving her audience a view inside Pecola's psyche and her parents' tragic and shameful upbringings Morrison appears to trace the impossibility of healing through other focal characters.

Cholly Breedlove, Pecola's father, being abandoned by his parents he reaches maturity without ever experiencing the safe, unconditional affection of family members, he represents the abusive father who regularly fights with his wife in front of his children, and never provides his family with even the most basic requirements, and rapes his daughter, Pecola, on the kitchen floor while intoxicated. motivated by excessive drinking, He rapes his daughter, Pecola, and abandons her on the kitchen floor, Pecola's tragic outcome is a result of the family's influence, internalized racism, and the strong dominant culture of white people.

After burning his house Claudia described him :''Cholly Breedlove, then, a enting black, having put his family outdoors, had captured himself beyond the reaches of human consideration. He had joined the animals ;was, indeed, an old dog, a snake, a ratty nigger.''(The Bluest Eye 16)

In a recent study entitled "*If trauma can be passed down through generations, so can joy*," psychotherapist and author Lola Jaye notes that although racism is a more prevalent problem in society, its effects on Black people's mental health continue to be profound. Celie, After discovering and acknowledging the causes of her trauma and the emotional scars from her early years, she started to heal and developed into a strong, independent lady. On the other hand, Pecola's road to rehabilitation might be insurmountable because no one nearby, not even herself appear to be willing to help her raise her awareness and bury her pain.

In order to heal, transform, and genuinely break the pattern, Nettie and Celie must face and deconstruct their pain. They do this by understanding the profound resonance of intergenerational trauma and seeking to put an end to the cycle.

In her book, *Healing Racial Trauma*, Sheila Wise Rowe, asserts that It is essential to conduct a historical and social study to shed light on the pain of racism since the violent trauma caused by the sick and dysfunctional White supremacy narrative has frequently gone

ignored in many researchers' discourse on race. It is important to consider how America's original sin has affected subsequent generations as well as the continuous misery brought on by modern phenomena like family separation and asylum seekers.

The persistent trauma of White supremacy affects both victims and offenders. Therefore, rehabilitation is not just for the victim; the victimizers have also been traumatized into thinking they are better, which is a very serious social-psychological delusion in and of itself. Fanon, believes that The negro enslaved by his inferiority, the white man enslaved by his superiority, alike behave in accordance with a neurotic orientation, Fanon's demand for a psychoanalytical explanation arises from the perverse reflections of "civil virtue" in the alienation acts of colonial governance, such as the ardent desire in the colonizer professed ambition to civilize or modernize the native.

despite his insistence on violence, Fanon was reaching forward to a new form of humanism, one that would be more inclusive and which would reject the European Enlightenment model. It argues that Fanon proposes an ethics of recognition of difference within the postcolonial paradigm as the first step on the route to the new humanism. Through mutual recognition, subjectivities are forged, and from this point a humanist vision is possible. Once mutual recognition has been accorded, it can lead to a collective ethics, argues Fanon.(Nayar 1)

#### **IV.10.Fanon's New humanism as a Coping Mecanism**

Human oppression has probably existed forever. In one way or another, tyranny has long characterized human existence. Examples include the oppression of the weak by the strong, the plunder of the unequipped by the equipped, and the unfair domination of the less organized majority by the more organized minority. In actuality, oppression and the revolt it invariably sparks are what propel history. Both human despotism and the beginnings of human civilization were influences on and precursors to one another. For black community, colonialism prevented black males from engaging in the self-Other dichotomy, which is fundamental for defining identities. Black men have no way of legitimizing themselves without an Other to do so. this condition of self-denial. Due to their lack of othering (alterity), black males become objects, a process Fanon refers to as "crushing objecthood."(Nayar3)

As a coping strategy, Fanon advises turning to new humanism : ‘Humanism born out of such a praxis is empowering and enabling because it seeks nothing less than the amelioration of the sufferings of people in the here and the now rather than offer transcendent truths about History. This humanism is a collective ethics that is pragmatic rather than idealist.’(Nayar7)

Africans have been marginalized, their sense of humanism has been disrupted, and they have been forced into an existential downward spiral. In actuality, modernity in the West has considered the issue of whether or not Africans are "humans," and has drawn the conclusion that they are not. Fanon has widened the scope of the public discourse on the colonial trauma that Black Americans have endured by highlighting the role of slavery, white supremacy, systemic anti-Black racism, and the conditioning to view black people as less than human. Fanon's purpose is to thoroughly deconstruct traditional European humanism, which

is based on discrimination and old inequalities. He seeks a humanism that values variety and relishes it to the advantage of the world .

According to Fanon's final remarks in his book *Black Skin White Masks*, the calamity of the man of color resides in the fact that he was an enslaved, while white man's tragedy resides in the fact that he has killed men somewhere, he adds saying , I the man of color do not have the right to lock myself into a world of retroactive reparations, to the extent that it is ... I, a man of color, merely desire that the man never become possessed by the instrument. that human slavery end once and for all. Fanon insisted that both whites and blacks should turn their backs to inhumanity (Fanon 231)

Even if entangled within Western notions of humanity, Fanon no longer asserts inclusion within them. He thinks that Black humanity's incorporation within Western humanity is an illusion. In fact, the more he pushes for inclusivity, the more he feels the uncomfortable cues of perpetual othering brought on by decades of mental trauma. Fanon saw philosophy as a practical engagement with the humanities and social sciences toward social reform, reeducation, and the removal of the dehumanization of the colonized in his search for a new humanism and humanity.(Sunguze 02)

## **Conclusion**

In the first part of the 20th century, each of the fictional female protagonists lived in rural areas with a caste structure based on Jim Crow laws. Both black females reportedly experienced violence, family incest, and believe they are ugly. However, African American women, their sense of self has changed drastically throughout the course of their existence. The central theme of *The Color Purple* is giving voice to the voiceless, and the book's central tenet appears to be that hearing one's voice can help one heal. Through Celie,

Walker narrates the tale of a black woman who was sexually assaulted by her stepfather and only manages to run away to find herself in a relationship with "Mr. —," another oppressive guy, where she is subjected to physical, mental, and sexual violence. Celie appears to be an ancestor who survived, she can be saved because her voice is preserved in letters, The people who are capable of reforming are those who are willing to listen.

Pecola Breedlove, on the other hand, is unable to fit into the white American society in which she lives. She is not at all protected by her family and receives no support from any other members of her community, as stated by Gillespie in her *Critical Companion to Toni Morrison* that Pecola, was unable to establish herself on the solid foundation of love and understanding, which is required for any maturation to be effective, Pecola's tragedy results from the loss and variation of love among her family, friends and the whole community at large.

Compared to Pecola, Celie developed differently. In order to reclaim her feminine agency in opposition to the male power brokers who oppress and take advantage of brown women generally, Walker lets her protagonist to talk from a first-person perspective and utilize her own voice, celie proved her ability to dispel the long-term psychic effects of prejudices rooted in racialism and sexism.

Morrison, however, is troubled by the aesthetic standards imposed by white norms, and because they have fully internalized the prevailing white standards of value and beauty, The Breedloves in *The Bluest Eye* were estranged from one another and are unable to identify their place in American culture, As Bhabha puts it, the colonial discourse has turned the colonized into "a subject of difference that is almost the same, but not quite" (Bhabha 86).

In order to protect and conceal his or her inner distinctiveness from the colonizer, the colonized consciously absorb the "reformed" appearance as a mask, as a result, they have

nurtured doubleness in the form of self-denial or self-distortion instead of forming bonds with one another to effect societal change.

The sorrow and remorse that Pecola's mother experiences as her family is mocked and despised by others in their neighborhood is embraced by her daughter, and as a result, she is left to fend for herself in a hostile environment. She eventually resorts to creating an imaginary friend who serves as a sign of her insane behavior, ironically, with the new blue eyes, a fresh perspective on insanity can be recognized, as the victim's hopeless reaction to trauma, Critics like Julia Kristeva point out that mimicry can lead to the dangers of assimilating the norms of the dominant culture, which can lead to psychological forms of oppression like delirium and insanity.

Pecola and Celie's lives seemed to be plagued by a string of unfortunate incidents, and they were affected by the psychological wounds that society has left behind, degraded and devalued as black women, ashamed and humiliated over the alleged incest with their fathers, yet, subjectivity is expanding in Celie as she asserts her freedom and proclaims her right to exist: "I'm pore, I'm black, I may be ugly, and can't cook..... But I'm here" (The Color Purple 187).

Celie, who experienced continuous abuse from her father and husband, transforms into an outspoken subject after having meaningful conversations with other women, whereas Pecola failed to find her autonomy and voice, there isn't a single woman in Pecola's life, not her friends and not even her mother, who can act as a guide to help her discover the solutions she wants and alleviate the pain of her fractured spirit, therefore she is doomed to a tragic end along with her family due to their total isolation from one another and from society. The path to self-acceptance, in *The Bluest Eye* has been disoriented. Thus, there is nothing left except adopting to the white societal rules.



African Americans are exposed to dominant ideologies that actively promote alienation, which exposes them to emotional trauma that originates in the past during slavery and repeats itself in the present, they are caught in a double-edged dilemma: Accept what white society has instilled in them, and perpetuate this type of relationship with their future children or fight for their own beliefs and aim for empowerment. It's a challenging journey, but it's the beginning of empowerment!

What does the black man want? this question that Fanon asks on the first page of his *Black Skin White Masks*, he concluded saying, "I am asking to be considered" it is not just a matter of identity as much as it is a matter of identification.



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## General Conclusion

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## General Conclusion

Racist and sexist ideologies permeate every facet of the American society to a degree that they become hegemonic and yet are seen as ordinary. Being black in an American society means that you are excluded from their culture and despised by them. Women's experience across all cultures has been manifested as resistance against oppression since the dawn of civilization. By bringing attention to the systematic and historical patterns of injustice, an understanding of the repressive American system contributes to a better identification of inequality. The institutions of society, including government, education, and culture, all contribute to or reinforce the oppression of marginalized social groups while elevating dominant social groups in the United States. Systematic forms of oppression, such as sexism and classism, are intertwined in the very fabric of American culture, society, and laws. The imposition of a masculine filter on black women demotes them to the status of "the second sex," which is a practice not limited to white Society. These ladies were evaluated as extraordinary women who, in response to a crisis, transcended their gender roles and behaving like men. Fighting against injustice was an outgrowth of the roles that African women played before American slavery.

Americans perceive black women stereotypically as a way to substantiate black women oppression and exploitation. A stereotype is an over-generalized belief about a particular category of people. It is an expectation that people might have about every person of a particular group. The type of expectation can vary; it can be, for example, an expectation about the group's personality, preferences, appearance. Stereotypes are sometimes overgeneralized, inaccurate, and resistant to new information, but can sometimes be accurate. In white America, inaccurate stereotypes are used to justify the implementation of oppressive acts against African women. The main four destructive, persistent racial stereotypes that lead

to modern women being problematized today according to Winfrey Harris are : The Jezebel, The Mammy, The Sapphire and the Matriarch.

Racism seems to have replaced slavery as a demarcation line between black and white people, thus, excluding one group based on the naturalization of difference led to the institutionalizing of racist supremacy in patriarchal US. The practice of sexism and the act of racism did not stop with the Emancipation Proclamation of 1863 by president Abraham Lincoln. In fact enslaved people, mainly men, accepted the patriarchal definitions of male-female gender roles and reproduced them, as a way to restore their lost manhood during the slavery period which ultimately led to a more marginalization for black women. Celie and Mr. are poor farmers who represent the archetype of that time when being unable to leave the south that enslaved their ancestors. (BOUGOFA, BACHER 125)

Black women's bodies become the domain of colonialism and chauvinism of white cultures as a result of the lack of opportunities for portraying their racial forms and cultural individuality, causing African-Americans to endure multiple layers of negation, The black body is accorded no value, which undermines certain characters' self-confidence because they think they are truly ugly. Dehumanizing the feminine body is a direct allusion to the abuse of the black bodies during slavery. Readers can access the defining influences of slavery thanks to Walker and Morrison's vivid narratives of violence and hardship through that time and even after.

A thorough analysis and expansion of the historical experiences of communities whose perspectives were typically marginalized by official discourse are necessary when retelling history from their viewpoint. Since fiction allows writers to relive and process such

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traumas in a way that historical discourse is unable to; both authors place a great value on revisiting history and dealing with its sad events.

The syntax in *The Bluest Eye* and *The Color Purple* show how both authors capture an authentic way their characters speak, which contrasts with the syntax used in the narrative voice. Dialogue often incorporates vernacular and slang as well as dropped words and incorrect verb conjugation. Allowing readers to quickly swipe through the pages, and the plot unfolds topics like incest, early marriage, and childbirth, as well as the ultimate shift from slaves to full-fledged individuals. are common themes in both novels. Both works map racial and gendered issues, which are very pervasive in the novels.

We cannot solely attribute self-destruction to the white cultural perversion that disregards the hopes and aspirations of black women who do not fit the blonde, blue-eyed American myth because this is so pervasive that it even affects whites who might be deemed unattractive by their own Anglican standards if they aren't sufficiently blond or blue-eyed. preserving strong relations within one's family and community help foster self-appreciation, strong female relationships are a strategy for overcoming sexism. Even in modern times, society still perceive women with darker complexion tones as "undesirable".

Not all those found guilty were whites, they could've been blacks with white sheets. Walker and Morrison's main concern is how to end the cycle of intergenerational trauma within members of the same ethnic group and to restore the spirits of the wounded. Purple is a secondary shade that is created by combining red (the color of love) with blue (which is often associated with depression). The author may have intended for her book's title to convey more than it actually does about the triumph of love over despair by using the color purple.

In *The Bluest Eye*, the superlative form of Blue can indicate how dejected the protagonist is, especially since it is "eye" rather than "eyes", which can convey the pronoun I. If women are separated, they cannot overcome anything; they must come together and speak with one voice in support of one another. Only with the support of other women can the oppressed women reclaim their voice and confidence, Homi Bhabha asserts that stories with a focus on historical reconstruction may help us respond to and rewrite the past. releasing us from historical determinism and allowing us to work inside and through the present.

The perception of colored as innately filthy and unworthy of respect, was and still is a reason why they are more likely to encounter sexual abuse, racism, sexism, and inequality. They have consistently been subjected to limitations and exclusions, and they hardly ever get any attention. Black women have historically received little legal protection, especially when they were the victims of rape, and this lack of protection has been justified by hypersexualization assumptions about black women. Prior to 1970, only a small number of black female writers produced what many academics regarded as significant work.

After 1970, however, a large number of black female writers emerged and contributed to the growth of African American literature, elevating it to new heights. A greater understanding of the black community was provided by Alice Walker, Toni Morrison, and many others.

The dominant group during slavery created a lot of unfavorable perceptions of Blacks in order to allay their guilt and cover up their violent exploitative behavior. These stereotypical representations, which continue to this day and have done significant psychological harm to Black people include Africans' enslavement in America was largely justified by the notion that the African "species of men" were "naturally inferior to the whites," as advocated by scholars like Hume and Kant. Black people were exploited by Southern plantation owners who were committed to making a profit.

In addition to giving their masters nonstop labor, slaves also constituted tradeable goods, owing racism black people are less aware of their Black identity, which leads to internalized negative sentiments and self-loathing about themselves as Blacks. Despite the fact that identifying with one's racial and cultural group is a difficult process that does not happen quickly, black people should work together to educate and elevate the Black community, the process by which a black individual creates a bond with his group, once completed, this process has the capacity to affect attitudes and behaviors through the acceptance of group values and goals. According to social identity theory, collective identity construction is a mental process wherein the self is formed through social influences such as country, skin color, common history and oppression, there is no easy answer to stopping racism, as it requires a commitment from all of us to address it head-on. One important step is to be aware of how racism manifests itself in our daily life , and to challenge any assumptions we have about people based on their skin color or origin. We can also work to create more diverse and inclusive environments where everyone feels welcomed and respected, this means creating a tolerant culture that promotes a healthy understanding of different races.



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