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***Morrison's Portrayal of Beauty Standards and its Impact on
Black Womanhood in the Bluest Eye***

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A Master's Degree in Literature and Civilization**

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Dedications

Every challenging work needs self-efforts as well as guidance of elders especially those who are very close to our hearts.

My humble effort is dedicated to my sweet and loving parents, who were the reason of my success and who have always shown great support, patience and love during my whole educational path especially this year. Words would never be enough to thank you.

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Abstract

The *Bluest Eye* is a novel written by the Nobel Prize winning author Toni Morrison; which represents the life of the African American females during the early twentieth century. Morrison shows how the concept of Western beauty ideals are formed and spread among black people. The novel, not only illustrate how black lives have been destroyed because of their skin colour. Yet also shows the human loss that occurs when true and realistic standards of beauty are not established. Along with the harsh racist and sexist acts practised on the black female characters due to the supported beauty myth, brought by the white American society. The present study aims to shed light on the issue of racism in relation to African feminism, The effect of the white ideology on the black female characters during the 20th century; Morrison's focus in this novel is on the damage black women characters suffer in their feminine construction. In a society that only recognizes white physical traits as a fundamental criterion of beauty.

Key Words: African American Literature, Black Feminism, Racism, Sexism, Beauty Myth, Beauty Standards, Abuse.

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General Introduction

General Introduction

When a writer portrays historical events in their literary works aiming to catch the audience's eye to the problem they want to solve, like the issue of racism against African Americans, literature here is being used as ammunition to call for their rights and demand for justice. America had a long history of injustice and inequality; this has been a central problem for black writers. This incident has existed since the colonial era, it contains practices and actions against the oppressed minority who are disregarded by the majority. It started when the white masters brought Africans to the new world to work as slaves for them. Fighting this unfairness was a must as many African American writers have rebelled against these phenomena through writing great literary works such as Toni Morrison's Novel *the Bluest Eye*.

The Bluest Eye is a novel written by Nobel Prize-winning author Toni Morrison, published in 1970. Tells the story of the African American little girl Pecola who is obsessed by the white standards of beauty and prays to have bluest eyes, because in her mind if she has blue eyes then she are going to look beautiful and every one will respect and accept her in society. She is the main character in the novel who believed in her own ugliness due to the white ideology that was practised on the black minority during the 20th century. This beauty myth is one of the most tackled themes in the novel, along to other themes like race, class, gender and sexuality.

The era of 1960s was an era of big changes in the United States of America, political and social changes occurred, especially beauty which was highly introduced by the American society. It becomes a social aspect that resulted in a negative impact on the black community whom were seen as ugly and worthless. In this period black feminist movement raised to prominence, because of the oppressive, racist and sexist acts on black women. Naomi Wolf used the term "beauty myth" to refer to "a black lash against feminism that uses an ideology about beauty to keep women down" (Wolf 3). The standards of beauty have always been both

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social and historical aspects unconsciously. So those who possess the beauty criteria will be respected and accepted in society, in opposed to the black community who were born and raised believing that they are ugly and worthless, which resulted in a self-hatred.

The present study aims to shed light on the issue of racism in relation to African feminism in Morrison's Novel *the Bluest Eye*. The effect of the white ideology on the black female characters during the 20th century; the damage that black women suffered through the construction of beauty standards and who supported these beauty ideals. Fighting this harsh act of racism against blacks and showing that they are no less than the whites. It also explores the profound impacts of the beauty myth, on black female character's racial identity and body image together with the ruthless resistance of these black female characters despite all the cruelty they have lived.

The work attempts to answer the following questions:

1. How was the mothering violence like in Morrison's *the Bluest Eye*? And what were the results?
2. What are the reasons behind choosing colour as a standard of beauty in Morrison's *the Bluest Eye*?
3. Who are the supporters of the beauty ideals in Pecola's life?

The research supports the following hypothesis that claims that:

1. African American women suffered from violence, cruel racist and sexist acts from both community and the closest members of their families which resulted in a self-hatred due to the white ideology practised on them during the 20th century.
2. Colour is a biological fact that cannot be changed, it is nearly impossible for black people to be white in actuality. So colour was chosen by the whites as a measure of beauty simply because it was unreachable for the blacks.

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3. The white ideology has been practised and supported by many in Pecola's existence; including her mother Pauline, the community surrounding her, Pecola herself. Along with cinema, media and advertisements.

As for the methodology used in this research, it is analytical and the data being collected in this extended essay focused on the novel of the Nobel Prize winning author Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*. The chosen topic is analyzed using analytic method; based on both printed and electronic references like: articles, websites and journals. The work adopted feminism theory, with the imposition of white standards of beauty on black women, as well as Marxist theory which deals with class of society and help give further explanation. The enormous impact Toni Morrison had on the elimination of all kinds of oppression against black people, through her writings was such a great thing to achieve and that's what motivated me in writing this dissertation. This dissertation also tries to show that; no race is superior or inferior to another, we are all the same and beauty is never a criterion of a person's worth.

In order to do so, the research will be divided into three chapters. Chapter one is the theoretical part where it begin with the history and definition of literature, racism and feminism. The reader will have an idea about the history of African American Literature, in addition to the history of racism in relation to African feminism.

The second chapter is the practical part. It analyses and examines the novel like characters analysis and themes analysis. In addition to revealing all kinds of oppression that was practised on the black people in general and on black female characters in particular.

It has been discussed in the third chapter that, there were reasons behind selecting colour as a standard of beauty. It brings to light the supporters and the impacts of the beauty myth on the black female characters. As it further more exposes who are the supporters of the beauty myth in Pecola's existence and the sorts of myths used by Morrison in *the Bluest Eye*.

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1.1 Introduction

The major issues in African American society have been identity, gender bias, slavery and marginalization. Toni Morrison discusses the issues of what it means to be an African in a racist culture, where blacks are oppressed and disrespected due to their colour of skin and gender, through her novel *The Bluest Eye*. She investigated the imposition of the dominant white culture, where beauty was highly introduced to the American society, on black women and the psychological harm it caused them, resulting in losing of their positive self- image. Morrison, through her novel *The Bluest Eye*, along with other African American authors, used literature as a weapon to fight against racism, defend their rights and show the world who they are and what are they capable of achieving. One of the most tackled issues in this section is racism about African feminism and its effects on the black community and on black women in particular.

1.2 Defining Literature

Definitions of literature have changed over time. Literature denoted all books and writings in Western Europe before the eighteenth century. Then a more narrow meaning of the word arose during the romantic period that stressed the notion that ‘literature’ was ‘imaginative’ writing. Contemporary debates on what constitutes literature can be seen as returning to older, more inclusive literature. The term is often used in non-written works for reference to: “oral literature” and “the literature of preliterate culture”. Due to its roots in the Latin *Littera*, literature here is a little troublesome. Alternatives have proposed such concepts as “oral styles” and “oral genres” however; the term literature is used extensively.

Literature is as any writing on a subject; the body of published work concerned with a particular subject (S.Cylar 83). A similar definition to this scholar was coined by Pollanen which states that “literature refers to published writing in a particular style on a particular subject” (Pollanen). Encarta gave another concept that is commonly held is that literature is

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the use of well-chosen words to tell a story through narration, involving characters in conflict, or through artfully designed images to convey an emotion or idea (Encarta) and as pointed by Cuddon, “literature is a vague term which usually denote works which denotes works which belong to the major genres: epic, drama, lyric, novel, the short story” (Cuddon). As for Mukarovsky, “literature is a language that draws attention to the mode of expression and thereby goes beyond merely describing or communicating ideas” (Mukarovsky).

The object of literature by the use of the imagination is to amuse and instruct the reader. Literature can also shock, amaze, or provide an escape from life for a while for readers. Although it does not include anything, this definition is broad. The existence of multiple forms of literature has made it difficult for scholars to develop literature with one working concept. Many of the meanings that exist now all have limitations, because the body of literature has many forms. Any concept that can be called holistic includes all genres, forms in varying degrees.

1.3 Defining Post-Colonialism

Post-colonialism is the historical era or state of affairs reflecting the aftermath of western colonialism. The concept can also describe the concurrent project to recover and rethink the past and agency of individual’s subordinated to different modes of imperialism. Post-colonialism suggests a potential future of overcoming colonialism, but during such transitions, including modern forms of global empire, new forms of dominance or subordination can arrive. Post-colonialism should not be confused with the argument that colonialism is, in fact devoid of the world we live in today.

From several philosophical, cultural, and historical viewpoints, postcolonial thinkers and historians have been concerned with exploring the different trajectories of modernity as perceived and observed. They were primarily concerned with engaging, beyond Europe, with the elusive legacy of the enlightenment, as reflected in social, political, economic, science,

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legal and cultural thinking. According to postcolonial theorists, the legacy is unclear since the era of the enlightenment was also an age of imperialism, and the connection between those two historical periods is more than incident.

1.3.1 Post-Colonialism

Postcolonialism is a concept that has various definitions and political connections, cut across and active within theories of imperialism, modernity, racism, race, cultural geography and post-modernism.

The most obvious and simplistic use of post colonialism is to demarcate the shift from colonialism to self-determination among formerly colonized nations. Postcolonialism operate in the sense of being a chronological marker and periodization process. The transcendence of imperialism in the nineteenth century, and more excellent balance of political and economic influence between the West and developing countries, was optimistically proposed.

This temporal approach to postcolonialism, as disputed conceptions of what it does and does not mean, are involved, is political. Despite of these new states engaging in the trappings of western modernity by institutionalizing such things as citizenship, nationalism, legal codes and cooperation in international bodies such as the United Nations, some scholars see postcolonialism as a symbol of liberating emancipation for new nations. Nevertheless, postcolonial rhetoric has become emblematic for much sub term and neo-Marxist academics of ongoing, and sometimes concealed, and sometimes colonialism by the west over the rest of the world.

1.3.2 Reflection of African Literature in the West

African literature is a literature written about Africa by an African, using popular African characters, environments and themes transmitted through African proverbs (Hamilton). African literature portrays all of the literary works that express the African people's socio-cultural and historical imperatives, written by any African citizen of any

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African history, African culture, and African cuisine, historical, political, social and religious experiences in Africa (Awa 15).

Going by the above accounts, whether written in any African language, could be seen as any literary piece written by an African about Africa, about Africans and their purples cities and their spectacular accomplishments. However, Achebe advises that if it is written in an imperial language, an African flavour should be given to the language in order to capture the cultural heritage of Africa and experience it more conveniently (Bame).

The poignant slave narratives, such as the exciting narrative of Olaudah Equiano's "Life and Adventures" or Gustavus Vassa "the African" (1789), that vividly described the horrors of slavery and the slave trade, were some of the first African writings, to gain attention in the west. As Africans became literate in their own languages, in their writings they often reacted, against colonial repression. For subjects, others looked to their own past. In 'Susuto, Thomas Mofolo wrote Chaka (1931), about the famous Zulu military leaders.

From the early nineteenth century, western African authors have used newspapers to publicize their views, and several newspapers were developed that served as platforms for voicing nascent nationalist emotions. In France, French-speaking Africans led by Leopold Senghor was involved in the negritude movement of the 1930s, along with French speakers from French Guiana and Martinique. Leon Damas and Aimé Césaire, not only did their poetry condemn colonialism, it proudly proclaimed the legitimacy of the cultures the colonies had sought to crush.

After World War Two, more African authors were published as Africans started demanding their freedom. Poetry, short stories, novels, essays, and plays were created by writers such as, in West Africa: Wole Soyinka, Chinua Achebe, Camera Laye and others. They all wrote in European languages, mostly expressing the same themes: the struggle

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between indigenous and colonial cultures, rejection of European subjugation, pride in the African past, and optimism for the independent future of the continent.

No one with even a faint interest in African literature could fail to be aware that 2008 saw the fiftieth anniversary of Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*. The anniversary was marked by swath conferences, television, programs, special issues and publications. More followed in 2009 and there is yet more in the pipeline for 2010. Achebe's essays collected in *The Education of a British-Protected Child* were widely read and reviewed. Achebe, with characteristic modesty rejected the endorsement of "Father of Modern African Literature", reportedly saying "there were many of us" (Achebe). This gave rise to a thoughtful piece by Ghanaian author Ayikwei Parkes that both acknowledges Achebe's significant contribution to literature and support his rejection of the label, noting its implicit bias towards writing in English.

1.4 African American Women Writers

African American female literature is a tool of education used by women of African descent in America. Racism, slavery and social equality are among the themes explored in this literature, Princeton University Professor Albert J. Raboteau said that "All African American study speaks to the deeper meaning of the African American presence in this nation. This presence has always been a test case of the nation's claims to freedom, democracy, equality, the inclusiveness of all." (J. Raboteau).

Phillis Wheatley was the first black American woman poet who mastered the master's tongue and was an inspiration for every other African American person to know their actual worth. It was the first step towards nullifying the false claims about the black minority that they are inferior to the whites. Writers of African American women have helped bring the experience of the black woman to life for millions of readers. They wrote about what it was

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like to live in slavery, what Jim Crow America was like, and what America was like for black women in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

Phyllis Wheatley was among the most superb afro American writers; in pre-nineteenth century America, she was the first and the most widely read poet. Born in Gambia or Senegal, West Africa, she was captured at the age of seven by slave traders and transported on a slave ship named the *Phyllis* to Boston in August 1761, the affluent Wheatley family bought her “for a trifle” teaching her to read and write, immersing her in studies of the Bible, astronomy, geography, history and literature. Wheatley’s anthology poems on various topics, religious and moral published in London in 1773, in which she declares that her love of freedom came from being a slave, earned her fame in England and colonial America.

In the late seventeenth century, American abolitionists quoted her poetry as evidence that in both artistic and academic endeavours, black people were just as capable of excellence as whites. In the colonies, her name by then a household word, Wheatley’s accomplishments catalyzed the campaign against antislavery.

Toni Morrison was an American author and college professor (February 18, 1931-August 5, 2019) known for understanding and willingness to contribute through her fiction to the black female experience. In Lorain, Ohio, Toni Morrison was born to a family with a profound understanding of black culture and history. She was awarded a B.A. in 1953 from Howard University and an M.A in 1955 from Cornell University. She worked at Random House Books as a fiction editor from 1965 to 1984. She taught writing at the state university of New York in Alabama from 1985 until her retirement in 2006.

Morrison’s first novel *The Bluest Eye*, was released in 1973, tells the story of a young black girl who prays for beauty every day. Even though it has been hailed as a classic novel, due to its graphic description, it has also been banned by many colleges. “*Song of Solomon*” is her second book, tells the story of a black man’s quest for self identity in the face of racism.

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The novel, published in 1977, earned Morrison fame, earning the prestigious circle Award for National Book Critics. In addition to her critically acclaimed novel *“Beloved”*.

Hurston’s novel *“Their Eye Were Watching God,”* is a transitional novel in the developing of black women images in literature. As Christian B comments, “Hurston’s anticipated future black women writers who would attempt to define themselves as a person within a specific culture rather than primarily through their relationships with whites” (Christian 60). Toni Morrison’s novels *“Sula”* and *“Beloved”* are considered two of the greatest Afro-American literary works. In addition to Alice Walker, who turned the idea of art upside down, she wrote her most famous novel, *“The Colour Purple”* (1982), which portrays the self- realization of an African American between 1909 and 1947 in a town in Georgia. Along with many other works like *“The Temple of My Familiar,”* a study of racial and sexual tensions (1989). *“Now is the Time to Open Your Heart”* (2005); about an old woman’s quest for identity and *“Possessing the Secret of Joy”* (1992).

1.5. The Status of African Women in the West

Western African American women suffered near-invisibility in western history. Only a few writers with foresight viewed black women in the west as a topic deserving further investigation. Early as 1919, African American club woman, Dalilah Beasley placed women prominently in her history, *“The Negro Trail Blazers of California”*. One might expect a plethora of articles and books concerning various aspects of black women’s history during and immediately following the civil rights movement of the 1960s. However, western black women received little attention.

By the post-civil rights era, African American women in the west were slowly included in a growing discourse on race and gender in the region. During the 1970s, the research of Theresa Banfield and Sarah Jacobus revealed the wealth of information that existed concerning black women the Pacific Northwest and in Colorado. Although few

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historians focused mainly on black women's history, many essential social histories of western black communities were published during these years, including critical discussions about the role of black women in the American West.

During the mid-1980s, a few historians demonstrated what might be done with the topic. These included Marilyn Dell Brady, who pointed out that black women's in Kansas they have established a strong and effective network of women's clubs (Dell Brady), and Lynda F. Dickson, who wrote of a similar pattern for black women's clubs in Denver. The 1990s not only promised to be better for western black women's history, but it has fulfilled that promise. Such movements as affirmative action and multiculturalism finally bore fruit.

Black women experienced the west differently from their white counterparts or even from other women of colour. Taylor and Moore have taken the story of black western women further; African American women confront the west covers the period from 1600 to 2000, incorporates black women's writings, and includes the work of some of the best younger scholars of our day.

In all the western states, there were significant numbers of African American men and women. The expansion of the frontier presented both a new way of life and economic freedom that was not granted either to African Americans or to women in the East. Significant contributions to the development and culture of the west were made by African American women. They founded cities, established churches, and did hazardous jobs such as mail delivering. They were magnates of real estate, authors, celebrated cooks, investors and entrepreneurs. Below are some of the stories of African women and their exciting, inspiring stories when they went west.

Bridget Bidy Mason was born in 1818 into slavery, but her exact place of birth is unknown; she was forcefully taken from her family, like so many enslaved people and sold many times. Her last owner Robert Smith converted to Mormonism and, with a larger

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community of church members, moved his household to California including Bidy. As soon as she entered the state, California was a free state and Bidy was legally free, but for five years, her owner Smith prevented her from knowing her right to freedom and when she finally gained her family's freedom, she adopted the surname Mason.

In Los Angeles, Mason settled down and worked as a nurse and a midwife. She invested in real estate after saving money for a decade, becoming one of Los Angeles's first black female landowners. Her wise investment made her a fortune and a prominent city resident, which she used to create many charities, colleges, daycare centres, and Los Angeles's first African church; she died as one of the wealthiest people in the city in 1891.

Mary Fields was born into slavery in Tennessee around 1832. She was the first African American woman (and only the second woman overall) to be a star route carrier in the United States. Mary Fields was forced to leave the convent after tensions boiled over. Mary became the second female mail carrier in 1895; she has nicknamed Stagecoach Mary for her reliability and bravery. After she retired from her store route contract, Mary settled in Cascade as its only African American resident.

1.6. Defining Feminism

Feminism is the belief in the equality of sexes in social, economic and political aspects. Feminism, while primarily originated in the West, is embodied globally and is reflected by different organizations dedicated to working on behalf of the rights and interests of women.

Women were restricted to the domestic sphere for much of western history, while public life was reserved for males. The right to own land, to research or to engage in public life was denied to women in medieval Europe. They were still required to cover their heads in public at the end of the nineteenth century in France and in parts of Germany; a husband still had the right to sell his wife, particularly as late as the early twentieth century, women in

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Europe and much of the United States (where many territories and states granted women's suffrage long before the federal government did so), could not vote or hold effective office. Without a father, brother, partner, legal officer, or even a son, women were prevented from conducting business, and without the authorization of their husbands, married women could not assert power over their own children. In addition, women had little to no access to schooling, and most occupations were prohibited. Such limitations on women exist today in some parts of the world. "I am too intelligent, too demanding, and too resourceful for anyone to be able to take charge of one entirely. No one knows me or loves me completely. I have only myself" (de Beauvoir).

1.6.1 History of Feminism

Early organized agitation against such circumscribed status is poorly proven. Roman women filled the Capitoline Hill in the third century BC and blocked any entrance to the forum when Consul Marcus Porcius Cato opposed attempts to repeal laws prohibiting the use of costly goods by women. "If they are victorious now, what will they not attempt?" (Cato). The revolt proved exceptional, though only scattered voices spoke out against the inferior status of women for much of recorded history, presaging the claims to come. The first feminist philosopher, Christine de Pisan, questioned traditional attitudes against women in late fortieth and early fiftieth-century France with a strong demand for female education. Her mantle became taken up later within the century by Laura Cereta, a fiftieth-century Venetian girl who published epistle familiars ("personal letters"; collected letters of a renaissance feminist), a volume of letters managing an array of ladies and conjugal mistreatment to the pointlessness of ladies clothing.

The protection of ladies had become an artistic subgenre before the finish of the sixteenth-century, when Merito Delle Donne (the worth of women), a women's activist primary side by another Venetian creator, Moderata Fonte, has distributed post-modern protectors of

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the norm pointed ladies as shallow and naturally improper. In contrast, the arising women's activists created considerable arrangements of ladies of fortitude and achievement and announced that ladies would be the scholarly equivalent of men if they were given equivalent admittance to schooling. The supposed "debate about women" did not arrive to England until the late sixteenth century, when pamphleteers and polemicists joined the fight over the real essence of womanhood. After a progression of a satiric piece reticulating ladies was distributed, the principale women's activists in England.

Simon de Beauvoir wrote that "the first time we see a woman take up her pen in defence of her sex" was Christine de Pizan, who wrote *Epitre au Dieu D'amour* in the fifteenth century (De Beauvoir). Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa and Modesta di Pozza di Forza worked in the sixteenth- century. Marie le Jars, Anne Bradstreet and Francois Poullain de la Barre wrote during the seventies.

1.6.2. African (Afro-American) Feminism:

Black feminism is an ideology that focuses on the belief that black women are inherently valuable, that black women's liberation is a necessity not as an adjunct to somebody else's but because our need as human persons for autonomy.

Black feminist theory contends that black women have an acute understanding of the negative impacts of sexism, racism and class discrimination. Race, gender and class are all aspects of the same system of hierarchy, namely the "imperialist white supremacist capitalist patriarchy". Intertwining identities deepen and reinforce one another, Toni Morrison said "I merged those two words black and feminist because I was surrounded by black women who were very tough and who always assumed they had to work and rear children and manage homes" (Morrison). And Mikki Kendall had claimed that:

no one can live up to the standards set by racist stereotypes like this that position black women as so strong they don't need help, protection, care, or

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concerned. Such stereotypes leave little to no room for real black women with real problems. In fact, even the most positive tropes about women of colour are harmful precisely because they dehumanize us and erase the damage that can be done to us by those who might mean well, but whose actions show that they do not actually respect us or our right to self-determine what happens on our behalf. (Kendall).

Sojourner Truth; is another black women's right advocate and abolitionist gave a speech at women's rights convention in 1851 in which challenged both racism and sexism faced by black women when she asked "*Ain't a woman?*" black feminism aims to empower black women with new and on critical ways of thinking that centered how racism and sexism worked together to create black women's social issues and inequalities, that arise from of mutuality constructed systems of oppression. Women such as Sojourner truth exemplify black feminist activism in the in the nineteenth century. In 1892 another black women, Anna Julia cooper, published "*A Voice from the South*" a book in which she described the importance of the voices of black women in social change. Another exemplary black feminist, Ida B. Wells, an activist and journalist, led a Crusade against lynching during the 1890s.

It is more precise to think of black feminism in the plural because of the diversity of opinion among black feminists. Noted activists and author Angela Davis discusses this point in an oral history interview from the Museum's collection:

I rarely talk about feminism in the singular. I talk about feminism and even when I myself refused to identify with feminism. I realized that it was a certain kind of feminism it was a feminism of those women who were not concerned with equality for all women. (Davis, Museum collection).

In 1983, Alice Walker developed the term "Womanist" to describe "a black feminist or a feminist of colour" black women are often thought to be at a disadvantage because of

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racism and sexism, but some black feminists view their position as one of possibility. Black feminism comes to centre queer and trans black women, girls and gender non conforming people.

When it comes to organizations, black women organizations faced more issues than white ones. “The short-Lived National Black Feminist Organization” was founded in 1973 in New York by Margaret Sloan, Hunter, et al. Barbara Smith, Beverly Smith, Cheryl. Clarke et al. tied to the civil rights movements. Black Nationalism or the Black Panther Party established the Combahee River collective in 1975 as an offshoot of the NB. The name was suggested by the founder and African American lesbian feminist, Barbara Smith. The members of this organization worked within the civil rights movement, anti-war movement, labour movement, and others.

As an organization, the Combahee River collection met weekly to discuss the different issues concerning black feminists. They also held retreats throughout the Northeast from 1977 to 1979 to help “institutionalize black feminism and develop an ideological separation from white feminism”. People of colour, especially black women, have played a significant role in shaping culture, history and feminism. Many prominent black female writers have questioned and explained what it means to be a feminist over the years while also presenting critical critiques of black activism, black feminism and the past of black women in the United States.

1.6.3. The Effect of State and Racism on African Women

For more than a century, African American’s inferior status was legally justified. Initially, they suffered from slavery, and they continued to be handled unfairly after the end of slavery. When the civil rights act was passed in 1964 that African Americans obtained the same rights under the law as other residents. Traumatic events in the past, however had profound effects on the lives of African American people as well as the lives of subsequent

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generations (Harrell). Nowadays, although various policies against racial discrimination exist, the experience of racism is still common.

Given the prevalence of racism, it is crucial to investigate its possible health and well-being impacts. There is a long-held view that mental illness among African Americans is more common than among European Americans (Wicks et al.). This higher rate of diagnosis, however may be due to the racial prejudices of physicians (Helper et al.).

Many studies indicate that African Americans, because of standard forms of prejudice, perform more poorly on neuropsychological cognition tests than white Americans. Fifty per cent of African American respondents reported witnessing racial discrimination in a 2017 national survey. Increased risks of different diseases, including depression, poor sleep, type2 diabetes and hypertension, have also been linked to racism.

African Americans have higher rates of Alzheimer's disease and dementia than white Americans, especially women. A culprit may be persistent stress, combined with cognitive Dysfunction and decreased volume in the memory brain, but one of the ultimate causes could be racism. Furthermore, the issue may be especially pernicious for African American women. For African American, racism is often a source of chronic strain and psychological distress. For African American women, racism-related stress may be compounded by experiences of sexism.

These forms of stress can adversely affect mental health operating through physiological, psychological and behavioural pathways. Racism and sexism are inextricably intertwined, combining into one hybrid force founded in the devolving of women and racist perceptions of gender roles. For intense perceived racism is significantly associated with subjective well-being, psychological distress, depression, and substance abuse among African Americans. Some researchers have examined racism and sexism through an intersectionality lens, arguing that African American women experience a unique form of oppression specific

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to this race-gender subgroup. The confluence of representation of black womanhood creates a system of oppression that works to silence African American women. This oppression makes them vulnerable to sexual violence, discrimination and sexism in ways that white women are not; experiencing multiple forms of discrimination is associated with poorer mental health relative to racial or gender discrimination alone.

1.6.3.1 Exploration of Black Feminism in the *Bluest Eye*

The novel "*The Bluest Eye*" examined how the ladies are attempting to get opportunity particularly individuals of colour are wholly endured parcel by the whites and the Patria novel "*The Bluest Eye*" because still now in this world individuals are though sociopolitical. In 1970 Morrison's novel "*The Bluest Eye*", women were marginalized in the literature of the past, so women novelists like Toni Morrison began to change how to deal with literature. 'Women of colour' is one of the main concerns of Toni Morrison's novels, Toni Morrison as an African-American author, very well shows the struggles and attempts of ambitious black women characters who want to free themselves from the clutches of injustice and the white male- dominated society.

According to Toni Morrison, in traditional black-skinned families, there is no talk of identity for the simple reason that identity is fixed. In her novels, we see how a black woman becomes aware of her oppression. Her novels are an attempt to make women understand their crucial roles. Toni Morrison sheds light on the implicit reality of savagery of people to one another. Morrison says: "In this country, American means white, everybody else has to hyphenate" (Morrison). *The Bluest Eye* was composed during the 1960s when racism was everyday in American society, beauty meant to be white and to have blond hair and blue eyes. In this novel, the main character Pecola loathes her appearance, and she feels that others disdain her because of her blackness. Sadly, her mom is the wellspring of a similar conviction which was moved to the girl, Pecola. Mrs Breedlove says: "...when I had the second one, a

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girl (Pecola), I remember I had said I would love it, no matter what it looks like...but I knew she was ugly. Head full of pretty hair but lord, she was ugly” (Morrison).

Maureen shouts at the girls: “I am cute! And you ugly! Black and ugly” (Morrison 61). Maureen called the other black girls of the community “black”, as though it is an affront or wrongdoing. Pauline (Pecola’s mother) conforms to an imposed ideal of beauty standards, racism and injustice. She sees herself through the eyes of white people. Claudia (Pecola’s friend) and her sister are satisfied and happy with their skin colour, blackness. They have physical confidence, Claudia says: “We felt comfortable in our skins”. Pecola has learned to hate herself and to internalize her blackness as her ugliness. She has learned and developed this negative self-concept from her own mother.

Pauline defines strength, beauty, and youth only in the terms she has learned from films. She always likes to spend her time in the fisher house; as she longed for such a stereotypical life, mistreat her own daughter in opposed to the friendly treatment she gives to the white girl. Pecola suffered from her mother, and she was unable to control her crying as her mother constantly humiliates her:

My mother’s anger humiliates me; her words chafe my cheeks, and I am crying, I do not know 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 cannot stop. (Morrison 9).

Morrison intended was to fight for black women’s freedom in a society where they are treated like animals with no human rights or equality; she wanted to break the shackle of patriarchy. Through the character of Pecola, Morrison warns the black female artist of the obscurity and madness that will befall her if she internalizes the racism that is infecting her surroundings. While Morrison shows the acts the black female artist must take through the

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character of Claudia, so she can develop a world in which she can make. Although the rape of Pecola is related to the departure of her parents from the south, Morrison harshly charges the broader white community and the immediate family and neighbours. They have let Pecola fall into madness self-protectively, for it is in the destruction of Pecola that historical and personal loss comes together.

1.7 African American literature An Overview

African American literature is a body of work written by people of African origin in the United States. It traces all the way back to African slave's earliest arrival in the new world in 1639, when they produced a language and a writing of their own. African American authors have engaged in an artistic, if often contentious, dialogue with American letters since the pre-revolutionary war era. As a consequence, a literature rich in expressive nuance and social analysis has emerged, providing insightful analysis of American identities and history. Despite the fact that African American authors, led by Toni Morrison, have received wide spread critical acclaim since 1970, this literature has been recognized internationally as well as nationally since the late eighties.

During the second half of the eighteenth century, African Americans began writing in North America, entering the war of words between England and its rebellious colonies with a special sense of mission. The earliest African American writers attempted to show that the declaration of independence's proposition that "all men are created equal" demanded that black Americans be given the same rights as white people.

African born Phyllis Wheatley, enslaved in Boston, devoted her first African American book, poems on various subjects, religious and moral (1773), to proving that "Negros, Black as Cain", were not necessarily inferior to whites in matters of the spirit and thus could "join the angelic train", a Christian gospel of universal brotherhood of humanity. The poetry and sermons of Connecticut slave Jupiter Hammon (1711-1806). Whose main

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theme is the necessity of Christian conversion bolstered the desire for literary recognition of early African American authors.

The standard-bearers of African American literature in the early nineteenth century spoke with increasing intensity about the need for whites to remedy the terrible sin of slavery. African American newspapers, beginning with *Freedom's Journal* in 1827, extolled the contributions of black people around the world through essays, poetry, and fiction, as well as more traditional journalism.

African slaves forged their own language and literature when they first arrived in the new world in 1639. The African-American vernacular culture is at modes of speech that existed before African slaves were able to read and write English. Sacred elements for example: spirituals, gospel and sermons, offered representations of just God who would avenge cruel slave owners and bring redemption to those who suffered as a result of the institution. The blues, jazz, work songs and rhymes, rap, sermons, and folktales are secular ways that express the emotional anguish of being black and dispossessed in white America due to race and class.

Despite the fact that Afro-Americans have unquestionably played an important role in the development of the United States, their literature has been largely ignored in schools and textbooks for a long time. Barbara Dodds Stanford (1978) claims that:

In 1966, a survey of thirty-seven literature textbooks showed that twenty did not have a single selection either by or about black people. Quite clearly, the books used in American schools were primary by and about white Anglo-Saxon, middle class people. (Stanford).

However, this does not imply that Afro-American literature was missing. Before the American civil war, several African American writers began writing. Nonetheless, it was only

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after the war that “black authors had the leisure to write for fun or the ability to integrate styles and concepts from the black oral tradition” (Stanford 18).

In the late 1960s, schools had begun to pay attention to Afro- American literature: as civil rights movements gained traction, people became more interested in this literature, and schools begin to respond to their student’s interest in black writers.

1.8.1 Slave Narratives

The slave narrative is a subgenre of African American literature that dates back to the middle of the nineteenth century. The debate about slavery at the time resulted in passionate literature on both sides of the subject, with books like Harriet Beecher Stowe’s *‘Uncle Tom’s Cabin’*(1852) reflecting the abolitionist view of slavery’s evil, and so-called Anti-Tom literature by white southern writers representing the anti-slavery viewpoint like William Gilmore Simms.

Former slaves such as Harriet Jacobs, who wrote slave narratives to reflect the African American prospective on slavery, and they quickly became a mainstay of African American literature. Approximately 600 former slaves from North America and the Caribbean wrote autobiographies, with about 150 of them being published as books or pamphlets.

‘Tales of Divine Solution’; tales to inspire the abolitionist movement, and *‘Tales of Prosperity’* are three different types of slave narratives. Since they appear to have clear autobiographical theme, the stories written to inspire the abolitionist movement are the most common. Many of them are now regarded as among the most literary of all nineteenth-century African-American writings; two of the most well-known narratives are Frederick Douglass autobiography and Harriet Jacob’s *“Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl”* (1861).

1.8.2 The Harlem Renaissance

From 1920 to 1940, the Harlem renaissance drew new attention to African American literature. While the Harlem renaissance, which took place in the African American

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community of Harlem in New York City, was part of a broader flowering of social thought and culture, with numerous black artists, musicians, and others creating classic works in fields ranging from jazz to theatre, the renaissance is perhaps best known for its literary output.

Novelist Zora Neale Hurston, author of the classic novel *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, is another popular renaissance writer (1937). Hurston published 14 books in all, ranging from anthropology to short stories to novel-length fiction.

Hurston's writings were forgotten for decades due to her gender and the fact that her work was not seen as socially or politically relevant. Hurston's work was rediscovered in the 1970s by Alice Walker, who saw Hurston as a role model for all female African American writers in a famous essay.

While Hurston and Hughes are the most well-known Harlem renaissance writers, the Harlem renaissance also produced a number of other notable authors. Jean Toomer author of *Cane*, a popular collection of stories, poems, and sketches about rural and urban black life, and Dorothy West, author of *The Living Is Easy*, are among them, which focused on the life of a middle-class African American family.

For African American literature, the Harlem renaissance was a watershed moment. Previously, books written by African Americans were mostly read by other African Americans. African American literature as well as black fine art and performance art, started to be incorporated into mainstream American culture with the renaissance.

1.8.4 Exploration of Racism in *The Bluest Eye*

Race and racism are confounded issues in *The Bluest Eye*, in contrast to normal depictions of racism, including white scorn against blacks. *The Bluest Eye* fundamentally investigates the issue of racism between minorities. There are not many white characters, yet racism remains at the focal point of the content. Since the novel includes generally black characters, "whiteness" exists on a range race isn't just characterized by the shade of one's

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skin, the shape of one's features, or the texture of one's hair, yet additionally by one's place of cause, financial class, and instructive foundation. "Whiteness" is related with uprightness, and "blackness" dirtiness, and uselessness.

Different characters internalize these race ideas, which have to do with cleanliness, virtue, and merit, to varying degrees. Internalizing these ideas about race contributes to racial self hatred in *The Bluest Eye's* characters, resulting in different aspects of dysfunction in their lives. When Claudia gets sick, Mrs. Macteer, for example, is unusually strict with her, since illness connotes uncleanliness, which is linked to race. Similarly, Sapehead church who despises black women for their filth, channels his sexual impulses towards girls.

In the book the black community is forced to believe that beauty can only be found in white people. Shirley Temple and other beauty symbols are shown to them. They seem to hold Maureen's lighter skin in higher regard than, Pecola's darker skin. The lighter you are, the more beautiful you are, and the darker, the uglier. Claudia is a character who, on the surface seems to see the error of her ways. She feels everyone's negative attitudes in the 1940s. In the way she kills her white doll, she seems to be rebelling against this. This is also evident when she imagines Pecola's child to be lovely. She is the only character who can be described as open minded and who sees beyond what is to her.

Racism has an indirect impact on the characters, such as the overarching general effects of the Great Depression on black people due to white relative affluence. Reminding us of how race and class are intertwined. More directly; Pecola's sexual abuse by her own father is linked to Cholly's sexual abuse by whites who are seen as enforcing their dominance in society on him.

Morrison uses Dick and Jane story as a primer to show the viewer the pre-determined ideals and mentality that exist within the black community. We instantly see a distinction between Dick and Jane's perfect upper-middle-class lives and the ugly life. Morrison does

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not mean that the 'white' life is better; instead, it is used to show us the black character's internalized white Dick and Jane ideals, which make them miserable. Provides a sense of irony between the 'Dick and Jane's story and the book.

The general sense of insecurity in the black community during the Great Depression, in contrast to the affluent conditions depicted in the book, emphasizes the relationship between race and class. Furthermore, Pecola's sexual abuse by her own father reflects Cholly's sexual abuse by the whites, who perceive his virginity loss as entertainment. This incident had a massive impact on Cholly, who shockingly did not despise the white men at the time of his humiliation; instead, he hated the girl.

The relationship between race, appearance, or ugliness, is something that *The Bluest Eye* delves into. The novel goes into great detail on how the dominant ethnic group's view of beauty and appearance is used to degrade and humiliate people of other races. The motif of 'dirtiness' and 'cleanliness' are stereotypically linked in the novel to 'black'. This idea of "dirty-black" is explored as this was the mindset of the forties. These links are explicit and excessively cleaning all the time. Mrs Breedlove may believe her own house is unfixable, even though she is only concerned with cleanliness while cleaning her employer's home. This obsessive cleaning may be characterized as a black woman's best yet futile attempt to rid herself of the dirt in her environment, as she may believe that her colour is dirty enough.

Mr Yacobowski, the shop owner, has trouble interacting with Pecola because he seems to see straight through her. He does not understand what she is pointing at and refers harshly to her. His disgust and annoyance were clearly shown when he 'hesitates' to take the money when she passes it over.

Pecola Breedlove is viewed as an indication of the worst effect of racial self-hatred. All who comes into contact with her does not find her beautiful, and she does not find herself pretty, implying a label of white dominance that results in a kind of "internalized racial

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loathing”. Geraldine quietly calls Pecola “a nasty little black bitch”, which might be seen as a result of her indignation at Pecola murdering her son’s pet. This shows that even her own race does not seem to like her, implying at the extreme of “racial loathing”, and of course due to the so-called “powerful self-loathing”.

1.9 Conclusion

Examining early twentieth century African American females and capturing their key concerns, such as gender and race inequality, was critical. As a result, the post-slavery social reality of America was deceiving to the Africans who were kept on the margins. Women, unlike men, were doubly oppressed and confronted with racism and sexism. Consequently, black feminism arose to resolve their fears and desires to be on an equal footing with white women. Morrison defied western white beauty standards, which undervalued African women and led them to reject their true identities. Morrison argued that western feminism was only concerned with gender issues from the viewpoint of white women. Morrison wanted people to be aware of the harm done to the young girl due to some expectations set by white people to fit their needs. Therefore it became essential for black females to establish their place in American society because the African American woman is no longer a slave.

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2.1 Introduction

Morrison's first book, *The Bluest Eye*, tells the story of the young girl Pecola Breedlove, a lonely black girl was living in Ohio in the late 1940s. Morrison reveals the power and brutality of white, middle-class American standards of beauty. The protagonist Pecola lived in a culture where whites were more privileged than blacks, which resulted in her obsession with white skin, blond hair and blue eyes that had later driven her insane. The little girl had a rough childhood, where everyone around mistreated her, including her own parents. This section attempt to analyze the novel reveals the consequences of the racist and sexist acts on the black female characters, as well as the focus on the mothering violence and the female resistance in Toni Morrison *The Bluest Eye*.

2.2 Toni Morrison's Biography and Publications

Toni Morrison Chloe Anthony Wofford was born to Ramah and George Wofford on February 18, 1931, in Lorain, Ohio. Her parents were both from sharecropping families who had migrated North in the early twentieth century.

Morrison developed an early interest in classic literature and storytelling, which her parents encouraged. Went to Lorain high school and worked in people's houses after school for two dollars a week. In 1949, she earned her bachelor's degree with honour, Morrison's parents encouraged her to attend college, and she graduated from Howard University in Washington, D.C in 1953 with a bachelor's degree in English. It was at Howard that she adopted the name, Toni. She pursued her education at Cornell University, earning a Master's degree in English in 1955, writing her thesis about alienated characters in Virginia Woolf's and William Faulkner's works. Morrison went on to teach at Howard University and Texas Southern University in Houston.

Morrison started writing fiction while teaching at Howard University in the early 1960s when she joined a group of poets and authors. She wrote *The Bluest Eye*, a short story

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that. Would later become her first book, about a young black girl who goes insane wishing her eyes were blue.

Morrison moved to New York in 1963 and worked as an editor at Random House until 1983, long into her career as a writer, and edited books by Toni code Barbara and Angela Davis. Morrison worked on the black book, an anthology of photographs and objects from African American cultural experience and history, while working at Random House. Morrison was the first African American woman to be awarded the Nobel Prize in literature in 1993; she was already working on her next book, "*Paradise*", when she learned of the distinction. "*Paradise*" published in 1998, was set in the all-black town of Ruby, Oklahoma and featured elements of magical realism once more. Next was Morrison's 2003 novel "*Love*", set in a black seaside black village, centred on a charismatic hotel owner and the women who loved him.

Morrison has also published essays, documents, a poem, children's and nonfiction books, and the Libretto for Richard Daniel Pour's 2008 Opera Margaret Garner. The 1994 Pearl Buck Award, the Rank of Commander of The Order of Arts and Letters, the 2000 National Humanities Medal, and the 1996 National Book Foundation Medal for distinguished contribution to America are among his other accolades; *Beloved* was voted the best work of American fiction of the lost quarter- century by a group of authors in New York Times Poll in 2006.

Morrison is a member of the American Academy, the Institute of Arts and Letters, and the American Academy of Art and Sciences, as well as a trustee of The New York Public Library. Harvard, Sarah Lawrence College, the University of Pennsylvania, Dartmouth, Georg town, and the Sorbonne, among others, have bestowed honorary degrees on her.

Morrison returned to the life of slavery in America in *A Mercy* (2008), this time focusing on the 17th century. Morrison's commitment to honouring slave lives is exemplified

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in her own comment on why she felt compelled to write “*Beloved*”: “There is no suitable Memorial, or plaque, or wreath, or wall, or park, or skyscraper lobby, there is no 300-foot tower, there is no small bench of the road...and because such a place does not exist...the book had to” (the world, 1989). The Toni Morrison society’s “*Bench by the Road*” project dedicated the first of a series of benches-honouring the African American contribution to the nation in July 2008, at a location off the coast of South Carolina that was a point of entry into North America for millions of enslaved Africans. Morrison released ‘*Home*’ in 2012 as a follow up to ‘*A. Mercy*’. Home is a film about a young African-American Korean war Neteran’s experiences upon returning to the segregated South.

Toni Morrison was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom by President Barrack Obama in 2012.

2.3 Plot Summary of *The Bluest Eye*

The Bluest Eye is a prize-winning novel written and published by Toni Morrison in 1970. The novel tells the tragic story of Pecola Breedlove, an African American girl from an abusive family, set, in Morrison’s home town of Lorain, Ohio in the 1940s. The eleven years old Pecola associates beauty and social recognition with whiteness and wishes to get “the bluest eye”. *The Bluest Eye* is now considered an American classic and an essential account of the African American experience the highest civilian award in the United States.

The Bluest Eye is split into four parts. Each named after a different season. (The novel starts with the word “autumn” and ends with the word “summer”). Each of the four sections is divided into chapters. The majority of the chapter titles are taken from a simulated Dick and Jane reader’s letter. At the start of the book, there are three different versions of the simulated text. The first version is straightforward and grammatically correct, telling a story about “Mother”, “Father”, “Dick” And “Jane”, with an emphasis on Jane, who is looking for a playmate. The second version repeats the first’s message but lacks correct punctuation and

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Capitalization. The third version is written without any punctuation, capitalization and no space between words.

The three versions reflect the various lifestyles portrayed in the novel. The first is white families such as the Fishers; the second is that of the well-adjusted MacTeer girls, Claudia and Frieda. Morrison's references to Dick and Jane, an illustrated series of books about white middle-class families famous in the 1940s for teaching children read, help to place the novel in perspective. They also point out how those "barren white-family primers" (as Morrison put it) are incompatible with the experiences of black families.

The story of Pecola is told through the eyes of many narrators. Claudia MacTeer, Pecola's childhood companion, serves as the primary narrator. Claudia tells the story from two points of view: an adult Claudia who reflects on the events of 1940, and a nine-year-old Claudia who watches the events unfold.

Claudia introduces Pecola and explains why she is living with the MacTeers in the first section of the novel. Claudia tells the reader what her mother, Mrs MacTeer told her: Pecola is a "case...a girl who had no place to go". Since Pecola's father Cholly, set fire to his family's house; the Breedloves are currently "outdoors". Pecola was put with the MacTeer family before they could determine what to do, or more specifically, until the Breedlove family was reunited, according to the county. Claudia and her niece Frieda enjoy playing with Pecola despite the devastating circumstances of their relationship.

Frieda and Pecola became friends because of their mutual admiration for Shirley Temple, a famous American child star known for her blond locks, babyish singing, and tap dancing with Bill Robinson. Claudia, on the other hand, was unable to join them in their adoration because she despised Shirley. She despised "all the Shirley Temples in the country". Claudia, now an adult, remember receiving a blue-eyed baby doll for Christmas.

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From the clucking sounds of adults, I knew that the doll represented what they thought was fondest wish all the world had agreed that a blue-eyed, yellow-haired, pink-skinned doll was what every girl child treasured, here they said, this is beautiful, and if you are on this day 'worthy' you may have it (Morrison 56).

Claudia recalls dismantling the doll "to see what it was made of, to discover the dearness that had eluded me but only" (Morrison 17-22). Claudia tossed the doll aside, finding nothing remarkable at its heart, and continued on; her destructive course, her hate for little white girls unabated; the second section (winter) consists of two short documents, Pecola's fascination with a light-skinned white girl. The second vignette focuses on Geraldine and Louis Junior, a young mother and son in Lorain, Ohio.

The third section of the novel is by far the longest, comprising four vignettes. The reader learns about Pecola's parents, Pauline and Cholly Breedlove. According to the omniscient narrator, they once loved each other, the fourth vignette picks up not long after the rape. It begins by delving into the personal history of Soaphead Church:

There was an ugly little asking for beauty a little black girl who wanted to rise out of the pit of her blackness and see the world with blue eyes. This outrage grew and felt like power. For the first time, he honestly wished he could work miracles (Morrison 174).

Soaphead forms a plan to deceive Pecola. He hands her a piece of raw meat and asks her to feed it to his neighbour's dog. He tells her that if the dog "behaves strangely", her "wish will be granted the next day". Pecola claimed her wish had been fulfilled after the dog eats the meat, gags and dies. As a result, her rapid fall into madness begins.

After Pecola loses her mind, the fourth and final segment (summer) takes place. Claudia and Frieda discover right away that Pecola's father has impregnated her. The sisters

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pray and even make an offering (a bicycle) to God; to hope that the baby will not die. Meanwhile, Pecola speaks to an anonymous person about her new blue eyes, which she still feels are not “bleu enough”. The adult Claudia informs the reader in the novel’s final moments that Pecola gave birth prematurely and that the baby did not survive.

2.4 Analysis of *The Bluest Eye*

A literary analysis is a detailed evaluation of several texts’ portions. Students, for example, examine any piece of literature, such as poems, novels, or songs, to gain a better grasp of literary and rhetorical methods. This style of study, in a similar vein, focuses on how numerous parts affect the works as a whole.

2.4.1 *The Bluest Eye* Character Analysis

In a story, a character is a human animal, creature or object. Writers employ characters to carry out acts and deliver dialogue, allowing the story to progress along a plotline. A story may have one protagonist and yet be considered complete. This character’s conflict may be internal (within himself, herself) or external (with nature, such as scaling a mountain). Multiple characters participate in most stories, with one of them serving as the antagonist, creating a conflict for the protagonist.

2.4.1.1 Pecola Breedlove

Morrison’s difficulty in depicting this young girl is to preserve the child’s innocence, that is, her blind embrace of colour ideology at face value. While also showing how that ideology kills her. Until the last chapter of the book, when she is given voice in a first-person conversation with her imaginary friend, Pecola is often viewed from a third- person narrative point of view, either by the omniscient narrator or by the first-person narrator Claudia.

Pecola is first described by Claudia as a “case” for charity when she comes to live with the MacTeers, Pecola goes along with whatever the girls want her to do. She is taken aback when she gets her period. As she learns that she wants someone to love her to have a

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son, wonders how she can make someone love her. Her parents and brother are arguing viciously the second time ever sees her, and she is overcome with fear and aversion in bed. She is the weakest member of her family and society as an eleven-year-old child.

She cannot do anything about her family's domestic violence; she cannot speak up to stop it; all she can do is tried to vanish with the power of her imagination. Morrison begins her portraiture of this child's vibrant imagination here. When her parents clash, she focuses all of her creative energies on dissipating her entire body except for of her tightly closed eyelids. The emphasis on the eyes is thus added subtly.

Pecola is surrounded by boys at her school who are taunting her by calling her hideous because she is black. In addition to inferring her father's excessive sexual freedom around her by claiming he sleeps naked. Pecola reacts to the bullies in the same way she did to her parent's aggressive altercation. She hunches her shoulders and attempts to shrink herself. When she is suddenly saved by Frieda MacTeer, she finds herself in the company of Maureen Peel, who is stunning due to her light eyes. Her talk with Maureen reveals her passion for movies, which she inherited from her mother, as well as her appreciation for European American movie stars.

Pecola defended herself when Maureen accuses her of having sexual experience before seeing her father naked. She adamantly asserts her innocence. Pecola's first and last act of rebellion towards her oppressors. Her next move will be to visit Soaphead Church and request blue eyes. Her child's logic is touching in its innocent confidence in the reality of what she has been told if beauty is blue eyes.

Her final picture, of her walking around town with her imaginary friend, is heartbreaking. Her only worries are celebrating her blue eyes and burying the memory of her father raping her and her mother ignoring her story. By taking the community's internalized racism to its logical conclusion, she is tragically killed.

2.4.1.2 Claudia MacTeer

In the book, Morrison only used Claudia as a narrator on a few occasions. Her voice fades in and out. She is better cared for a kid than Pecola, but only by a single step. Claudia will use this slight advantage to strike back against the colour paradigm of white beauty against black ugliness. Her youth is often cited as a factor in her willingness to see right through colour ideology's deception. It has believed that philosophy takes time to take hold, and Claudia has not wholly grasped it when she sees what happens to Pecola. Claudia's representation as a narrator-character is sparse.

The reader is conscious that she is recounting events from the past. She recalls the summer when she and her older sister, Frieda learned that their acquaintance was when Pecola Breedlove had been raped and impregnated by her father from her mature viewpoint. She understands that the crime was not only committed by Cholly but was also committed by society against its own children.

The culture scorns its own children's beauty, encouraging them to accept the dominant media's beauty ideal as the only kind of beauty, the Shirley Temple blond and privileged blue-eyed picture. Blackness is considered unattractive, and the darker an individual is, the more unattractive they are. Claudia is a staunch opponent of race ideology and internalized racism. Claudia's thought is portrayed by Morrison as at least briefly clear-vision.

Claudia acknowledges that the message she receives that she is unattractive because she does not resemble Shirley Temple is false. She is intrigued by what makes the white doll so valuable, and she explores by taking her dolls apart. Claudia has the impression that what has happened to Pecola indicates what has happened to all the African American children in her neighbourhood. Her perception is acute in this region.

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2.4.1.3 Cholly Breedlove

Her portraiture of Cholly, however is not a central concern in the novel. While the reader is given a poignant narrative of Cholly's childhood years until he is a father. The reader is not given an account of Cholly's adult life with Pauline, his degradation by drink and gambling. He, and his wife brutally fight one another and in the first scene of his character portrait, he is knocked unconscious by his wife and wished dead by his son. As a child, Cholly is shown as sensitive, caring and tender in his desire to explore sexual pleasure with a girl named Darlene.

The person who witnessed his degradation, and who embodied it simultaneously, Cholly's hatred of the weak and powerless, in his society African American women and children, resulted from the cycle of oppression. He was oppressed as a child and never having found a way out of that system of oppression.

His rape of his daughter is depicted oddly as a failed return to tenderness. In his befuddled state, he collapses his image of mother and daughter, he desires to protect and cherish her, and at the same time, he cannot control his sexual desire for her. The reader hears nothing more of Cholly except he left, and perhaps before he left, he raped his daughter a second time, and then that he died in a work camp.

2.4.1.4 Pauline Breedlove

Morrison's skill at character portraiture is evident in history. Pauline is first presented as an ugly member of an ugly family, fighting viciously with her husband, disregarding her children's feelings, and giving all her love, and care to the child of her white employers. Then Morrison shows Pauline's beginnings and the reader gains sympathy for her sees the roots of her degradation by the institutionalized racism of the media which presents European beauty as the standard and epitome of beauty. The last picture of Pauline returns to the degraded

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version, a woman who is so severely physically abuses her daughter when she finds out her daughter has been raped.

2.4.1.5 Soaphead Church

Though a minor character, Soaphead Church deserves some analysis here since he is the catalyst for the final outcome of the plot. Soaphead Church is a flawed character he is not fully drawn; he is the repository of all the sickness of internalized racism. His insanity is drawn in unfortunate Homophobic language and he comes into the narrative only at the end of the novel, where Morrison attempts to give his entire history in too short a space before continuing the narrative about Pecola.

2.4.1.6 Frieda MacTeer

Frieda is a ten-year-old girl; who shares Claudia's independence and stubbornness. Since she is closer to puberty, Frieda is more susceptible to her community's correlation of whiteness with appearance. Frieda is more mature and holds than Claudia when it comes to the adult world.

2.4.2 *The Bluest Eye* Theme Analysis

Toni Morrison's novel *The Bluest Eye* weaves together the concerns of significant themes. She delves into the tragedy of children's oppression or violation, especially of poor children, and a problem peculiar to groups targeted by racism: internalized racism. This is a type of thought that occurs when members of a targeted group, in this case, African Americans, starts to believe the stereotypes about themselves, as they are superior in terms of appearance, morals, and intellect.

2.4.2.1 Beauty vs Ugliness

The Bluest Eye's black protagonists have been raised to believe that whiteness is the pinnacle of beauty. Images of whiteness are regularly presented to the characters of movies, books, confectionery, magazines, toys, and commercials. Mrs Breedlove spends her days at

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the movies admiring the white actresses, thinking she could enter their world. Moreover, Pecola and Frieda exclaim over Shirley Temple's beauty early in the story. The link between beauty and whiteness extends the concept of beauty beyond the physical appearance of one's body, making it a symbol of one's worth and value. Many of the novel's protagonists feel that their beauty or ugliness determines their worth or luck in the community.

Character's feeling of self-worth is founded on their perceptions of attractiveness. As a result, beauty and ugliness become internalized circumstances, wreaking havoc on the novel's character's lives. The Breed loves, according to the narrator, are stuck in poverty because they believe they are ugly, and Pecola believes she deserves the abuse and neglect she receives at home.

The narrative implies that beauty and ugliness are not harmful or hazardous in and of themselves. Internalization of the concept of what constitutes beauty, on the other hand, has enormous harmful potential.

2.4.2.2 Women and Femininity

The Bluest Eye is a story about women's subjugation at its foundation. The women in the novel are subjected to not just the horrors of racial discrimination but also the tyranny and abuse perpetrated by the men in their lives. Several stages of a woman's development towards womanhood are depicted in the novel.

The novel's youngest female characters, Pecola, Frieda, and Claudia, have a narrow and unrealistic understanding of what it means to be a woman, have sex, and be loved by a man. The narratives of Mrs Breedlove and Geraldine show how the naïve outlook is destroyed as they face the terrible realities of marriage and the persecution they face in their houses. Women are subjugated by men in *The Bluest Eye*, and they turn to the weak and helpless. The lone exception to the pattern of male tyranny of women is prostitutes. Prostitutes are similar to males in many aspects.

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In *The Bluest Eye*, the issue of women and femininity, as well as male domination of women, reaches a terrible climax with Cholly's rape of his own daughter, Pecola. This scenario, which depicts the most extreme type of abuse and oppression against women, is told entirely from Cholly's point of view. The lack of Pecola's perspective during the rape episode exemplifies how male domination silences women.

2.4.2.3 Race and Racism

In *The Bluest Eye*, race and racism are tricky concerns. Unlike most depictions of racism, which focus on white animosity toward black people, *The Bluest Eye* focuses on racism between people of colour. Although Morrison's novel has few, if any white characters, and no critical white characters, racism remains at the heart of the book. Because the narrative is primarily about black people, "whiteness" is a spectrum. The Race is determined not just by the colour of one's skin, the form of one's features, or the texture of one's hair, but also by one's birthplace, social status, and educational background.

Different characters internalize these race concepts, which have to do with purity, virtue, and value, to differing degrees. Internalizing these views about race leads to racial self-hatred among the *Bluest Eye's* characters, which resulted in various types of dysfunction in their lives. Mrs Macteer, for example, is particularly harsh with Claudia when she becomes ill because illness is associated with uncleanliness, which is associated with being black. Similarly, Soaphead Church, who despises the filthiness of black women, turns his sexual impulses on youngsters.

The characters in the story utilize other black people as benchmarks against which they measure their own "whiteness" and self-worth. The colour of one's skin, the colour of their eyes, and the texture of their hair are used to make distinctions. When these markers fail to define a person's race, characters turn to social, educational, religious, regional, and

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hereditary characteristics to fill in the gaps. Characters who lack any sign of “whiteness” are the ones who suffer the most.

2.4.2.4 Home and Family

Home is an idea that shapes the protagonist’s feeling of self and self-worth in Morrison’s novel. *The Bluest Eye* depicts residences in the context of an idealized notion of home and family. The story depicts several homes, illustrating the various ways in which a person’s feeling of worth is defined by their home.

Although the majority of the black families in the novel do not own homes, they nonetheless have a sense of belonging and family. Cholly’s rape of Pecola symbolizes the absence of home. Cholly commits the ultimate family transgression by rapping his own daughter, writes Morrison.

2.4.2.5 Sex and Sexuality

Sex is associated with violence, shame, and depravity in *The Bluest Eye*. Sexual initiation has severe impacts on a person’s life and sense of self for both men and women. Sex is used by the men in the novel to subjugate the women in their lives.

Geraldine Breedlove’s feeling of self-worth as a woman is still derived from her marriage. Geraldine’s spouses married her because she cooks, cleans, and takes care of the house. Prostitutes use their sexuality to gain power over men, but this power method leads to self-hatred and hatred of those of the opposite gender.

2.4.3 Symbolism Analysis of *The Bluest Eye*

Symbolism is literary device that refers to a literary device that refers to a literary work use of symbols. A symbol is something that denotes or implies something else; it denotes something other than its literal meaning. A symbol in literature is a word, object, behaviour, character, or idea representing and evokes additional meaning and significance.

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2.4.3.1 The House

The book opens with a line from Dick and Jane story: “here is the house”, in this book, homes reflect not only socioeconomic status but also the emotional circumstances and beliefs of the characters that live in them. Mrs Breedlove’s preference for her employer’s home over her own has left the Breedlove apartment desolate, symbolizing the Breedlove family’s misery. The Macteer house is drafty and gloomy, but it is lovingly cared for by Mrs Macteer, and according to Claudia, it is filled with affection, symbolizing the relative cohesion of that family.

2.4.3.2 The Bluest Eye

Blue eyes symbolize the beauty and joy that Pecola associates with the white, middle-class world. They even come to represent her own blindness, as she only receives blue eyes at the expense of her sanity. The saddest eye may also be the “bluest”. Furthermore, eye puns on in the sense that the novel’s title uses the singular form of the noun to express much of the characters sad isolation.

2.4.3.3 The Marigolds

Claudia and Frieda associate marigolds with Pecola’s baby’s protection and well being. Their ritual offering of money and the remaining unsold marigold seeds is a sincere act of self-sacrifice. They assume that as long as the marigolds they planted grow, Pecola’s baby will be fine. Marigolds in general, symbolize nature’s endless renewal. In Pecola’s case, her father’s raping of her tainted this period of regeneration.

2.4.4 *Bluest Eye* Imagery

We are programmed to interpret the world through our senses by what we hear, smell, see, touch, and taste. Novelists, poets, and storytellers utilize descriptive language that nudges the five human senses to elicit this inherent nature and help reader’s better grasp literary work. These are referred to as imaging.

2.4.4.1 The Breed loves

Much care and attention is spent on sketching the family at the centre of the bluest eye, Morrison describes the Breedlove's living situation as being "nestled together" like a den of animals. She also describes how they have done their ugliness as if it was a piece of clothing.

2.4.4.2 Pecola's Disappearance

One of Pecola's coping mechanisms for when her parents fight is imagining herself disappearing. If she concentrates hard, she can make her face disappear too, but she can never get her eyes to recede. To Pecola, her eyes are the most crucial part, so their refusal to disappear make all her other efforts pointless.

2.4.4.3 Claudia's Father

Men, particularly fathers, are given a predominantly harsh and unflattering representation in *The Bluest Eye*. The lone exception is Claudia and Frieda's father, Mr MacTeer. Claudia makes effective use of personification to describe how the winter moves into her father's face and presides there. This proves to be the contrary when he knew that Mr Henry Washington sexually assaulted Frieda.

2.4.4.4 Geraldine

The Bluest Eye, explores how "the demonization of an entire race could take roots inside the most delicate member of society: a child "is also a portrait of African American life in the mid-20th century. In the 1960s, when Morrison was writing her first novel, there was a dearth of literature depicting the lived experiences of African Americans.

2.4.5 Toni Morrison's Writing Style

Morrison is famous for her use of fragmented narratives with multiple perspectives. Her use of different narrative styles alternating between first and third-person omniscient gives her the freedom to do two interesting things. On the one hand, she uses Claudia to

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convey the thoughts and perceptions of a nine-year-old girl, giving the novel an aspect of innocence. On the other hand, the use of third-person omniscient narration allows the novel to cover broad sweeps of time and space. Like when we get the history of the Breedlove's storefront or stories about Soaphead Church's white ancestors.

2.4.6 *Bluest Eye* Literary Elements

Literary elements are the components of a literary text. We can study the storyline, settings, characters, point of view, and themes of a novel individually rather than as a whole (Literary Elements: Definition, Types and Examples).

2.4.6.1 Genre

Tragedy and African American Literature

2.4.6.2 Setting

The novel is set in Lorain, Ohio, in the years following the great depression.

2.4.6.3 Narrator and Point of View

The story alternates between the first-person narrative of Claudia MacTeer and third-person omniscient narration.

2.4.6.4 Tone and Mood

The sound of the prologue is enigmatic and sad. Claudia has a terrible story to tell us, that she will tell it her way. As a result, the mood is cautiously anticipatory as we enter the autumn chapter. The tone is explanatory, reflective, yet distantly compassionate throughout the third-person omniscient scenes, as the narrator has a little personal relation to the characters whose stories they are telling. Nevertheless empathizes with their plights. As a consequence, one's mood is heavily influenced by current events. For example, the narrator's tone is practiced calm during Cholly's rape of his daughter, but the mood is horrified, disgust as Cholly assaults Pecola.

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2.4.6.5 Foreshadowing

Mr Henry's eventual sexual abuse of Frieda is foreshadowed by the expression "even after what came later" in this quote:

And while we waited for the coin to appear, we knew we were amusing Mama and Daddy. Daddy was smiling, and Mama's eyes went soft as they followed our hands, wondering over Mr. Henry's body, we loved him. Even after what came later, there was no bitterness in our memory of him (Morrison 10).

2.4.6.6 Allusions

The novel never directly mentions the great depression, but it is referred to throughout her rant about Pecola drinking three quarts of milk, Mrs Macteer mentions President Roosevelt and the Civilian Conservation Corps.

2.4.6.7 Paradox

A paradox is a logically nonsensical or self-contradictory assertion or proposition that, upon investigation or explanation, can turn out to be well-founded or accurate. "Paradoxical" is an apt word to describe Mrs Breedlove's effort and commitment to the fishers, an effort and dedication she does not even consider putting into herself or her own family.

The creditors and service people who humiliated her when she went to them on her own behalf respected her were even intimidated by her, when she spoke for the Fishers (Morrison 98).

2.4.6.8 Parallelism

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Morrison draws several parallels between the life of the Breedloves and the Dick and Jane story. There are also parallels between Pecola and her mother Pauline and her father, Cholly. Both women are recipients of Cholly's violence.

2.4.6.9 Personification

“So when I think of autumn, I think of somebody with hands who does not a living being with a stake in her life.

2.5 Kinds of Abuse Against Pecola and the Consequences

The plot revolves around Pecola, an eleven- year-old black teen. Almost everybody in the novel abuses her, and she finally suffers two traumatic rapes. Pecola's experiences, on the other hand, are not representative of all black girls growing up in a hostile environment. Pecola has no friends but Claudia and Frieda. Because of her dark skin and coarse features, she is mocked by the majority of the other children and is humiliated and tormented by black schoolboys. She knows that no one can play with her, socialize with her, or be seen with her but Claudia and Frieda. Her drunken father rapes her, and she deludes herself into thinking that God has miraculously provided her with the blue eyes she wished for. She loses her son and her sanity not long after.

Although white society tends to admire and love only little girls with blue eyes, yellow hair, and pink skin, all little black girls aspire to grow up to be healthy people with good self- images. Many black girls today endure the bombardment of white media messages, but some still do not. Pecola, a young black girl in the 1940s, was known as the “broken-winged bird that cannot fly”.

Pecola was tormented and even tortured by almost everyone she encounters, but she never defends herself. She might have countered the meanness of others against her if she had the inner strength of Claudia and Frieda. She has always been the victim and the target of other people's anger. When Pauline spills the cobbler on the fisher's kitchen floor, she

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exploits Pecola. Geraldine damages Pecola's feelings by evicting her and insulting her by calling her "black", and Mr Yecobowski degrade her by refusing to touch her hand when she gives him money.

Pecola is psychologically abused by the degrading conditions in which she and her brother, Sammy, live as they watch their parent's abuse on one another. The schoolboys torment her about her ugly blackness; Maureen buys her an ice-cream corn, in order to "to get into her business".

Pecola has never had proper clothes or food, and she is finally evicted from her own home after her father in a drunken stupor, sets fire to the house and burns it down. Soaphead Church employs her to assassinate a dog that he lacks the confidence or resolve to kill himself. Cholly abuses Pecola in the most obscenely graphic way possible. Pecola never retaliated against the boys who tormented her after school in the same way Frieda did. She should have thrown her money at Mr Yocobowski when he refused to touch her hand. She could have gotten into a fight with Maureen when she investigates her father's nakedness. Pecola would not have been society's victim if she had transformed the ugliness that society describes for her outward.

2.5.1 Sexual Abuse

When an adult uses a child for sexual purposes or engages a child in sexual activities, this is known as sexual assault. Cholly is Pecola's father in *The Bluest Eye* is often drunk, and beats his wife and children. He rapes his own daughter Pecola and she becomes pregnant with his child as a result. Cholly is known for his lack of discipline and awkwardness. He sets his own house on fire and burns it down during one of his drunken stupors. He is a terrible father to both of his children.

Cholly considers Pecola to be an easy target because she is a child with no power or influence over adults. She is a girl who has never been taught how to fight injustice in any

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form. Pecola is eventually subjected to sexual harassment at the hands of her father. He rapes her twice she is compelled to engage in a heinous sexual act solely for her father's physical pleasure. Regardless of the result, he rapes her.

He is more dominant than Pecola, but she is the one who suffers. This is a form of incest that has left Pecola psychologically traumatized. Cholly's rape causes Pecola to become pregnant. The entire society, both blacks and whites, begins to despise her for carrying her father's baby. Pecola's psychological damage is exacerbated by the social stigma surrounding her sexual assault. Her father has killed her, an endless amount of times by raping her. As her mother, Pauline always ignored and neglected her.

2.5.2 Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse refers to the psychological and social aspects of child abuse. It is the most common form of child abuse. Many parents are emotionally abusive without being violent or sexually abusive.

This form is exemplified by Pauline, Pecola's mother. Pauline has never taught her much about the human body. She does not have the privilege or right to ask her any personal questions. As a result, her transition to adulthood is daunting and traumatic. Pecola's mother, in fact, has never regarded her as a human being and has only loved her to teach her womanhood. Adults do not speak to us, Claudia says, they send us instructions.

"Adults do not talk to us; they give us directions. They issue orders without providing information" (Morrison 13). Children cannot confront adults with questions. "It was certainly not for us to dispute her. We did not initiate talk with grownups; we answered their questions" (Morrison 23). The bond between Pauline and her children is revealed by Claudia's words.

2.6 The Mothering Violence and the Ruthless Female Resistance in *The Bluest Eye*

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Toni Morrison's black female protagonists are frequently wounded by the harsh conditions around them both, physically and mentally. For years or decades, these women have been racially exploited, sexually abused, and often emotionally degraded, and they have learned to live with their apparent and invisible scars by making difficult choices. Many of Morrison's female characters, in particular, resort to violence, sometimes verbal, but more commonly physical, in an attempt to find unique solutions to avoid continued victimization; this process exemplifies how aggression can transform into something else. These female characters, ranging in age from youngsters to adults, use violence as means of escape. Social and ethnic dominance torments and subjugates them.

A new concept of African American femininity and femaleness emerges as a result of violent acts. Black women are neither helpless nor powerless. They can generate new patterns and reject gender and racial identities that have been socialized.

Young black girls react to white dominance's oppressiveness and the rigidity of traditional female behaviour norms. According to the author, they use physical aggression to gain strength in what are typically vulnerable positions. According to her, the violence may be useless or even harmful to individual psyches and more extensive society. But it's also a rebuke to the white oppression that's been going on for a long time. The majority of Morrison's young characters learn about violence through their mothers. Multiple sources misuse these mature female characters on a regular basis. Their abuse is subsequently aimed at others, most often children.

Morrison depicts child murder as the ultimate kind of mother violence, revealing the complexity of mothering as a creation and destruction mechanism. These black mothers demonstrate their motherhood over society norms by not only deciding on death for their children but also carrying out the murder themselves.

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Pecola's mother hurts her daughter's body because she is enraged by Pecola's awkwardness, which causes her white master's kitchen to get unclean, and her white master's tiny child to scream:

She was on Pecola, and with the back of her hand knocked her to the floor.

Pecola slid in the pie juice, one leg folding under her. Mrs Breedlove yanked her up by the arm, slapped her again (Morrison 86).

Pauline has never hesitated in neglecting her own young girl. She is unconcerned about the section of Pecola's body that has been severely burned by the hot berry juice. For her, Pecola's body has no meaning; she is just a black, filthy body that reminds her of her, which is the thing that she hates and strives to escape. Pecola loses her right to her body due to her own mother's lack of regard for her.

Claudia learns her invisibility in popular culture in Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*. The nine-year dislike olds for white baby dolls is exacerbated by the white dolls she receives as gifts. Claudia disturbs the obsessive need to worship white light traits by dismembering them, rejecting the in favour of her own blackness. She defies white tyranny by compelling others to perceive her as a person rather than a reflection of whiteness.

Claudia's fight against the white kid star's invisibility is the subject of the black. Claudia's outward violence is similar to the heartbreaking internal violence of Pecola, who is another black girl in *The Bluest Eye*, who exhibits against herself for similar reasons. Her mother despised her, and her father neglected her. Pecola embraces all things white and accepts her self-hatred. Young black girls are encouraged to revere white femininity and white motherhood in Morrison's novel *The Bluest Eye*. Pecola accepts the humiliation of her blackness, submitting to white oppression's heaviness. Shirley Temple and white baby dolls are important to her in her desire for blue eyes.

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As a result, some of Morrison's female characters resist white beauty ideals by resort to the verbal violence in order to maintain a positive self- image. Claudia and Freda use verbal aggression against Maureen Peal, a "high yellow dream child" (Morrison 162). Eventually devolves into a yelling match over skin colour. As the light-skinned, straight-haired black child who baits a dark-skinned girl, Maureen represents even more devotion to white beauty standards. Recognizing that Maureen is using the term "black" in a derogatory manner (and recognizing her own presence within the same category), Claudia's attitude changes as she realizes she is being attacked as well. Maureen's final attack is aimed at bringing her attention to her own highly appreciated pale skin colour: "I am cute!" you are also unattractive! "Black and ugliness black e moss (Morrison 61). Claudia and Freida are taken aback by Maureen's final words, which are wise, accurate, and timely:

If she was cute and if anything could be believed, she was, then we were not. And what did that mean! We were lesser. Nicer, brighter, but still lesser 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. (ibid 74).

The majority of the pecola's community considers white (and light) skin to be attractive, dismissing the attractiveness of black skin. The girls must either accept the emotional violence that has been imposed on them or believe in their own ugliness, or they must fight back forcefully. That is precisely what they do. Claudia and Freda try to reclaim authority by focusing on Maureen's flaws: being born with six fingers, having a "dog teeth", and silly play on her name. Their verbal attack turns the power of white light on its head, rejecting racist and gendered expectations for young black girls in favour of a new picture of themselves as dominant characters. While they continue to be bothered by the fact that their dark skin is not regarded as highly as Maureen's pale complexion, their verbal assaults

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become their own act of defiance, challenging society's persecution of them. Claudia and Freda's self-esteem is unaffected by society's white obsessive fixation, even if it is tarnished.

2.7 Stereotyping Blackness

Internalized racism is psychological as well as an ideological problem. It begins as a social construct, then progresses to become an ingrained and internalized problem that is generally accepted and rarely challenged. It is ensured, in other words, by "the acceptance of the negative societal beliefs and stereotypes about themselves" (Banks et al. 94). The social influences on the constructing of this self-oppressive perception are not noticeable concerning stereotypes and beliefs. The colour black is often associated with negative perceptions such as ugliness, savagery and filthiness in *The Bluest Eye*.

Throughout the book, the colour black is synonymous with filth and dirt. It has a negative reputation due to social generalizations that pass down from generation to generation, causing young people to adopt their mentality and attitudes, owing to their skin colour, which is far similar to blackness? The novel's black characters are far away from neatness and cleanliness. This stereotype is often refashioned at a young age, as in *The Bluest Eye*.

White children in the novel are taught that niggers are filthy, while whites are clean and identifiable; they are defined by both whiteness and cleanliness:

His mother did not like him to play with niggers; she had explained to him the difference between people of colour and niggers. They were easily identifiable. White people were neat and quiet; niggers were dirty and loud" (Morrison 87).

This association of blackness with filth and filthiness continues to spread among people of colour, who accept it as a natural reality. In this regard, Frantz Fanon emphasizes in his well-known book "White Mask". Black skins that young people are more likely to

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embrace “a white man’s attitude” and believe it is also a form of “sacrifice dedication, which is at the same time a self-oppression that batters their own race” (Fanon 114). Similarly, Pecola, Frieda, and Claudia, representing the next generation of people of colour, go through Fanon’s self- sacrifice. They still consider filthy places to be their home; they just hang out in filthy places and “could go up the alley and see what is in the trash cans” (Morrison 26), dressed in filthy clothes:

She looked at Pecola. Saw the dirty term dress, the plaits sticking out on her head; hair matted where the plaits had come undone, and the muddy shoes with the wad of gun peeping out from between the cheap soles... (Morrison 94).

In the other hand, in the book blackness is a very recognizable criterion by which white people can distinguish between cruelty and gentleness. When Pecola went to the doctor to get her pregnancy checked, she was placed under a white’s gaze, which reduces pecola’s humanity to that of a mere animal (horse). “They blacks deliver right away and with no pain just like horses”(Morrison 124). “He looks toward her...he senses that he need not waste the effort of a glance” (Morrison 24). When she visits the store, the store keeper’s humiliating glance turns her to nothing, “for Morrison, white gaze would render blacks as merely low forms of animals” (Morrison 25).As Mao and others assume, it is clear that Morrison seeks to portray how biases kept against African American community go further to humiliate and transform them into animals; that are not even worth looking at (Mao et al).

In other words, “the black body was subhuman and didn’t deserve the rights of human beings” (Pinckney 94). Furthermore, the colour black has long been synonymous with ugliness; that is the darker an individual is pervasive and unquestioned. The bluest eye’s African American characters (particularly Pecola) are “poor and black... they believed they

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were ugly...they had each accepted it without question” (Morrison 39); separated from beauty by their black skin, curly hair, and flat noses.

These characteristics, according to Ella Przybyo, “are essential to constructions of difference: abnormality and ugliness” (Przybo 07). To put it another way, being oppressed and labelled is a different, abnormal person and thus ugly. Pecola picks up on this mentality by being subjected to the prevailing attitudes of white people and taking them for granted. Consequently, the concept of beauty is often associated with features and facial appearance and mentally isolated from blacks; because the foremen are glorified and represented.

In positions of power and superiority and their whiteness is a privilege, while the blacks who are “the marginalized group are often framed as inferior or less than the group in power (the whites, 94).

2.8 Longing for Whiteness

Internalized connotations of whiteness, on the other hand, have been synonymous with positive images: elegance, liberation, and dominance, as a result of this cheap and stereotyped signification of blackness and its deep embedding in the mind of blacks. As a result of being conditioned by white people’s dominant culture, blacks have become more incorporated into the constructed longing for white beauty ideals.

They have formed a deep desire to become whites to the point that they prefer white standards to their own. In this aspect, Corrin Pinkney believes that black’s preference for whiteness over blackness is an ideology profoundly ingrained in their psyche: “the ideology that being white was better than being black became imbedded into the black psyche as a result of treatment” (Pinkney94).

As previously mentioned, it is the product of the treatment of whiteness as a right and blackness as a flow; this treatment produces a preference for white values over black values as opposed to the mistreatment of the latter. The reader will discover in the novel that people of

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colour, unlike white people, are deprived of their dignity and are exempt from fair treatment. Pecola's contrast, with Maureen Peal at school, for example, is one way of building this desire for whiteness; her attention is mostly on what makes the less dark girl better and superior to her; the brown girl is considered "as rich as the richest of the white girls", with expensive clothes and thriving treatment.

She enchanted the entire school. When teachers called on her, they smiled encouragingly. Black boys did not trip her in the halls; white boys did not stone her, white girls did not suck their teeth when she was assigned to be their work partners; black girls stepped aside when she wanted to use the sink in the girl's toilets, and their eyes genuflected under sliding lids (Morrison 26).

Pecola concludes that being less black or white is superior to being black due to this treatment. Her fictional transformation into a blue-eyed girl began when she started "worshipping" white models such as "Shirley Temple" and drinking much milk from the white cup on the bottom of which Shirley's picture is drawn. Adrian Goldman argues that the constructed concept of beauty is formed by media texts such as model postcards, social effects, and comparative judgments, writing "young women's ideas of beauty are created in part by mediated images, interpersonal influence, and social comparison"(Goldman 5).

This interpersonal influence is felt on a surface level, particularly as Pecola's friends become conscious of her devotion,

we knew she was fond of the Shirley Temple cup and took every opportunity to drink milk out of it just to handle and see sweet Shirley's face" (Morrison 23),

and they are also influenced by Pecola's adoration, and they learn later on how to love, admire and "worship" Shirley Temple. "It was a small step to Shirley Temple", says Claudia,

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I learned much later to worship her, just as I learned to delight cleanliness, knowing even as I learned that the change was adjustment without improvement (Morrison 23).

While she initially despised this model, she later changed her mind to assimilate with white norms and not stigmatize black people. In Claudia's case however, whiteness is linked to having romantic relationships, implying that being white, or at least having some white spots on her face, would ensure her a partner or partners in the future.

My supply of ideas exhausted, I began to concentrate on the white spots on my fingernails'. The total signified the number of boyfriends I would have seven (Morrison 27).

To put it another way, being too black is the worst luck one can have because it has become an internalized stereotypical reality in black cultures that being too dark means being too ugly, and that no boy can approach them in fact, backed up by the light-coloured young girls continuing and supportive assumptions in the book, such as Maureen's conception of darker people: "I am cute! And you ugly! Black and ugly black e mos I am cute!" (Morrison 73). Despite belonging to a black group, Maureen stigmatizes those with a darker black hue, although she is also a member of this community.

To equate white, beautiful people with sweetness, candy is named after a white model with 'blond hair', 'smiling face' and 'blue eyes, and to eat the candy is to "eat the eyes" of white people and dream day in and day out to the point that she cannot give up dreaming or succumb to praying:

Each night, without fail, she prayed for blue eyes. Fervently, for a year, she had prayed. Although somewhat discouraged, she was not without hope. To have something as extraordinary as that happen would take a long, long time. (Morrison 16).

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As a result of this adoration and its psychological effects, Pecola comes up with an ideal concept of beauty, to be attractive, must have blue eyes.

2.9 Conclusion

To sum up, Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* takes a two-pronged approach to internalized racism, examining the stereotyped conception of blackness on the one hand and the ideological conception of whiteness on the other. Throughout the book, black skin is stereotyped as being synonymous with "ugliness," "dirt" and "animality," which is a viewpoint that runs deep into Pecola, Frieda and Claudia's subconscious. White skin and blue eyes, on the other hand, are ideologically idolized by associating them with elegance, dominance, and sweetness. As a result, the novel's black culture revolves around white expectations of adoration, ignoring their own beauty, which resides in celebrating their black race.

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3.1 Introduction

In reality, not everybody has or can have ontological liberty. The idea of the beauty myth is one of many impediments to one's freedom of life. Beauty myth, which operates mainly on an unconscious level and takes many forms impacts many aspects of human life. All of these are evident in Pecola's existence. She is an easy target for the beauty myth since she is a young, black, poor girl whose life has been wrecked by it. The novel is discussed in a greater depth in the following chapter. The attempt here is to show how much gaining the beauty ideals of that time and being considered beautiful was important to little Pecola, and what were the impacts of these white standards on her existence. In addition to analyzing and shedding light on the supporters of the deadly need of having the ideal beauty in Pecola's life. The present chapter will also analyze the literary elements in *The Bluest Eye* along with other esthetics of the novel.

3.2 The Impacts of the White Standards of Beauty on Pecola's Freedom of Life

Pecola Breedlove has been bullied by the schoolboys; they made fun of her body and her father's habit of sleeping naked. The lads are impoverished and black, and they secretly embrace the beauty standard, just like the victims of the beauty myth. Their actions are motivated by their dissatisfaction with being left out of the beauty circle, according to Morrison. On three levels of existence, the beauty standard's impacts on her bodily and social freedom will be examined.

Pecola is an ideal target since she appears defeated, despondent, and lonely. This occurrence implies that Pecola's freedom of movement has been restricted due to her physical appearance. As a result, it can be claimed that Pecola is subjected to unjust and the harsh treatment on her physical level because of her physical condition and looks, which do not fit the criteria of beauty admired by those around her.

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Pecola is mistreated not only on a physical level, but also on a mental level, which has negative consequences. Pecola's critical consciousness does not arise as a result of the first impact. Pecola is an ideal victim of the imposing practice of the beauty standard because she is young, alone, and surrounded by many manifestations of the beauty myth. She is not yet mature enough to establish her own critical view. She also lacks the support of her family and the love of a friend to allow her to form her own perspective. The many complex manifestations of the beauty myth that surrounding her, makes it impossible for her to escape its grip. As a result of her lack of opportunity, Pecola lacks her own critical consciousness regarding the beauty myth and its oppressive requirements.

Ultimately, Pecola is influenced unwittingly to adopt the beauty myth that pervades the community's mentality. She comes to perceive everything through the eyes of the community, particularly her own situation. Despite her criticisms of the beauty ideals, Pecola, like others, including her mother, becomes a believer and worshiper of it. She does however, use her false consciousness to assess her: "... she sees only what was there to see the eyes of other people" (Morrison 40). This prompts her to consider her physical state as in the 1920s, Shirley Temple, a well known and endearing white child actor. When she briefly lives with the MacTeer family: "She was a long time with the milk, and gazed fondly at the silhouette of Shirley Temple's dimpled face" (Morrison 19). After being abandoned by her own family, the Macteer family is eager to keep her from becoming a tramp. Pecola's dream has only grown more robust and more steadfast since then. She aspires to be lovely by possessing blue emeralds.

Pecola's engrossment on her own fantasy universe causes her to lose touch with her natural social life. She isolates herself from the rest of the world, leaving her alone in her own fantasy world. Pecola, in the other hand, is finally abandoned by her only imagined friend in

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her own world. This occurs after the imaginary companion has had enough of the only topic of their conversation, which; are Pecola's imaginary blue eyes:

I am not going to play with you anymore.

Oh. Do not leave.

Yes. I am.

Why. Are you mad at me?

Yes.

Because my eyes are not blue enough?

Because i do not have the bluest eyes?

No, because you are acting silly... (Morrison 158).

In the end, Pecola's infatuation and its fictitious fulfilment leave her completely alone. Nobody wants to be her friend, real or imaginary.

The outcome of being entirely cut off from social life, real or imagined, is that Pecola's current existence, physical, mental, or social life is mixed together in a bewildering way, with no more synergy among the three levels:

The damage done was total. She spent her days, her tendril, sap-green days, walking up and down, her head jerking to the beat of a drummer so distant only she could hear. Elbows bent, hands -on shoulders, she flailed her arms like a bird in an eternal, grotesquely futile effort to fly. Beating the air, a winged but grounded bird, intent on the blue void it could not reach, could not even see, but which filled the valleys of the mind (Morrison 158).

Pecola is stranded in the rubbish area, where she belongs as a completely. Damaged, undesired, discarded thing. Her strange physical movement, similar to that of a bird attempting to fly represents her unconscious attempt to surpass her undeserving real existence. The failure of this deed reflects the hopelessness of her attempt to flee her perilous situation.

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The voice that fascinated her indicates the conflict in her head as it is overtaken by the notion of beauty myth that she cannot but so desperately seeks.

3.3 The Supporters of the White Ideology in Pecola's Life

If there are no advocates who practice or promote the beauty myth as a doctrine, it will die out. The proponents of beauty ideals and its criteria in Pecola's case can be divided into different categories, including her immediate family, others in her environment, and Pecola herself.

3.3.1 Pecola's Mother

Pecola's parents, particularly her mother, Pauline, are a firm believer in the beauty myth. Pauline appreciates beauty despite being black, impoverished, illiterate, and having a physical deformity. She aspires to the elegance, money, and romance depicted in films starring white actors. Pauline embraces all of those fictitious white standards to avoid the monotony of her low-income family life. Pauline takes away one lesson from those films:

She was never able, after her education in the movies, to look at a face and not assign it some category in the scale of absolute beauty (Morrison 97).

This demonstrates that Pauline is not merely a passive observer but also applies the beauty ideals to those around her, particularly her own daughter, Pecola.

3.3.2 The Community Surrounding Pecola

The beauty myth is also practised by individuals or small groups of people in Pecola's vicinity. This is reflected in Pecola's academic environment: "The ugliness that made her ignored or despised at school, by teachers and classmates alike" (Morrison 39). Geraldine's fair-skinned black ladies, who are middle-class and follow a white way of living, do not want to interact with Pecola yet still, have the dirty black girl in their spotless home. Pecola's dark skin and filthy looks also make her undetectable to the old white man; who owns a little candy shop where Pecola occasionally buys candies: "She...sees the vacuum where curiosity ought

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to lodge, and something more, the total absence of human recognition, the glazed separateness" (Morrison 42). Geraldine's little boy, like his mother, despises darkness and slovenliness, as evidence by his terrible behaviour toward Pecola, who is much older than him.

3.3.3 Pecola Herself

Pecola, like the other two parties, is a massive fan of beauty standards. Pecola eventually absolutely hates her physical situation as a slave of societal expectations and sees no way to change it: "As long as she looked the way she did, as long as she was ugly, she would have to stay with these people. Somehow she belonged to them" (Morrison 39). She, on the other hand, hides and protects herself from the oppressive beauty ideals that accompany her by using her physical unattractiveness and scruffiness as a nest: "She hid behind hers. concealed, veiled, eclipsed" (Morrison 35).

3.3.4 Media and Advertisements

Cinema and film industry plays a significant influence in the dominance of African-Americans in the United States. Pecola was significantly affected by white actors and actresses because they were immensely motivating to the public. In the film industry, white actors are cast as prominent characters, while black actors were cast as supporting ones. The prominent roles were always given to the whites, while the blacks played as servants or subordinate roles. Because blacks were not given any chances to gain a higher position in the film industry, they could not develop the concept of obtaining a higher place in society. Instead, they were depicted as servants who were intellectually dominated and believed the masses were uneducated and destitute. There were much advertising featuring white models.

Shirley Temple was the highest -paid child actress of the 1903s and early 1904s, with her trademark dimples, golden curls, and twinkling blue eyes. Pecola discovers the Shirley

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mug when she moves in with Claudia. Pecola started to sip from it whenever she has the chance to, believing that it will make her look beautiful. As Claudia said:

She was a long time with the milk and gazed fondly at the silhouette of Shirley Temple's dimpled face. She and Frieda had a loving conversation about how cute Shirley Temple was (Morrison 12-13).

White baby dolls were also favoured by Pecola and Frieda. To dazzle the black youngsters, the white people utilized the blue-eyed baby doll as a weapon. Blue-eyed baby dolls were portrayed as the most precious gifts for Christmas and a girl child's most valued possession. It came to be known as the white beauty emblem. Using the mainstream media, magazines, and newspapers, whites formalized the ideals of white beauty. As Claudia said:

Adults, older girls, shops, magazines, newspapers, window signs-all the world had agreed that a blue eyed, yellow-haired, pink-skinned doll was what every girl child treasured. (Morrison 14).

Pecola and her mother have been socialized to believe that white people are lovely and that they are unattractive. Pecola has been very happy to have the bluest eyes because of the white ideology, and her mother Pauline wants to spend the majority of her time in the white man's house. As a result, the white people of America have been somewhat influential in hegemonies the black people to accept the white standards of beauty as a cultural aspect.

3.4 The Reasons Behind Choosing Colour as a Standard of Beauty

In America, African blacks were enslaved, tortured, and tormented by white people. Although black people were more significant and had greater physical strength, they were ruled by white people. To completely dominate them, educated and crafty white people attempted to hegemonies the black by implying that there is no way to change their skin colour. They are not only considered not beautiful but rather born and raised believing they were ugly. The whites picked colour as a means of persuasion since it is a biological fact. It is

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nearly impossible for a black person to be white in actuality, with golden hair and blue eyes. The black could do this if the white could use anything else to measure of beauty since it was simply unreachable for the black. A scholar Imane Hidayet Belad Said:

By the 1960s the American society introduced the beauty myth to black minority who accepted it blindly, resulting in the destroying of an entire race. During this period, black feminist movements emerged due to the oppressive, racist and sexist acts on black women. As a result, numerous authors reflected on this problem, among them Toni Morrison, a feminist author, in her novel *The Bluest Eye*, where she attacks the founders of the beauty standards and the ones that practised it (black and perspective". (Balad: Web).

3.4.1 Self Hatred

Without getting a pink complexion, yellow hair, and blue eyes, blacks could not achieve the standards of beauty. As a result, believed they were unattractive since they did not even think they were pretty. *The Bluest Eye's* novel was about the so-called ugliness of black people from the perspective of white people in America. The entire Breedlove family considers themselves to be ugly. Because of their whiteness, the whites thought of themselves as superior to the blacks. Since black individuals like Pecola and Pauline were ignored all around America, they began to despise themselves. As Manuela Lopez Ramirez said:

In *The Bluest Eye*, the dissociation of the female adolescent identity stems from the colonization of blacks by mainstream culture and the internalization of its standards of beauty, which engender self-hatred. (Ramirez: Web).

Pecola believes that acquiring the bluest eyes will help her overcome her feeling of self-hatred. As Claudia said, "Each night without fail, she prayed for blue eyes. Fervently for

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a year she had prayed” (Morrison 35). Pauline, Pecola's mother, has internalized the belief that black is unattractive. She prefers to spend her time working in a white man's house over spending time with her family. As a result, the black began to hate them, feeding the idea of white beauty. Because black people despised themselves for not being attractive, white people were able to dominate them easily.

3.5 Biblical and Classical Myths in *The Bluest Eye*

The portrayal of the black women in fiction has always been tied with myths. Myths like “prostitute,” “sexually loose,” hyper-sexuality and a variety of other labels is used to maintain sexist relationships. Both the black the white community and black minority are responsible for these arrangements. According to Sheftall Beverly Guy:

This association of black womanhood with hyper-sexuality her partial nudity underscores was to persist in the in the Euro-American imagination long after slavery and colonialism had ended (Beverly 15-16).

Such examples of overlapping can be found in Morrison's works. Stories and tales become powerful in shaping the identities of entities concerning others, and symbols may be understood as contained in myth's connective tissue in a sense. Morrison's appropriation of biblical tales and symbols is always done with critical angularity, as she articulates the living condition of African Americans in America through her usage of these stories and symbols. Morrison's use of biblical mythology is part of a long tradition of appropriation, in which one culture adopts materials from another. In her works, Morrison also repositions much biblical symbolism. A myth is described as ‘a conventional story taken as history that serves to explain people's worldview. Morrison's usage of biblical and classical myths can be viewed through the lens of the above as a gesture of acknowledging the bible's influence while also waving this experience of the black community.

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Toni Morrison is not the first African American author to use biblical in her work. We already have a tradition of black writers incorporating biblical stories and symbols into their canon. *The Bluest Eye* is a sad story about a young black girl who wishes to have blue eyes. This improbable wish has a tumultuous past, both personal and communal. Pecola Breedlove is the young aspirant's name, and; she comes from a broken family where her mother and father are estranged. Claudia MacTeer, the novel's narrator and a young girl Pecola's age, recalls with horror the day when Pecola's father put her outdoors, she remembers:

Outdoors, we knew, was it the absolute terror of life... to be put outdoors by a landlord was one thing, unfortunate but an aspect of life over which had no control since could not control income. Nevertheless, to be slack to put oneself outdoors, or heartless enough to put one's own kin outdoors - that was criminal (Morrison 3).

Outdoors marked the end of something, a physical truth that defined and complemented our metaphysical state. Morrison, on the other hand does not employ the fairy tale element in her story solely as a frame of reference. Little Pecola was not provided with any protection from her mother. Since her mother was too occupied looking after the white family's child. Pauline, who was up on a Hollywood diet, begins to despise her own origins. She cannot even love her daughter because, in her mind, Pecola is too ugly to be even noticed.

Morrison paints an essential, depiction of the life of the African Americans in America who are still affected by slavery via the misery of her characters. Pecola is shunned by society, and this shunning is nearly ritualistic. Claudia recognizes Pecola's influence in moulding the community in her final summary of Pecola's tragedy. Pecola's tragic story is also linked to the "scapegoat myth". The term 'scapegoat' is derived from a Hebrew rite detailed in the book of Leviticus in the Bible. Morrison's depiction of Pecola's tragedy is

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ritualistic, highlighting the inadequacies of the western concept of religion, predicated on a binary system of values. The African religious system believes in various aspects of God, aside from 'dualistic Western theology' and the 'Holy trinity'.

3.6 Losing of Subjective Culture and the Species Equality in Morrison's

The Bluest Eye

It is especially true for black people who have never experienced actual freedom as a result of the ongoing racial discrimination and cultural control exemplified by the construction of inferior blacks on the one hand, and superior whites on the other. There was a great focus on the 'ecological feminism' in Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*. The term ecological feminism refers to its unique philosophy of species equality. Ecological feminism is concerned with the numerous rules that have existed throughout history, such as oppression, inequality, and exploitation. It promotes egalitarian, harmonious, and long-term social growth, with a focus on the development of diverse values such as friendship, love, honesty, and character. Ecological feminism is a social movement that promotes gender equality, human society in accordance with nature, and species equality. Environmental feminism has contributed to the improvement of social relationships. Violent behaviour in social relationships will be efficiently kept within boundaries, according to the ecological female point of view.

Simultaneously, it is vital to reject violence in order to build healthy social interactions and a social culture. Traditional patriarchal ideology, on the other hand, opposes this. Traditional patriarchal thinking emphasizes conquest, expansion, and rule, as well as modifying and conquering nature. Ecological feminism was more concerned with human nature, while harshly criticizing war's harshness. *The Bluest Eye* depicts a realistic depiction of black life. Between the lines of the novel, Morrison's concern for women is evident. Morrison examines too many inequalities in reality in this work. She also discusses the

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disparities between men and women, as well as racial and socioeconomic disparities. For Pecola's tragedy, the community deserves heavy condemnation. Pecola is subjected to a significant deal of prejudice in the neighboring community. By the dominant social order's standards, Pecola is seen unattractive. Pecola, on the other hand considers herself to be ugly. The plot of the story is set in villages and towns rather than a big city to emphasize the vast disparities between the wealthy and the poor worlds.

Many times in the work *The Bluest Eye*, women and ecological nature were shown in the same way. Pecola's first period, for example, was not pleasant, which is a metaphor. The author is attempting to convey to the reader that this was a violation of natural law. She was afterwards raped by her father. Marigold seeds were mentioned in the text. Fertility was identified with seed germination, the womb to the land, and the baby to marigold seeds, according to the author. Women seemed to have fully embodied the traits of nature, which include gentles, tolerance, and harmony. Men are the polar antithesis of nature, which depicts oppressive, destructive, and conquering powers. The author adopted a compassionate, to women.

3.7 Conclusion

As a black writer, Toni Morrison is acutely aware of the plight of African-Americans in the United States. *The Bluest Eye* is a vehicle through which she conveys her deepest sentiments. And she has demonstrated how the ideals of beauty, which is used by white people as a form of power politics, can devastate a person's life. Throughout the work, the author seeks to demonstrate how males in America employ various ways to oppress black people. Morrison takes use of more modern mythology, such as the myth of nation-building. She exposes the restrictive politics that such a story highlights. Morrison not only broadens the scope of her story by including so many mythical and legendary aspects, but she also provides us with a through perspective on the current state of black people in America. Toni

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Morrison's unique construction of myth and mythology in her novel *The Bluest Eye* is studied in this chapter. Within the context of Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* the link between African-American mythology and classical mythology is demonstrated.

General conclusion

General Conclusion

This major dissertation primary goal was to show how white beauty standards affected and threatened the lives of African-American women. Toni Morrison, an African American writer, investigates how Western standards of ideal beauty are developed and promoted with and within the black community in *The Bluest Eye* (1970). The story depicted both the lives of individuals whose dark skin and Negroid characteristics' blight their lives, and how the standard of white beauty, when placed on black youth, can severely impair one's self-love and esteem, which is common when beauty goes unnoticed. In this work, Morrison focuses on the harm that black women characters suffer as a result of the formation of femininity in a discriminated society where whiteness was all what matters at the time.

The Bluest Eye is a portrayal of African American's life and fight to be accepted in the twentieth century. Claudia's narrative perspective as a little girl and an adult, where the reader gets a glimpse into the life of black women, is the key to understanding their change. The story covers not only the psychological advances of the twentieth century, but the economic, cultural, and political components. The analysis of the *Bluest Eye* helps the researcher in answering the research questions and proving the hypothesis. The twentieth century was an age of racism and a white dominating culture against black people who migrated to America. As in the case of the Breedlove and the MacTeer families, a white culture that was by all means supported by almost everyone in the society, especially by propaganda in movies and advertisements, in order to deeply contribute in instilling the white beauty ideals in the American society.

This study proves that female characters suffered from violence not only from strangers but rather from the closest people including parents. The claim that the main character Pecola has suffered from cruel abuse both physically and emotionally, have been proven through the analysis and the reading of *The Bluest Eye* from both psychological and feminist perspectives. Prior to the 1970s, child sexual abuse was a taboo subject that was kept

General Conclusion

hidden in society. It wasn't until the 1970s that it was made a criminal offense. Morrison addressed this topic in her novel "*The Bluest Eye*" which deals with the unthinkable. Sexual abuse and violence against women became public and political issues as a result of second wave feminism. Morrison showed in her novel that Pecola's mother has never taught her anything about her body, and she is not allowed to ask her any intimate questions. As a result, her transition to maturity is tough and stressful. Pecola's mother, on the other hand, neither regarded her as a human being, nor devoted her life to teach her womanhood.

According to the findings of this study, no one is born with the proclivity to harm others. When people are in pain, they inflict harm on others. There are only a few examples of Pecola being directly oppressed by whites in *The Bluest Eye*. People in her own community are the ones that oppress her the most. We note that Pecola's oppressors have been harmed by repressive adults, who believe in a cruel racist ideology. An ideology that was made up by the white community, knowing that there is no way for black people to change their skin colour and that is how they could easily rule and dominate them.

All in all, many people seek for beauty in their lives because they have a preconceived notion of what beauty is. People are aware that it can assist you in your life. However, most individuals are unaware that beauty is subjective. Meaning that beauty should not be defined by what others tell you it is; beauty is subjective, and what you see as pretty can be seen as ugly for someone else. In Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* the characters are so obsessed with the beauty ideals, and they were ready to do anything to achieve them; despite the fact that it was something impossible to get.

Appendices

Appendices

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Appendix 1: Toni Morrison Biography and Publications.

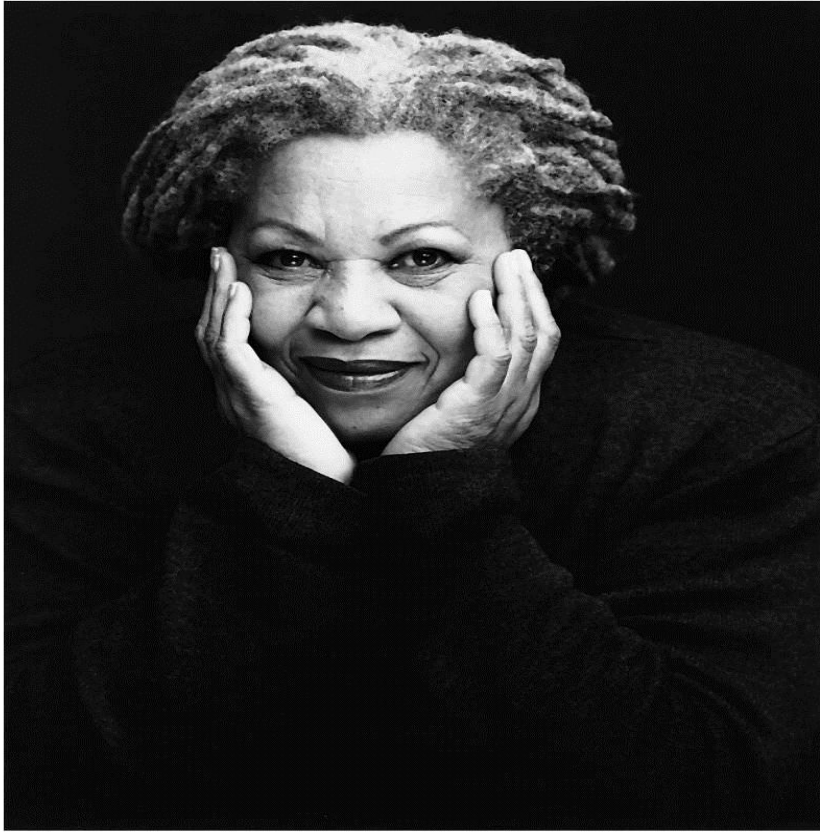
Appendix 2: Synopsis of Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*.

Appendix 3: Black Women Writers.

Appendix 4: First Black Feminists.

Appendix 5: The Emergence of Slavery in the USA.

Appendix 1: Toni Morrison Biography and Publications



Toni Morrison Breaks Down Race

As a Social Construct

Toni Morrison Chloe Anthony Wofford was born to Ramah and George Wofford on February 18, 1931 in Lorain, Ohio. Her parents were both from share cropping families who had migrated North in the early twentieth century.

Morrison's first novel, 'the *Bluest Eye*', was published in 1970. Her second novel 'Sula' came out in 1974. Morrison is the author of 'Beloved' and 'the Black Book', both published by Random House, as she has written several other books. In 1987, Morrison was named the Robert F. Goheen Professor in the Humanities at Princeton. In 1993, she was awarded the Nobel Prize in literature for her novel 'Beloved' her next novel, 'Paradise', is set in all-black town in Oklahoma.

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The black American experience is a key element in Morrison's writings. Her characters fight to find themselves and their cultural identity in an unjust society. Her use of fantasy, poetic style, and stories has a lot of depth and substance to them.

Appendix 2: Synopsis of Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*.



Vladimir's Portfolio: The Bluest Eye

Book Cover Recreation

The Bluest Eye, tells the narrative of a young African American girl and her family, who are influenced by the dominant American society in every way. It relates the narrative of Pecola, an eleven-year old African American girl who is described as impoverished, black, and ugly. Pecola adores the concept of having white skin and blue eyes, which she considers to be the ultimate “ideal” of beauty.

Pecola has had some difficult times throughout her life, and her mother, Mrs. Breedlove, is uncaring. She doesn't give a damn about her and prefers to work and look after the baby in the white family. Cholly Breedlove, an alcoholic who rapes his own daughter Pecola until she becomes pregnant. Her parents fight frequently, and these squabbles frequently result in physical violence. As a result, Pecola's brother Sammy dealt with violence

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by fleeing. Pecola's reader discovers that both of Pecola's parents have had sad histories, which has led to their adult dysfunction. Cholly, Pecola's father was abandoned as a newborn and later turned away by his father after he sought him out. Cholly's first sexual experience involves two white males forcing him to perform a sexual act while they watch. Her mother Pauline, has a lame foot and has always felt alone and ugly. She loses herself in movies when she was a young woman. Pecola meets the gorgeous little white actress in despair, making her believe she is unattractive. Pecola requests blue eyes in an act of Soaphead Church, who claims to be able to perform miracles. Soaphead Church dupes Pecola into poisoning a dog he wanted to kill for a quite long time, claiming that if the dog acts strangely, it means she will get what she is wishing for. Eventually Pecola loses her baby because of the pre-mature labor and she ended up insane.

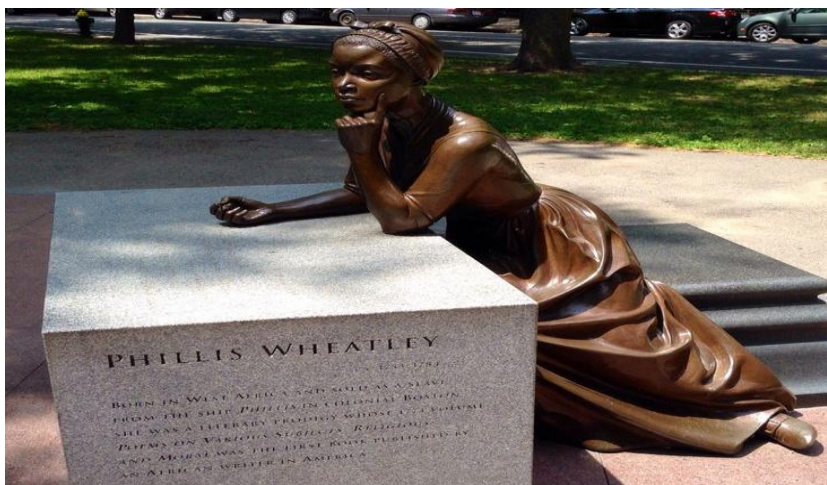
Appendix 3: Black Women Writers.

Appendix 3.1: Phillis Wheatley (1753 - 1784)



Phillis Wheatley-Wallpapers Cave

Poemson various subjects, religious and Moral were written by Phillis Wheatley in 1773. Wheatley became the first Black American woman and the second African American to publish a collection of poetry with this release. She was kidnapped from Senegambia and sold to a Boston family who taught her to read and write. Wheatley's talent as a writer was recognized early on, and she was encouraged to produce poems.



Statue of Phillis Wheatley on Comm Ave Mall, Boston

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Wheatley became popular throughout the American colonies and England after gaining admiration from early American leaders such as George Washington and other African American writers such as Jupiter Hammon. Phillis was set free once her enslaver, John Wheatley, died. She married John Peter not long after. Despite the fact that the couple had three children, all of them perished as babies. Wheatley got seriously ill in 1784 and died.

Appendix 3.2: Frances Watkins Harper (1825-1911).



Frances Watkins Harper, 19th- century

Author and Reformer

As an author and speaker, Frances Watkins Harper received international fame. Harper motivated Africans to make societal changes through her poetry, fiction, and nonfiction writing. Harper began publishing poetry volumes in 1845, such as *Forest Leaves and Poems on Miscellaneous Subjects*, which were both published in 1850. The second collection sold over 10,000 copies, setting a new record for a poet's poetry collection.

Harper was hailed as “the Most African-American Journalism” for a series of essays and news stories aimed at improving African Americans. Harper's work appeared in both African-American and white newspapers. “...No nation can gain its full measure of enlightenment... if one-half of it is free and the other half is fettered”, as she says on one of

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her most famous lines, which embodies her attitude as an educator, writer, social and political activist. Harper was a founding member of the National Association of Coloured Women in 1886.

Appendix 3.3: Alice Dunbar Nelson (1875-1935)



Alice Dunbar Nelson

Alice Dunbar Nelson's career as a poet, writer, and activist began even before her marriage to Paul Laurence Dunbar, as a celebrated member of the Harlem Renaissance. Dunbar-writings focused on African American women, her multiracial identity, and Black American life in the United States during the Jim Crow era.

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Appendix 4: First Black Feminists

Appendix 4.1: Anna Julia Cooper (1858-1964)



Pennsylvania Peacemaker: Anna Julia Cooper

Cooper was the fourth African American woman to get a PhD when she graduated from the University of Paris-Sorbonne in 1924, making her one of the most notable Black scholars in American history. Cooper, who was born into slavery in Raleigh, North Carolina, wrote her first book, *A Voice from the South: By a Woman from the South*, in 1892, using both her lived experience with racism and her scholastic aptitude. Cooper's work is regarded as the first volume of Black feminist thinking in the United States, in which she pushed for Black women's self-determination.

Appendix 4.2: Sojourner Truth (1797-1883)



Sojourner Truth Portrait Photography by

War Is Hell Store

Truth, is an abolitionist and women's rights leader, was born into slavery as well, but managed to flee with her little daughter. Later, she went to court to get her son's freedom, being the first Black woman to do so. "*Ain't I a Woman,*" her famous address on gender inequality, was given 1851 at a women's rights convention in Akron, Ohio. She has stood the test of time as a raw and powerful expression of the trials and difficulties that Black women face.

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Appendix 4.3: Harriet Anne Jacobs (1813-1897)

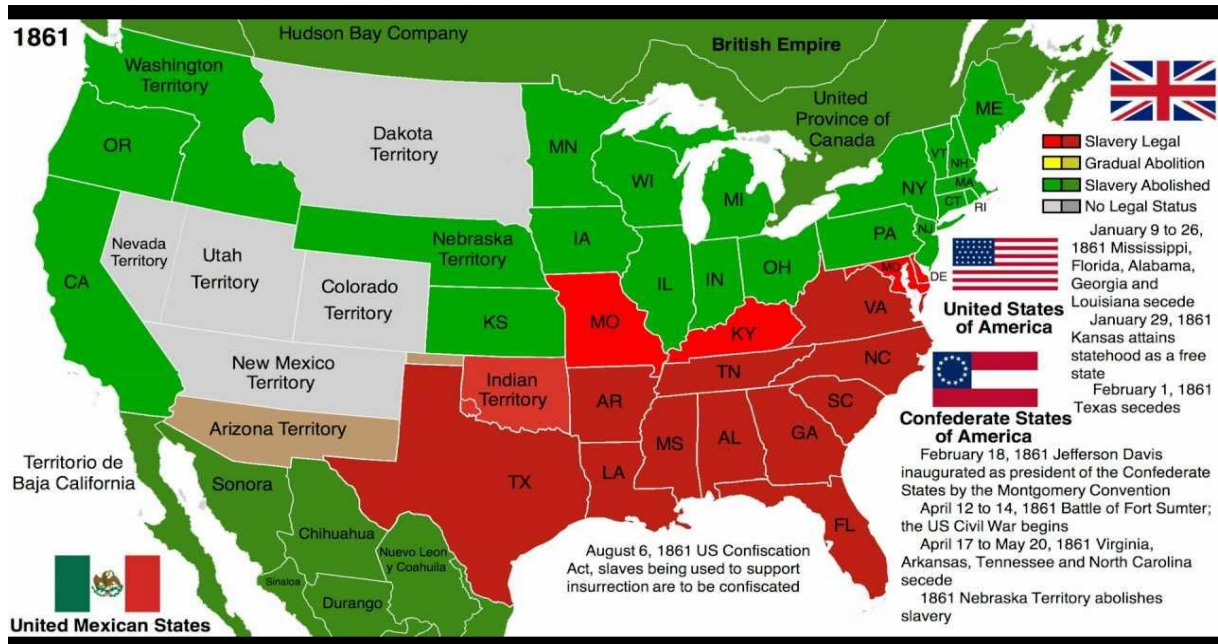


Harriet Ann Jacobs (1813-1897)

Jacobs, who escaped enslavement in North Carolina and went on to become an abolitionist and social reformer, wrote only one book, "*Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*". The 1861 book was one of the first and few autobiographies that detail the physical and sexual violence endured by enslaved women.

Jacobs was constantly threatened by her slavemaster to sell her two children if she didn't accept his sexual advances until she eventually escaped to the north. She dedicated her life after the Civil War to developing a community among newly freed slaves by coordinating the construction of schools, hospitals, and homes.

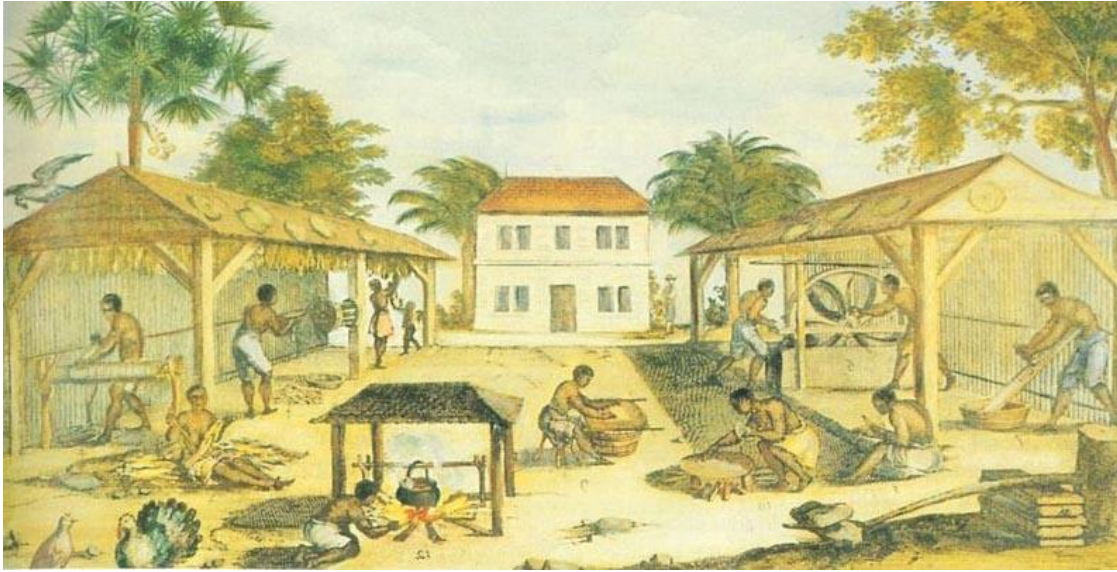
Appendix 5: The Emergence of Slavery in the USA



Abolition of Slavery Map: United States

Slavery in America originated in the early 17th century, and the colonies and states continued to use it for the next 250 years. Slaves, primarily from Africa, labored in the tobacco and cotton industries. The use of slaves in the South became a basis of their economy after the introduction of the cotton gin in 1793 and the increased demand for the product in Europe.

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Slaves Processing Tobacco in 17th-century Virginia.

By an Unknown American Slavery Time Line. Image is in the public domain via Wikimedia.com

The abolitionist movement began in the north in the late 18th century, and the country began to split over the issue. Slavery was outlawed in all new western areas by 1820, which Southern states considered as a danger to the institution of slavery itself. The Supreme Court ruling known as the Dred Scott Decision was handed down in 1857. Slaves who escaped to Free states were not free; they were still their masters' property and had to be returned to them.

Appendices

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