T.C.

ISTANBUL AYDIN UNIVERSITY

GRADUATE INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

GENDER VIOLENCE AND ALIC WALKER'S NOVEL THE COLOUR PURPLE, TONI MORRİSON'S NOVEL THE BLUEST EYE

M.A. Thesis

ARY SYAMANAD TAHIR TAHIR

SUPERVISOR
ASSIST. PROF. DR. GORDON MARSHALL

Istanbul – 2014

T.C.

ISTANBUL AYDIN UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

GENDER VIOLENCE AND ALIC WALKER'S NOVEL THE COLOUR PURPLE, TONI MORRİSON'S NOVEL THE BLUEST EYE

M.A. Thesis

ARY SYAMANAD TAHIR TAHIR

SUPERVISOR
ASSIST. PROF. DR. GORDON MARSHALL

T.C.
İSTANBUL AYDIN ÜNİVERSİTESİ
SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ MÜDÜRLÜĞÜ

Yüksek Lisans Tez Onay Belgesi

Enstitümüz İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı Ana Bilim Dalı İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı Tezli Yüksek Lisans Programı **Y1212.020010** numaralı öğrencisi **Ary Syamanad Tahir TAHIR** 'ın **"GENDER VIOLENCE AND ALICE WALKER'S NOVEL THE COLOUR PURPLE, TONI MORRISON'S NOVEL THE BLUEST EYE"** adlı tez çalışması Enstitümüz Yönetim Kurulunun 03.06.2014 tarih ve 2014/14 sayılı kararıyla oluşturulan jüri tarafından oybirliği ile Tezli Yüksek Lisans tezi olarak kabul edilmiştir.

Öğretim Üyesi Adı Soyadı	**İmzası**
Tez Savunma Tarihi :23/06/2014	
1)Tez Danışmanı: Yrd. Doç. Dr. Gordon John Ross MARSHALL	.....
2) Jüri Üyesi : Yrd. Doç. Dr. Ferma LEKESİZALIN	.....
3) Jüri Üyesi : Yrd. Doç. Dr. Gamze SABANCI	.....

Not: Öğrencinin Tez savunmasında **Başarılı** olması halinde bu form **imzalanacaktır**. Aksi halde geçersizdir.

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that all information in this document has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced all material and results that are not original to this work.

Name, Last name: Ary Tahir

Signature:

ACKNOLEDGEMENTS

My sincere gratitude is to my supervisor Asst. Prof. Dr. Gordon Marshall who has provided me with the tremendous support, advice, and guidance during the study. I am grateful to my graduate professors, Prof. Dr. Kemalettin Yiğiter, Prof. Dr. Veysel Kılıç, Assist. Prof. Dr. Gamze Sabanci for treating me with respect and timely advice throughout my graduate studies.

Next, I would like to express my gratitude to all my friends for their brilliant support. I also thank my dear wife, Nadia Rashid, who encouraged me to accomplish this study. This study could not have been made without the loving support, patience and assistance of my wife. Lastly, I would like to thank my parents, my father Syamand and my mother Adebah. Thanks for supporting me during my studies and urging me on.

DEDICATION

This paper is dedicated to:
- My lovely parents and siblings.
- My ever-supportive wife.
- My lovely children.
- Anyone who appreciates this work.

Contents

1. Introduction

This paper analyses two literary works, *The Bluest Eye* by Morrison (1970), and *The Color Purple* by Walker (1982), through their central themes of the trauma that black people, in particular black women suffered from. These two novels reflect how skin and eye color contributed negatively to the lives of the protagonists Pecola in *The Bluest Eye* and Celie in *The Color Purple*. Black women experienced a double oppression, the first by white dominated society, the second, inside their own families. Rape, torture, physical and psychological abuse, and racism were nightmares that deeply affected the lives of black women in the United States. The works of both Walker and Morrison focus mainly on slavery, racism, segregation, and how black people suffered both psychologically and socially since being forcibly brought to America. Both novelists attempted to illustrate their particular perspectives in the texts by constructing fictional narratives rooted within the history of Black America. Therefore, to discuss a literature of African-American women which is written by themselves it is necessary to fully explain this history, which will be done in chapter two, enabling the reader to better understand the protagonists of both novels.

The importance of the historical context of black feminism rests on the idea that “in both, feminism and Afro-American criticism, the other woman, the silent partner, has been the black woman, black women have also challenged the racism of feminist history" (Showalter 169). Showalter continues her argument referring to the movements of the 1970s within the discourse of African-American feminism, how black women exposed a political situation that involved both race and gender and

more important how "Blackness" itself became an ontological and critical category for assessing Afro-American literature. She also refers to both “Toni Morrison and Alice Walker and their contribution to make their voices heard in the literary community as black feminist writers” (171). In such an atmosphere of black community that had inherited the bitter history of racism, sexism, and the hierarchal heritage handed down to them from previous generations, black women were treated as less than human by white masters and black men.

Thus, the voices of feminist writers of color were raised in a revolutionary outburst to show this maltreatment of women within the black community, and to attack this hierarchal, phallocentric tradition. Toni Morrison and Alice Walker who are the subject of analysis in this thesis, contributed to this challenging of Black culture by giving a clear picture of the situation of women and girls inside the black community and challenging both black men and their inherited hierarchal tradition. In *The Bluest Eye* and *The Color Purple* the writers depicted black women who experienced brutality, in a hierarchal, cruel, and brutal community which itself struggled both inside of and against a racist society. The position of women in both novels, illustrates this brutality at the hands of American society, the Black community, and worst of all, their own families. The novels depict silent, submissive women acting in accordance with a tradition that handed authority to men. However, there are more importantly strong, self-sufficient women that reject this stereotype of black women. Both novelists also fulfill the role of feminist social activist, declaring that women have their own voices and that they can also be forceful and participate confidently in a community on equal footing with men. These women have the potential to make themselves the equal to any men sexually or physically, but do not

always act on this potential. Morrison and Walker chose to craft black female protagonists like Pecola and Celie because they themselves had bitterly suffered, cruelty, ill-treatment, racism, violence, and rape in their own lives. Thus, an element of the autobiographical can be observed in their novels. Both novelists attempt of create a society where women, especially black women are respected regardless to gender and skin color. However, they are clear that such aims cannot be realized without trauma and struggle.

1.1 Shadow of American Slavery in *The Bluest Eye and The Color Purple*

While slavery has likely existed since before recorded history, the first recorded dates of slavery are as early as 2700 BC in Mesopotamia (present-day Iraq), and again in 1600 BC in Greece. Slavery would continue to exist, making its way to Europe and to the New World by the 15th century. “In America slavery began when the first African slaves were transported to Virginia, in 1619, to aid in the production of such profitable crops as tobacco” (Deford 6). While slavery began as a system similar to indenture, it became a sadistic system that not only displaced families from Africa, but resulted in incalculable loss of human lives in the Middle Passage, leaving entire generations of African-Americans traumatized as their traditional lives were destroyed. Rape, torture, and brutal whippings happened daily on plantations in order to enforce discipline and ensure the breaking of the slave’s spirit. Slavery was common in the American colonies, especially the southern colonies where large scale agriculture was the norm, in the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries. Because of the dependence of the white elite on African-American slave labor to reduce costs, slaves were essential to the development of the American economy. The farmers and plantation owners of the American colonies became the ideal market for enslaved

Africans. Tobacco plantation owners in the colonies of Virginia, Maryland, North Carolina and rice planters in South Carolina, pushed slave traders to provide greater numbers of slaves as the 17th century progressed. As a result, more and more people were kidnapped from their countries in Africa and taken to the colonies to cultivate crops on the increasingly large number of Southern plantations. Africans were also taken to the Northern colonies as slaves, to be household servants, farm workers, and craftsmen, but in dramatically fewer numbers based on the different economic and social organization of those colonies. While, black women have made significant progress since slavery in the United States, they continued to be subordinated to both white and black men: politically, culturally, economically, and socially. Most black women worked in the labor force, often in farming, and in plantation homes as domestics. History testifies to this double suffering by black women; enslaved by white men and further oppressed by black men in both their community and their family.

> "The cult of real womanhood that occurred during the 18th century had an intense discouraging influence on confined black women. They were not happy of their talent to work alongside men in the fields and desired more than anything for their lot to be the same as that of white women" (hooks 48).

Black male slaves learned from their owners, employing a hierarchal pattern in the treatment of women, undermining the role of women in their culture, relegating them to the same role they had on the plantation, servant. Black males demanded the unquestioning obedience of women to their husbands. Black people accepted masculinity of male-female sex roles. They supposed, as did their white

owners, that women's role involved remaining in the household, raising children, and following the will of husbands. Black men increased black women's responsibilities and duties.

Black women suffered twice and were enslaved twice and that is why after emancipation, black women refused to work in the same fields as they did under slavery. After the Second World War, Black women's discontent increased along with demands for women's and civil rights becoming a political and social movement with the manifesto of women's freedom in 1970. Therefore, there is a difference in the demands of black and white women. Black women's movements called for their own history to be told, which was already reflected in the history of their lives in America and clarified with the introduction of the black women's manifesto:

> "The black woman is demanding a new set of female definitions and recognition of herself of a citizen, companion and confidant, not a matriarchal villain or a step stool baby-maker. Role integration advocates the complementary recognition of man and woman, not the competitive recognition of same" (La Rue 42).

Thus, black women's lives both during slavery and in its aftermath, motivated some modern novelists to write about the oppression of black women in white dominated America: specifically, Alice Walker and Toni Morrison who are the subject of this study. Both Walker and Morrison "deepen our understanding of the limitations and possibilities of lives of Afro-American women" (hooks 269). After the 1970s, African-American literature emerged an important and equal part of the American literary canon. Most African-American writers of 20th century focused on

the experiences of blacks and their conflicts with white society exclusively. Dickson-Carr argues that “the three decades between 1970 and 2000 indubitably marked as the most creative and flourishing period in African American literary history” (20). The number of black authors winning awards such as the Pulitzer Prize and the Nobel Prize was on the increase. For example, Toni Morrison received the Nobel Prize in 1993. This period is particularly important in marking the emergence of African-American female novelists, such as Maya Angelou, Toni Morrison, Alice Walker, June Jordan, Gayl Jones, and Gloria Naylor, amongst others. As Black women authors of modern American literature, Toni Morrison and Alice Walker have emphasized on the suffering and struggle of blacks in the United States. As black writers, both of them stressed that to be a black woman is different and more difficult than it is to be a white woman in America. Morrison and Walker consistently emphasize in their works the significance of restoring, or building a strong black female identity based on self-worth, self-actualization and sexual awareness. The anxiety of black women, and the impact of racism and sexism, and the effect of these social problems on black women are central themes in the works of Walker and Morrison. Not only Walker’s novels *Meridian* and *The Color Purple* but also Morrison’s novels *The Bluest Eye* and *Beloved,* have presented how black women's lives were personal hells because of their skin color. Both of the writers illustrated African-American women’s lives fully, their characters have suffered further than what one might think any human being could suffer. Reading these significant works; one can realize the details why black women agonize and the specific gendered and racial problems they face.

1.2 Violence in *The Bluest Eye* and *The Color Purple*

The World Health Organization (WHO) describes violence as "the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community that either result in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, or deprivation" (Shackelford, T. K. and Hansen, R. D. 188). However, the word violence can be even more broadly defined. Generally, there are many forms of violence, but most prevalent and widely known are: sexual, physical, and psychological, especially when discussing violence to women and children. In 1993 the United Nations General Assembly approved the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women. The Declaration emphasizes**:**

> "violence against women" means any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life (Husain).

Literature, as a mirror of human activities, actions, and emotions, has always reflected the wide range of human experiences, including violence along with love and other emotions. Violence is widespread in literature because writers and their audiences want to address problems at the inner core of human nature. Thus, it is the tendency of human beings to be in a struggle with the interests of others over their own. Even within the closest families, conflicts arise. For example, between parents and children, siblings, spouses, cohabitating partners, and the members of one's own

tribe. Guneeta describes violence in relation to art arguing that “if art is the creative force of the mind, violence is the destructive force of the mind” (207). Violence can be the uncontrollable reaction to the provocation or tension brought to a critical mass. In literature as in life, violence discloses the true and often ugly structure of human passions and motives.

Like most systems of oppression based on patriarchy, slavery breeds violence among those in power and the powerless. In the period of slavery in the United States, boys were taught to be dominant and violent, girls submissive and obedient. Under the norms of patriarchy, black women experienced the worst kind of treatment that a human being can face. The measured use of violence made black women’s life harder and made it almost impossible to receive an education, thus further restricting black women’s freedom. Violence is the most obvious manifestation of gender inequality and also as the center of the system that keeps black women in an inferior class. Violence reached its peak during slavery in American patriarchal society, every single right of humankind was violated and women bore the lion’s share of that cruel treatment.

Both *The Bluest Eye* and *The Color Purple* examine the issue of violence in addition to other forms of social oppression. Toni Morrison and Alice Walker highlight how black women have been oppressed by white masters simply because they were black. Violence is also prevalent in both novels. There are many striking examples of violence in the two novels. Both novels describe in graphic detail the pain that black women suffered as they were beaten, raped, humiliated, and abused merely because of their skin color. In Morrison’s *The Bluest Eye*, Cholly abuses Pauline and the children, and Pauline does the same to Cholly and her kids. For

example when Pauline abused her children she knew it was wrong. “Sometimes I’d catch myself hollering at them and beating them, and I’d feel sorry for them, but I couldn’t seem to stop” (124). Violence becomes a form of communication. Pauline abuses her children whole heartedly but there’s always a sincere feeling when she abuses them. In this household there is more violence than real communication occurring. Also, when they do talk to one another, there are still boundaries that have to be aware of. “Her calling Mrs. Breedlove Polly, when even Pecola called her mother Mrs. Breedlove…” (108) Pauline let other people, specifically white people, call her nicknames because Pauline feels closer to white people when they give her nicknames like “Polly”. While on the other hand, regardless the fact that Pecola and Polly share a much closer mother-daughter relationship, Pecola still has to address her own mother as “Mrs.” Pauline’s relationship with her children shows that they all have a very distant relation with one another and the family lacks communication. The theme of violence, as presented by Morrison, portrays a form of cause and effect. The novel highlights not merely the phenomena of violence, but also describes how it has an impact on all aspects of life. The novel presents the main consequence of violence which is family and social breakdown. The characters cause torture and sufferance of their own family members in a way that living together under one shelter seems impossible. For example, Cholly Breedlove sets his own house on fire without thinking about the plight of the family members inside. On the other hand, *The Color Purple*, observes the entire process of suppression of blacks at the hands of whites.

Apart from exposing the plight of the Black people in The United States, the novel also depicts the way in which some African-Americans exploited the members

of their own race under the supremacy of racial domination. *The Color Purple* shows many examples of violence within black society. In this period the male was dominant. As Alber says “Men’s pose to wear the pants” (126). Violence also seems to be a common occurrence, even in relationships which seem quite love, like between Harpo and his wife Sofia. He beats her because "the woman s'pose to mind" (43). Patriarchy is a social system that marginalized women and keeps women’s voice unheard. Under the norms of patriarchy men exploit or treat women the way they want and consequently they restrict women’s freedom. During slavery, American society was both completely patriarchal and divided by race. At that time, it was common amongst men to act violently against their wives and daughters. Both white and black men tended to exert their dominance over women, especially their wives. Women couldn’t stand the brutality of men. At the same time, black women practiced violence against their own gender. They believed that violence is the only way to assure their authority. In the following chapter I will discuss the definition of slavery, the history of slavery in America to its conclusion, the role of racism in American culture, and Civil Rights Movement.

2. Slavery, Racism, and Civil Rights Movement in America between (1619-1968)

2.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the history of slavery in the United Sates. The paper examines African-American life throughout the period of slavery and after its abolishment. Racial prejudice and the Civil Rights Movement will also be investigated. It seems almost impossible to be involved in a productive discussion without first referring to the historical facts regarding African-American slavery and how African people had been both traded and treated. Slavery in the United States is considered one of the darkest chapters in American history. It almost negatively affected every aspect in terms of social life, politics, and economic development for both whites and blacks. These appalling circumstances created a traumatic and hierarchal system where more important or powerful masters kept more slaves to look after their interests.

The trauma of slavery is heavily reflected in Walker's and Morrison's writings, in both the novels *The Color Purple* and *The Bluest Eye*. Both writers stressed how African-American people suffered due to their gender, color, the greed of the masters, and the rapid economic development allowed by the institution of slavery. Both novels focus on the explicit influences of slavery and its subsequent racial oppression. Therefore, gender, violence, segregation, and persecution are associated with the suffering of black people in the United States throughout the era of slavery and after.

Slavery, racism, and the Civil Rights Movement are examined and analyzed in relation to the novels *The Color Purple* and *The Bluest Eye* to illustrate the tragedies and traumas that affected black people in America and are the focus of the texts in question. The beginning of oppression and persecution of black people in the United States is rooted in the time of slavery. Africans brought to America at this time were brutally exploited by their white masters. They experienced all kinds of inhumane treatment; the color of their skin became the physical marker of their undesirable identities. The announcement of the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863 by the 16th President of the United States, Abraham Lincoln, paved the way for termination of slavery. But legalized racism and segregation remained until the signing of the Civil Rights Act in 1968. This year marked a turning point in American history as black people began to feel that most of their civil rights were secured by legislation and federal government intervention. The entire body of Walker and Morrison's work focuses on slavery, racism, segregation, and how black people have suffered both psychologically and socially over the ages, and thus *The Color Purple* and *The Bluest Eye* are not exceptions of their writings.

2.1.1 Definition of Slavery

According to the United Nations slavery is "the condition of a person over whom any or all of the powers connected to the right of ownership are exercised" (Sylvester 8). Slavery is the subjugation of a person to another person, especially when that person is forced into work. Slavery is a social establishment restricted by law and tradition as the most absolute mandatory system of human bondage. Slaves can be held against their emotion, determination and will from the time of their

captures, purchases or birth, and disadvantaged of the right to leave, to reject to work, or to request pays. Slavery has existed in many contexts over the centuries. "The slave is defined by the society from which he is excluded" (Robin 40). Robin points out that the slave could not be a citizen of the society in which he was owned. He was considered to be isolated, an outsider, without a supporting family. He was subjected to the authority of the master, and was often in a state of anguish or was physically abused. He was brutalized, treated like an implement rather than a person. In some societies the institutions of slavery allowed masters to exercise their full power over a slave's will. One of the most notorious examples of slavery happened both during and after the settlement of the United States of America.

2.1.2 Historical Review of Slavery in Unites States

In order to have in-depth view of the history of African people in United States, it is significant to know that for nearly three centuries, Americans in the 13 colonies and then in the newly founded United States of America bought imported Africans, keeping them and their descendants in bondage. Slavery controlled all aspects of African-Americans people lives. In 1619, African-American history began when a Dutch ship transported “twenty and strange” Africans to the English settlement at Jamestown, Virginia, where they were sold by bid as indentured servants. Despite these twenty Africans did not become immediately slaves, they signified the first unwillingly African immigrants who come to the Colony that later known as United States (John 34). Most slaves were black and were held by white masters. The largest section of slaveholders was found in the southern colonies of the

United States, where most slaves were involved in a machine-like “gang system” of agricultural labor.

It is believed that 11.8 million people were seized and shipped from Africa to the Americas as a whole. Many passed away during the voyage across the Atlantic Ocean. Nearly 10 million people survived and were sold in the Americas from 1519 to 1865. “Nearly one-third of those slaves were taken to Brazil, while only about 3.8 percent (391,000) came to North America” (Encyclopedia of African American Society).

2.1.3 African-American Slavery

The first form of slavery, albeit temporary in nature, was imposed on early settlers who sold themselves as indentured servants to pay for the voyage to the New World. In 1619, however, Jamestown, Virginia, was the first English colony to receive Africans. The first Africans in Virginia were, like about one-half of the white immigrants at that time, indentured servants.

European colonizers imported many Africans as slaves to work, mostly in the Caribbean to cultivate sugar. Sugar producers progressively looked to black Africa for slave labor. The slaves did not have any idea where they were. Usually the slave traders and masters treated them brutally as both workers to be subdued and exploited, and as sources of profit, but not as human beings. The largest slave owners were normally the wealthiest people in their area. For example, one Virginian colonist, Robert “King” Carter, owned 734 slaves and was the richest man in the colony.

2.1.4 Slave Life

African slaves were forced to work hard, in some cases, heartlessly tough, often to the point of death. Most African slaves had previous experience in farming so were set to work immediately. They were compelled to work for many hours on rice, tobacco, cotton, and sugar plantations. Sugar plantations created an inhuman and deadly world for African slaves new to America. Black women worked at a wide range of tasks in the countryside including field labor. Edmund Morgan argues that while "Europeans put African women to work in whip-driven field gangs in the Americas but were not prepared to see European women work under like conditions, a kind of sexual theory of slavery" (32). Black women slaves were forced to work many different types of jobs to keep themselves out of the fields such as: Chef Waitress, Servant, and tailor. They also ran shops and tended livestock. Many colonies and then states had rules that restricted the ways that free blacks could make a living. Some prohibited free blacks from buying or selling certain goods, such as corn, wheat, tobacco, and alcohol, without special licenses.

In South Carolina, free blacks could not be clerks; in Georgia, they could not be typesetters. White people kept control of these occupations by terrorizing free black and slave alike with terrible punishments or threats of punishment. Slave holders used a carrot and stick approach for a number of factors: to encourage submission and to avert disobedient conduct before it began. In some states, rules collected under a “slave code” assessed penalties and punishments for insulting slaves. According to Virginias' 1705 slave code, “all Negro, mulatto, and Indian slaves within this dominion shall be held to be real estate. If any slave resists his master, correcting such slave, and shall happen to be killed in such correction the

master shall be free of all” (State Department 7). This regulation demanded that slaves receive formal approval before leaving their work. It allowed whipping, beating, hanging, mutilation, shackling, burning, imprisonment, and disrespect as a punishment for even slight mistakes. Punishment was carried out even if there was no disobedience from the slaves, but it was rather to confirm superiority of the masters or the person who is in charge of the slaves. In some states the rules forbid the education of slaves thus, most slaves were deprived of an education. Slave owners forbade their slaves to learn how to read and write to protect against perceived insurrections or general defiance that came with hope brought on by knowledge of the outside world. Fredrick Douglass states that, "occasionally people brave enough to break the law attempted to open schools for blacks, but they were always shut down. If slaves were caught with books or writing materials, they were whipped" (4).

In the late of the seventeenth century, at the same time that the fee of slaves dropped the supply of immigrants who wished to indenture themselves dwindled. Because man-power of slaves became cheaper than indenture, enslavement increased and spread across the colonies. By 1797, enslaved African-American made up roughly forty percent of the inhabitants in the southern colonies, the largest number concentrated in South Carolina. Confronted with such a huge, exploited, and possibly challenging minority, southern leaders emboldened a solidification of treatment of African-Americans. The children of slave women were to share the same destiny as their parents. In South Carolina, one of the states with the largest slave population, the death penalty was established for a variety of offenses: conspiring insurgence, fleeing, murder, and using or making poisonous substances. The government also

prevented slaves from livestock ownership and limited the number of free African-American in the colony.

Slave owners were allowed to kill slaves, an act which sometimes occurred during the disciplining of them. The masters had absolute power of reward and punishment over their slaves. Anderson states that "slaves could face harsh conditions and punishment for disciplinary infractions" (24). Slave were required to work in severe conditions in the fields, where they had to dig ditches, drain fields, take care of eroded lands, and adjust fences on a daily basis. The most able-bodied were forced to work harder by creating channels, cutting trees, and carrying logs with leather straps attached to their shoulders. (Stampp 65).

Southern economic life was built on the labor of slaves, regardless of setting, rural or urban. Black slaves not only worked on farms but also became skilled laborers. For example in Charleston, South Carolina, black masons and carpenters were larger in number than whites in those crafts. Due to their hard work in farming they played a signify cant role in the expansion of the American economy; mainly in the southern states were large-scale agriculture existed. This is explains why, as Engerman remarks, compared to the north, the south intensely stood against abolitionism as they essentially depended on slave work to build their economy unlike the limited slavery in the North. As Engerman explains, the significance of the slavery in the north was considerably less than in the southern states in which plantation crops were grown (327). The laws of slavery were extremely inhuman. Masters treated slaves harsher than they treated animals on the plantation. The price paid for a slave was especially insignificant and cheap; and this is why masters had the ability to buy as many as they wanted.

Slave masters arranged most slave marriages, mainly to produce more slaves. In the case of disobeying orders or talking back, slaves faced agonizing punishments, as well as the threat of being put on sale and forced to leave their loved ones. For slaves did who manage to choose their spouses willingly, marriage was often arranged secretly and were often more successful than those forced by the master. An ex-slave from Virginia, Caroline Johnson Harrison narrates her unhappy marriage experience on the planation which appears in Blassingame's anthology *Slave Testimony*:

> Didn't have to ask Marsa or nothin'. Just go to Ant Sue an' tell her want to get mated. She tell us to think 'bout it hard for two days, 'cause marryin' was sacred in the eyes of Jesus. After two days Mose an' I went back an' say we done thought 'bout it an’ still want to get married. Then she called all the slaves after tasks to pray fo' the union that God was gonna make. Pray we stay together an' have lots of children an' none of 'em gets sold away from the parents. Then she lays a broomstick 'cross the sill of the house we gonna live in an' join our hands together. Fo' we step over it she ask us once mo' if we was sho' we wanted to get married. 'Course we say yes. Then she say, 'In the eyes of Jesus step into the holy land of matrimony. When we step cross the broomstick, we was married (Sylvester 179).

Thus, the institution of slavery had negative impacts on the lives and psyches of slaves. The slaves were deprived of their position, their names, their families and companions, their traditions, and society. Slaves were encircled by terror, distrust, and frequently disdain. Slave life was characterized by human suffering, terror,

uncertainty, persecution, deprivation, gender inequality, and torture. Slaves were faced with all types of punishment. The relationship between masters and slaves was brutal. Numerous slave owners advocated violence against slaves because they believed slaves were weak and unequipped for deep feeling, or by declaring that they were like parts of the family, helped, dressed, and protected.

2.1.5 The End of Slavery

Slavery lasted nearly two and half centuries in the United States, starting in 1619 and ending by 1865. As early 1776, the first government organization in what would become the United States, declared that the importation of slaves to America would be prohibited: “thus the first American governmental body organized at the national level embraced a policy disfavoring slavery to the extent of restricting its growth” (Fehrenbacher 211). When asked by Congress to draft the *Declaration of Independence*, Thomas Jefferson intended to openly censure George III of England for being responsible for the systematic growth and continuation of the institution of slavery. Congress dropped his criticism of the King England from the final document. Although unsuccessful, this is considered to be one of the early political attempts to end slavery at the dawn of American independence. After separation from Britain, voices that called for the ending of slavery in the United States rose once more. The economic element was a great hindrance to emancipation. Moses Finley states that there were five slave societies “whose social economic institutions were dominated by the existence of slavery. Two were in the ancient world, Greece, Rome, and three in the Americas between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries, Brazil, the Caribbean, and the U.S South” (15).

Numerous reasons caused abolitionism to develop in America as a movement, one of which was the arduous life slaves encountered under the institution of slavery. As a consequence of the black fight against slavery, abolitionism came to existence. One more reason was the role played by the Underground Railroad. This was an unofficial movement led by anti-slavery people in the north who aided fleeing slaves to the safety of the Northern States and Canada before the Civil War officially ended slavery in the United States in the 1860s. Slogans of liberty and human rights in the American Revolution also played a significant role to motivate the abortion of slavery. It led blacks and whites alike to work together in order to bring about an end to human oppression. The American Revolution energized the abolitionist movement. It became more challenging for white Americans who had fought for liberation from Britain in the name of liberty and global natural rights, to authorize the continuous of slavery (Jordan 67).

In 1793, President George Washington approved the Fugitive Slave Act, granting masters the right to reclaim fleeing slaves if they could provide documents of ownership. The Underground Railroad Movement resisted such an act: “antislavery resistance to the act of 1793 appeared in a variety of forms, including the active promotion of slave escapes by aggressive abolitionists” (Don 213). In 1850, the government passed the second Fugitive Slave Act, which was harsher than the previous one. The Act was intended to mollify the slaveholders who were not quite satisfied with the Fugitive Slave Act of 1793. It states that even government officials would be fined if they were accused of disregarding the claims of owners or their agents. The second Fugitive Slave Act motivated more resistance amongst blacks and abolitionists to slavery. The fugitives had no right to defend themselves

against their accusers. Douglass rejected the democratic principles that Americans boasted about because such principles were never considered when a fugitive slave was on trial (53).

In 1860 Abraham Lincoln was elected President of the United States. Lincoln stood against slavery, calling it a "monstrous injustice," but his main concern was to keep the union. Lincoln denounced slavery as unjust and bad governmental policy, stating: I think slavery is inhuman, decently, and civically. I wish that it should be no more spread in these United States, and I should not object if it should gradually abolish in the whole Union (Roy 440). By 1863, President Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation stating that all slaves in states not detained by Union troops or in Union were free. Lincoln argued that slavery was "a total violation of this principle" of democracy, because the slaveholder "not only governs the slave without his consent; but he governs him by a set of rules altogether different from those which he prescribes for himself" Roy 441). However, the slaves in the Southern states would not be emancipated until 1865. Two years after Lincoln's first step, the Northern-led U.S. Congress approved the Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution during the final spring of the Civil War. In 1865, slavery was officially abolished by the Thirteenth Amendment. One year after the 13th amendment, the 14th amendment came into effect. In 1865 servitude legitimately ended when the thirteenth amendment to the Constitution was approved by the individual states. After the 13th and 14th amendments were adopted, and slavery was abolished but official forms of racism would still exist for the next hundred years.

2.2 Definition of Racism

The concept of racism is frequently utilized in a loose and unreflective manner to highlight the averse or negative attitudes of one ethnic group or people towards another and the consequences causing from such feeling. Racism is an ideology that people's values are influenced by their race and that the members of other races are not equal to the members of your own. Racism always produces differences among many human races. Problematic cultural or individual attainments, allow those members of the particular racial group to believe that their own race is superior and thus, has the right to rule others. The most common perception of racism is that of white-skinned people all over the world viewing themselves as genetically superior in cleverness and capability to people with black skin or different physical characteristics. This idea excludes others from holding power solely based on race and color of skin. Racism is the systematic practice of repudiating people ability to gain civil rights, representation, or resources based on ethnic differences. Racism is rooted on ideology and seen in attitudes that accept race as a biological unit and preserve that ethnic groups, other than one's own, are intellectually, psychologically, and bodily inferior (Atkinson 56). From Atkinson's perspective, racism applies only to racial differences; in reality, however, the concept has also been applied to cultural and ethnic differences. A more inclusive conception of racism embraces the idea that racism also entails the everyday, monotonous, negative perspectives, feelings and ideologies and the seemingly understated behaviors, as well as circumstances of racial discrimination towards minorities.

2.2.1 Historical Background of Racism and Violence in America

Racism is considered to be the darkest stain in the history of the United States, which has hindered the country since it was founded. According to James Baldwin, "the root of American difficulty is directly related to skin color ideals." (117). The most profound cases of racism in the United States of America have been felt by Native Americans, Asian Americans, African Americans, Jewish Americans, Latin Americans, and Irish Americans. The paper attempts to highlight the impact of racism against African Americans.

2.2.2 Racism against African Americans

The ideology of racism, that Black Africans were of an inferior race, was developed in order to maintain the growing system of slavery. Because of the plain physical difference between Africans and Europeans and the institutionalization of slavery, racial discrimination helped spread the belief that blacks were naturally inferior. African-Americans are dwellers of the United States whose ancestors came unwillingly from Africa, being transported to American colonies as slaves in the 17th and 18th centuries. When attempting to understand racism against black Americans, it is unreasonable to forget the impact of the long lasting period of slavery in the United States. Certainly, racism has been increased by the establishment of slavery in the United States. Trouillot describes the link between slavery and racism, and thus laying the foundation for a history of European settlement in America that includes its problematic relationship to race:

> Colonization provided the most potent impetus for the transformation of European ethnocentrism into scientific racism. Blacks were inferior, and therefore enslaved; black slaves behaved badly, and were therefore inferior. In short, the practice of slavery in the Americas secured the blacks' position at the bottom of the human world (77).

Returning to race relations after the Civil War, in 1866, the Ku Klux Klan organization was secretly established by white hardliners in the South. The main aim of K.K.K was to fight black liberation and Northern supremacy. During the Ku Klux Klan's time the highest levels of sexualized violence, whipping, genital torture, mutilation, and rape were recorded against black Americans. The Ku Klux Klan was a racist organization; most of their attacks were focused on African-Americans but they were also against Catholics, Jews, and any other non-Protestant religious group in America. Klan leaders presented white privilege as natural and preordained, and they appealed to constituents by interpreting social change through the lens of white supremacy. As George Lipsitz explains,

> Racial is a cultural norm, but one with evil organizational causes and consequences. Aware and purposeful acts have established group identity in the United States, not just through the distribution of cultural stories, but also through organized efforts from colonial times to the present to build economic benefits through greedy investment in whiteness for European Americans (2)

Nearly one thousand physical attacks occurred during the Ku Klux Klan's active period. Whipping was definitely the most commonplace form of attack. Klansmen used little restriction in these attacks, choosing men, women, and children

and colors to receive merciless whippings that caused in the deaths of countless black people and serious injury to numerous more. Whipping was a powerful tool to dominate recently freed blacks as it had been an endless feature of black people's former lives as slaves; a practice and mindset white racists were obviously unwilling to abandon. It would be an exaggeration to argue that all assaults had a sexual dimension, even though; most of these assaults were explicitly sexual in nature. White attackers deliberately remained anonymous as this would help them both avoid capture and participate in more assaults. “White racist[s] were very took extra cautions in assaulting their victims, for example they carefully chose insulting words, teasing and choosing a wide range of victims to intrigue terror among black people for the purpose of subordinating them” (Cardyn 705).

Simultaneously, there are countless obvious cases of the Klan's' tendency for sexualized lashing. Though these attacks differ to a great extent in their natures, all of them shared the same motive, which was to make black people feel vulnerable and powerless. Further, Klansmen reveled in their victims' humiliation. For instance, an ex-slave, Hannah Travis, narrates how the Klan dragged a pregnant black woman from her bed and made her dance against her will in front of her helplessly bound husband in order to entertain them. Thomas Settle testifies that were some attacks had overtly sexual backgrounds: Klansmen “took a young black man who was in the house that night and whipped him, and compelled him to go through the form of sexual intercourse with one of the girls, whipping him at the same time,” (Lisa 706). All of this in the presence of the girl's father a former slave from Alabama.

Like in the years before the Civil War, the continuing vulnerability of black females to be raped and abused sexually was recognized by critics of the South's

"peculiar institution." Sexual abuse was a common experience among females and to a lesser extent among males. Slaves were overtly deprived of ownership of their bodies and furthermore, criminal law crafted by white legislators and jurists, excluded the rape of blacks by whites. This situation perpetuated physical abuse of blacks by whites. These circumstances were not dramatically changed with the end of slavery. Many historians have recently begun to argue that this nightmare of sexual humiliation was even more widespread for black females in the postwar period than it was when they were slaves.

Some of the most poignant testimony in regards to the Klans' acts of sexual horror can be seen in the twisted details of individual experiences of indignity as they have been narrated by victims. A Mississippi freedwoman, Ellen Parton describes how her house was attacked by a band of Klansmen. "On Wednesday night, they came and broke open the wardrobe and trunks, and committed rape upon me; there were eight of them in the house; I do not know how many of them were outside" (Mecklin 54).

Violence, like whipping and rape were not the only ways to spread sexual panic, but were tools exploited by the members of the Klan to keep blacks in a subservient position included, mutilation and genital torture. Documentary evidence shows that men and women, mostly black, were exposed to these insults in almost equal numbers, as victims of night attacks focused on other ends, and in some examples, as victims of brutal cold-bloodedness by whites.

Thus, racism officially existed for almost another century, from the end of the Civil War and slavery in 1865, to the passing of the Civil Right Act in 1964; which

officially ended racial segregation in the United States. However, some scholars still argue that racism in the United States still exists but to a lesser extent. They claim that at the dawn of the twenty-first century a relatively a few number of white people are still opposed to a race-blind America that would reject them a sense of racial supremacy. Moving on from the immediate end of the Civil War, the next section discusses the Civil Rights Movement in which black people achieved a legal end to most institutional racism.

2.3 Civil Rights Movement

The Civil Rights Movement was an encounter by African-Americans to eradicate segregation obtains civil rights as to those of whites, including equal chance in work, housing, and literacy, the right to vote as well, the right of equal right to use public services. This movement sought to restore black people's character, identity, and dignity. Despite the abolition of slavery in the United States, formerly enslaved people and their decedents were regarded as physically, intellectually, socially, and psychologically subordinate to whites. This deeply established racism cannot be seen as purely a legal issue alone. Such ingrained cultural racism can be observed in the speeches of Benjamin F. Perry, a Johnson appointee who served as the Reconstruction governor of South Carolina.

> “The African has been in all ages, a savage or a slave. God created him inferior to the white man in form, color, and intellect, and no legislation or culture can make him his equal it is in vain to think of elevating him to the dignity of the white man” (Anderson 34).

African-Americans obviously would have numerous unpleasant years of unkind treatment in front of them. The Supreme Court restricted voting protection

rights allowed by the Fifteenth Amendment. Moreover, segregation laws limited access to society for African Americans. Thus, against all odds the Civil Rights Movement emerged as a counteraction to segregation by African-Americans to attain full racial equality.

The Civil Rights Movement “officially” commenced in the 1955 with the Montgomery bus boycott and continued until the signing of the Voting Rights Act in 1968. The Montgomery City Lines bus company was similar to that of other Southern systems. It was run on the principal of segregation, with blacks forced to hand over their seats to whites and to enter the bus from the back. The back of the bus was reserved only for black passengers. The Montgomery system had another rule, though. Officially, "if there were no seats available for blacks to move back to as additional white passengers got on, blacks were not required to give up their seats" (Marsico 9). Despite the rule, nevertheless, it was common for bus drivers to order blacks to stand if a white passenger needed a seat and there were none left. If a particular bus driver had designated certain seats for white passengers, blacks might truly have to stand up even with some of the "whites only" seats still empty.

Rosa Parks, known as the mother of the civil rights movement because of her detention for refusing to abandon her bus seat became the focal point of the Montgomery, Alabama, bus boycott. “I didn’t get on the bus with the intention of being arrested,” she said later. “I got on the bus with the intention of going home” (Feeney 43). She carried out the first act of civil disobedience when she challenged a local law by refusing to abandon her bus seat to a racist man when ordered by the driver. The subsequent boycott was not an act of civil disobedience, but an organized struggle to oblige the white authority structure in Montgomery to dissolve the transit

system. However, the boycott opposed a law; it fell within the restrictions of the law. Such seating divided by race made no sense in practice. Each day, on Montgomery's buses, 40,000 blacks paid 10 cents to ride on a bus, and approximately 12,000 whites paid their dimes. The numbers of black passengers were more than three to one. After the Baton Rouge bus boycott, Montgomery blacks decided to willingly disobey the city's bus plans. As Abernathy declares that "Surely the world will see that our demands are not out of line" (Ken 42).

One of the more prominent activists was Jo Ann Robinson, a Black English professor at Alabama State College, an all-black institution. She recounts a bitter memory of an episode experienced in 1949, when, carrying Christmas presents onto a nearly empty Montgomery bus, she sat down in the wrong seat, drawing the anger of the bus driver, who threatened to strike her if she did not get up and move from her seat. She had certainly not forgotten the humiliation and terror she had experienced. In 1953, she vigorously defied the city's bus policy. While she and other black activists, including Edgar Daniel Nixon, a former leader of the Montgomery chapter of the NAACP, met with city's decision makers, they were civilly listened to, but the bus policy continued. Only one concession was granted to the activists: City buses would now "stop at every corner in black neighborhoods, just as they did in the white sections of town" (Ken 54).

Civil rights activists were successful in both enlarging the range of the fight for rights across the land in attracting of white northern liberals to the dilemma of blacks in the south. This intensified the struggle to a point where the federal government could no longer preserve a hands-off method. During civil right movement numerous protests and boycotts occurred. For example, in Tuskegee,

Alabama, black people successfully blacklisted white tradesmen who refused to hire or serve blacks or charged them a higher rate. Most black people seem respond to the boycott by shopping in local black stores instead of larger white chains.

White people come to realize the power of black people's spending to the country's economy. Black activists used the boycott to broadcast a political message to the nation. Civil Rights leader, Martin Luther King Jr. (1929-1968) vigorously defended black equality through his enthusiastic speeches. He had been a devoted servant of the movement for black rights since the mid-1950s. He was instrumental in organizing the great Montgomery bus boycott in 1955 and had been among the first to call for black protests against segregation through peaceful ways.

King was convinced that peacefully fighting segregation would likely gather the support of more black people and their white supporters having a more fruitful result than resorting to violence. Thus, for more than a year African-Americans determined to boycott the bus system. "Nonviolence is ultimately a way of life that men live by because of the sheer morality of its claim" (King 88). In 1956, a declaration by the Supreme Court eventually terminated segregated seating on busses all around the country. King's words were seen as a source of strength to the cause and motivated civil rights supporters to continue their cause. In Washington in 1963, he delivered one of the most famous quotes in the history of the United States:

> I have a dream that one day down in Alabama one day right there in Alabama, little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls as sisters and brothers. With this faith we will be able to work together, to pray together, to struggle together, knowing that we will be free one day (King 97).

King's dream that his generation will soon live in a homeland where their freedom would not be determined by the color of their skin but by the essence of their personality was not as close as he hoped. In June 1963, John Kennedy, the 35th president of the United States, addressed the nation on the need for civil rights legislation that would end segregation and the national turmoil that was resulting from it. Kennedy stated that, "the fires of frustration and discord are burning in every city, north and south, where legal remedies are not at hand," he declared. "Redress is sought in the street, in demonstrations, parades, and protest which create tension and threaten violence and threaten lives" (Marsico 82). One week later Kennedy spoke to members of Congress about the same problem. He states that "No one has been barred on account of his race from fighting or dying for America," he observed "There are no 'white' or 'coloreds' signs on the foxholes or graveyards of battles" (Marsico 82). Despite his desire to do so, The Civil Rights Act was not passed until after his assassination, but Kennedy was one of the first presidents to speak out against segregation. In 1965, King organized a demonstration from Selma to Montgomery Alabama, to denounce the suppression of black voters by white authorities. Almost 30,000 black and white Americans organized demonstrations against the injustice of compelling blacks to must pay a tax to vote, or having to face other obstacles that would prevent them from the right of voting.

Consequently, the Congress approved and President Johnson signed into law the Voting Right Act of 1965. This passage changed many things in just one year. By 1966, sixty percent of African Americans obtained the right of voting. Moreover, President Johnson appointed Thurgood Marshall, the great civil rights lawyer and advocate as his solicitor general. In 1967, Johnson nominated Marshall for a seat on

the U.S. Supreme Court; Marshall was the first black man appointed to the highest court in the land. As Lewis Powel, Supreme Court Justice, stated, “No other American did more to lead our country out of the wilderness of segregation than Thurgood Marshall” (State Department 28). The Voting Rights Act was originally passed for five year period, but it has been renewed many times and new requests have been introduced, such as the provision for bilingual election materials.

Consequently, after almost a century since the end of the Civil War, the American people and its government had eventually terminated legal segregation. All the rules that were pro- separation between white and black Americans ended. Black people began to develop an identity not based on slavery and a lack of civil protections. They gained their civil rights, and actively participated in the political process of the United States.

.

3. The Bluest Eye

3.1 Introduction

This chapter examines Toni Morrison's literary works. A synopsis of *The Bluest Eye*, and the sexual, physical, psychological violence, racism, and mental breakdown of black women in the novel will also be examined. Morrison's family background plays a vital role in most of her works. For instance, due to racism her parents moved from the South to Ohio. Thus, she highlights the issue of racism in most of her works. Morrison depicts the reality of black women's life in American society; she is conscience about the traumatic acts which shape black women's lives throughout American history. Thus, she interpreted all of these tragedies into her literary work. In *The Bluest Eye*, Morrison stresses subjects associated with sex in a distinct manner, combined with a focus on black females who are situated at the lowest rank of African-American society. *The Bluest Eye* catches the essence of the 1940's, when Morrison was a child and when to be black was considered both physically ugly and socially inferior. Through the character of Pecola, Morrison has depicted the dilemma of a black girl in a society controlled by whites. Pecola's plight illustrates the power of white people and their ill-treatment of blacks, exposing the threat which racism, violence, hierarchy, and social institutions are to the black female in American society. Violence against black women is another issue that Morrison highlighted in *The Bluest Eye*, where in the text, black females faced sexual, physical and psychological violence, as they did in life. *The Bluest Eye* shows this violence as something which is handed down through the generations,

illustrating that violence has become a sign of how oppressive and a corrupt society is.

Simultaneously, violence is exposed as the most overwhelming and unkind type of oppression. Most black female characters conform to white beauty standards which are associated with happiness and respect. By admiring white culture, Pauline and Pecola, lose their identities, culture, and sense of self. They loathe their blackness, which in turn drives to self-loathing. They are obsessed with the social icons depicting beauty like: movies, magazines, books, newspapers, dolls, and drinking cups, which routinely ignore black standards of beauty. Pecola believes that white beauty is the only way to resolve all of her problems. She thinks that possessing beauty in the eyes of whites can change her and lead to an honorable life. She thinks that if she becomes beautiful (or white) her parents, classmates, and people around her would no longer abuse her. Unfortunately, her wish leads her to a dark fate. Eventually, Pecola couldn't bear her parents abuse, her classmate's insults. As a result, all these negative points made her lost in her fantasy to having the bluest eye. And finally, all that suffering makes Pecola become insane.

.

3.2 Toni Morrison's Literary Works

Writing is the driving force of Toni Morrison's life. Her passion for exploiting her writing talent in favor of humanity has made her one of the most influential novelists in 20th and 21th centuries. She stated that "the only one thing that I couldn't live without is the writing" (Stepto 23). Through her writings, Morrison revealed her inner most passions. When you read her novels you feel as if you were reading the writer's true biography, feeling every possible torture and

trauma that the words describe and often fail to convey the tremulousness of some the characters in her novels. Toni Morrison's writing career began in 1970s when *The Bluest Eye* was published. As Morrison stated, she wrote her first novel "in order to read it." (Stephanie 31) This statement indicates that before committing pen to paper, she considered herself as a reader, imagining the books she wanted to read and the characters she wanted to know. At the time that Morrison began writing, the novels of early twentieth-century black women writers such as Zora Neale Hurston, Jessie Fauset, and Ann Petry were out of print. Morrison saw interest growing by the public for reading works by African writers like Chinua Achebe, Aime Cesaire, and Camara Laye who "did not explain their black world [White writers] inhabited their world in a central position and everything nonwhite was other" (Morrison 3). These African writers took their blackness as key and the whites were the "other." Morrison's respect of this style essentially influenced her lifetime commitment to writing for African-Americans in order to tell their story while analyzing the roots and overwhelming consequences of racial self-hatred. "Toni Morrison is the voice in conscience in America she is the sage who provokes us to become better to look abhor about past" (Bearn 7).

In her first novel Morrison highlighted the most ignored member of society: a poor, black girl who wishes for blue eyes. Pecola Breedlove assumes she is ugly and accepts that beauty and virtue are only connected with whiteness. Although Morrison's portrayal of Pecola's descent into insanity offers a pointed critique of white American values, the novel is chiefly worried with the health and responsibilities of the black community. Most importantly, Morrison set her artistic

and critical gaze on black life; white characters are insignificant to the concerns, preoccupations, and joys of African-Americans.

In 1973, Morrison wrote her second novel *Sula*. In *Sula*, Morrison again provides a rich description of African-American community, tempering the critique she offered in *The Bluest Eye* to portray a vibrant though sharply judgmental collective. *Sula* is set in the Bottom, an Ohio town situated in the rocky hills above the all-white town of Medallion. By returning to a small Midwestern community, Morrison highlights her conviction that towns are the epicenter of African-American identity: "Most of our lives are spent in little towns, little towns all throughout this country. And that's where, you know, we live that's where we made it, not made it in terms of success but made who we are" (Morrison 45). In 1977, she published *Song of Solomon*, which represents a significant shift in subject matter for Morrison. While *The Bluest Eye* and *Sula* focus primarily on female characters and the dynamics between women, *Song of Solomon* is fundamentally concerned with the development of a black man. In describing Milkman Dead's epic quest for identity,

In 1981, Morrison published *Tar Baby*. A challenging leaving from her earlier all-black casts, the novel presents the uncertain Jadine, a world-weary traveler who searches for self-realization among West Indian servant-caste relatives and through a brief fling with a stealthy black intruder. In 1987 Morrison published *Beloved.* Set in Reconstruction-era Ohio, *Beloved* is a story of Sethe, a fugitive slave woman who kills her daughter instead of return to a life of slavery. Morrison describes Sethe's fight to keep her slave memories from consciousness along with her need to confront the ghosts of her past. Sethe becomes increasingly anxious with the arrival of Paul D, a man she knew in slavery, and Beloved, a troubling stranger

who doesn't seem to know who she is and who may in fact be the daughter Sethe killed so that she would not be returned to slavery. In this powerful novel, Morrison describes the brutalizing effects of slavery and the difficulties of maternal love in that system. *Beloved* is often considered Morrison's masterpiece, but it has generated significant debate concerning both its literary merit and its presentation of past atrocities. In 1992, she wrote *Jazz*. She explains her motivation for writing *Jazz* came from a photograph she saw in *The Harlem Book of the Dead* (1978), a collection of photographs taken by James Van Der Zee in the 1920s. The photographs consist mainly of dead black New Yorkers and reflect the practice of dressing deceased loved ones in fashionable attire. Morrison was especially taken by a photograph of the corpse of an eighteen-year-old girl. The contiguous caption suggests that the girl was shot with a gun while dancing at a rent party. She was killed by an envious ex-boyfriend, but when her friends asked who shot her, she declined to tell them. She loved him enough to let him go free, promising her friends that she would reveal his identity the next day; instead she died. In 1993 she received the Nobel Prize in literature, only the nine women ever to do so, and the first Black woman. Since winning the prize she penned three further novels, *Paradise, Love*, and *A Mercy.*

3.3 Synopsis

The Bluest Eye is a novel written by Toni Morrison in 1970. The novel gives incredible viewpoint of the culture of African Americans during 1930 and 40s. It begins in the autumn 1940, ending in the summer of 1941. The novel is narrated by Claudia MacTeer, who is a young black girl who is part of a warm family in Lorain. Yet the main focus of the novel is Pecola Breedlove, another young black girl who lives in a broken family. Her life is full of trauma, quite different from Claudia and

her sister Frieda. *The Bluest Eye* is a story of eleven year old girl, Pecola Breedlove, who is silenced and devastated by her own adopted self-denigration (William 54). Her parents, Pauline and Cholly Breedlove, have a terrible marriage. Her mother is constantly working hard and agonizing Cholly, while Cholly is constantly coming home drunk and beating Pauline. “Cholly and Mrs. Breedlove fought each other with a darkly brutal formalism that was paralleled only by their lovemaking” (42). They shout and fight, and Pecola and her brother Sammy, each seek an escape in their own way. Sammy repeatedly runs away to escape away his family. The home life that should offer the basis of growing turns out to be a prison in which Pecola and Sammy and are stuck along with their parents (Bloom 70).

Pecola believes she is an ugly child, despising the way she is perceived. Pecola is under the impression that if she possesses blond hair and blue eyes, everyone would love her and treat her in a good manner. She constantly prays for beauty and to be had born in a white family. She is sneered at by her classmates and other children for her dark skin, curly hair, and brown eyes which set her apart from the majority of the town. William states that “Morrison creates Pecola’s character to throw light upon the class, gender and racial prejudices which can sabotage it’s more vulnerable members” (55). Her mother, Pauline, is unkind to her family because they are a persistent reminder that her life can never match up to the perfect world of the white family for which she works for as a maid. One day, when Pecola is washing dishes, her drunken father rapes her. She bears his child, who dies after birth. Due to the instability and the dysfunction in her family, her father tries to set fire the family's home. Pecola is then sent to live with the MacTeer family.

Pecola, Claudia and Frieda try hard to find out why the world is controlled by poverty and the problems of class, race, gender and beauty. Claudia dislikes the white dolls she receives as Christmas presents and cuts them. Frieda defends Pecola from teases at school. Claudia particularly loathes the new white girl in school, Maureen. Maureen behaves as if Pecola's best friend, but turns on her during a fight, calling her ugly and black. Child services decide to unite Pecola with her family. Pecola's anxiety gets her to a man named Soaphead Church. He contends he can fulfill her dreams, but he is a pedophile and deceitful. Soaphead shames Pecola when she asks him to turn her eyes blue. He vows Pecola her dream will be accomplished if something odd happens to the dog after she feeds him. He gives her food that has been poisoned, and Pecola watches in panic as the dog dies after eating. She considers her prayers have been answered, and she will have blue eyes. Pecola claims her new blue eyes are the reason no one will look at her, but the real reason is her pregnancy. Claudia and Frieda pray that Pecola's baby will live. Sammy Breedlove runs away from his dysfunctional family. Cholly is jailed and dies in the workhouse. Pecola and Pauline move into a house of their own. Both remain helpless to change their destiny in an insane world.

3.4 Sexual Violence

Black women were stigmatized and oppressed sexually during the time of slavery, both by whites and by black men in their own communities. During slavery, black women lived in a sexual oppressive culture. Rape has been, and continues to be, a fundamental tool of sexual violence consistently directed at black women. Black women have also been profoundly affected by a sexual hierarchy that places

them at the bottom. Black women live a gender hierarchy in which inequality of racial and social class has been sexualized. In essence, Black females were double oppressed. First, they have been sexually oppressed by white masters within institutionalized slavery. Second, they have been victimized by their own family members and social institutions. These historical events form the foundation of Morrison's, *The Bluest Eye*, a novel which traces the extended tragedy of black women's life in the aftermath of slavery. *The Bluest Eye* is a story of both violence and abuse. Violation and rape become images for both black and white nightmares of reversed love and stigma of selfhood (Rubenstein 144).

In the novel, there are many scenes where the characters are involved in sexual violence. Pecola is the protagonist of the novel and is raised in an unkind and uncaring family. Her parents show her no love, no affection, and she has little basic education; therefore trauma and depression fill her life. One day, Cholly returned home drunk and saw his daughter, Pecola, washing dishes. She was bending over the sink and was scratching her calf with her toe. While Cholly saw her, he was at once reminded of a gesture of his wife which was accurately the same when he first met her and he rapes his own daughter. Cholly feels that he is free from responsibility even towards his own daughter Pecola or any family relations. Thus, Cholly raped his own daughter mercilessly.

Cholly's background is closely connected to Morrison's rationale for his rape of Pecola, because Cholly was also raised in a traumatic environment. His parents abandoned him and he was raised instead by his Aunt Jimmy. His basic education was limited, because he was forced to quit school. He had become distant, due to repeated trauma, from people, from society, from love, and from responsibility.

According to Husain “Parental supervision is considered as one of the most important elements in the development of personality and character.” (227). Cholly received no parental supervision of any kind and he was deprived of his family’s affection. In addition to Cholly being brought up in a family on the brink of disintegration, he further suffered from thwarting and weakness because of being black in a white society. Thus, his upbringing negatively affects his own life and that of his family. Therefore, Cholly never concerned for his family, his house, his wife and his children because he was unable to care, not because he was a bad man. Consequently, Cholly turned into abusive man; he has developed into a hazardously free beast whose conduct cannot be controlled by any means. “Dangerously free. Free to feel whatever he felt—fear, guilt, shame, love, grief, pity. Free to be tender or violent, to whistle or weep” (145). Pecola’s rape came as a natural outcome of her father’s suffering in his life; therefore Cholly’s life of misery added another traumatic chapter to his own daughter’s life. On the other hand, this rape exposes inequality between male and female. Cholly exploited his masculine power to justify the rape to himself. Morrison demonstrates Pecola’s sufferings with the excessive feeling of emotions, as she was herself a victim of gender inequality in one way or another, thus her words came as if she was telling her own life’s story. Pecola’s rape illustrates the mentality of the men who hurt defenseless women for the sake of their sexual pleasure or to exert their masculine power even if these pleasures come with the misery and harassment of others.

Likewise, Cholly’s past is bound up with raping Pecola and she becomes a helpless victim of her father’s first lust. At his grandmother’s funeral Cholly met a young woman named Darlen with whom he had his first sexual experience. Cholly is

interrupted during his first sexual encounter by white hunters, who make him give a brutalizing sexual performance at gunpoint: “Come on, coon. Faster. You ain’t doing nothing for her” (135). When he sensed impending humiliation he turned his hatred towards Darlene. He was incapable of directing his anger toward the white hunters. He adopted the white men’s merciless attitude towards their victims. “He cultivated his hatred of Darlen” (137). His first sexual experience with Darlene is also the first black spot in Cholly’s life and will eventually lead him to rape Pecola. Cholly sees sexual experience as a way of releasing or getting rid of his anger and fear of the white hunters who humiliated Cholly, forcing him to have sex while they both watched and continued to berate them. Cholly’s release from anger and fear came at the imposition of further misery on his own daughter. For Pecola her father became one more person who betrayed her. The rape occurred within her home, it was supposed to be a shelter of comfort and education, but it became the opposite. This increased the tremendousness of her suffering, leaving her miserable for the rest of her life. “The dangerously free Cholly rapes her twice, turning her ‘outdoors,’ pushing her towards the depths of despair and the fringes of insanity” (Bharati and Joshi 42). While Pecola’s rape by her father certainly caused Pecola’s journey to insanity, but because this rape left her pregnant, she was ignored by the whole black society, insuring she would further sink into madness. The failure of parenting in regards to his own daughter Pecola, clearly made Cholly an irresponsible individual.

Henry, a new tenant in MacTeer’s house, molested Frieda. Frieda’s being left alone at home by her parents, gave Henry’s access to commit this horrendous act. He touched her body in a sexual way, starting to pinch her tiny breasts. It was always Henry’s intention to sexually abuse Fieda. He waits for Frieda’s reaction; if she

remains silent about his sexual advances then he would proceed with his attack. “He . . . *picked* at me.” “Picked at you? You mean like Soaphead Church?” “Sort of.” “He showed his privates at you?” “Noooo. He touched me” (99). Frieda was devastated by Henry’s assault. She started to explain to her sister Claudia how she resisted Henry’s inappropriateness. Claudia showed her interest in hearing what happened between Henry and Frieda, because she wished she had been there during the incident to both stop the attack and insult the rapist. The girls were not fully aware of why they had suddenly become the center of attention by men and why they suffered all kinds of submission. Most did not know how to react, consequently becoming helpless victims, their lives stained by hopelessness and frustration. As soon Frieda’s father found out about the attempted rape, he decided to dismiss Henry from his house as a punishment of what he did towards her daughter. Frieda’s father’s reaction is contrasted with Pecola’s father, how Cholly not only neglected his daughter but even involved her in incest. The role of father in family is vital in securing and educating children.

3.5 Physical and Psychological Violence

The Bluest Eye is full of scenes of physical violence within the black society. Inside Cholly’s family physical violence seems to be daily occurrence. Cholly Breedlove and Pauline Breedlove are constantly fighting in an awful way. When their marriage begins failing Cholly and Pauline resort to violence. “Cholly and Mrs. Breedlove fought each other with a darkly brutal formalism that was paralleled only by their lovemaking” (42). Violence seems to replace respect, love, and affection between them. Cholly lacks any idea of what marriage should be like; he can only copy what he himself has seen in his own family as a boy. He thinks that Pauline is

not worthy of respect because she is a woman. Cholly sees Pauline as a sexual object, treating her as a means of obtaining sexual satisfaction. Furthermore, Cholly has lived a life of sadness and rebuffs; this is reflected in the way he deals with his wife. Life in the Breedlove household is anything but discreet. The ritualized violence of Cholly and Mrs. Breedlove's relationship psychologically affects their children, who constantly witness parental fights resemble a brawl rather than an argument.

> Cholly picked [Mrs. Breedlove] up and knocked her down with the back of his hand. She fell in a sitting position. He put his foot in her chest. Dropping to his knee, he struck her several times. In the face…his wife ducked…[she] snatched up the round, flat stove lid…and struck him two blows, knocking him right back into the senselessness out of which she provoked him (Morrison 44).

Both of them deal with each other through white culture's perception of what they are. They believe that by using violence, they can defeat the other one. Both Cholly and Pauline adopted the same norms of violence which white people used against black people during the slavery. Through the violence between Cholly and Pauline, the influence of white culture upon the black community is exposed. "Perpetuating the brutal series of poverty, violence, mistreatment, and fatherlessness that are transferred, like DNA, from generation to generation" (Williams 17). Pauline even acts with her daughter in a violence way, she believes that violence is the best way to deal with Pecola. When Claudia and Frieda visited Pecola at Pauline's workplace, Pauline asked them to wait for lunch until she had finished the laundry, Pecola, accidently tilted the pan full of boiled blue berries and all the juice spilled on the ground. Pecola's feet were injured but Mrs. Breedlove, after seeing this,

responded fiercely, knocking Pecola down heartlessly and expelling them from her master's house.

Physical violence is an endless trial for Pecola. She is the most brutalized victim of physical violence by her mother and other black people. Junior is a black boy uses violence against Pecola to torture and suppress her. Junior invites Pecola to his house, but he has an ulterior motive and he entices Pecola into his house, tells her to play and he will entertain with her. When Pecola entered his house; Junior throws his mother's cat, which he enviously hates, in Pecola's face. He is delighted at her pain and at her fear when he tells her she is locked in the house and is now his prisoner. When Pecola tries to escape Junior's plans to do away with his powerless victim, he shouts, "You can't get out. You're my prisoner" (Morrison 84). When Junior attacks Pecola's face and attempts to hold hostage her, he is taking his abhorrence for his mother out on both the cat and Pecola. Like Pecola, Junior is a victim because he is mistreated by his mother, but in a different way. He is not beaten or shouted at; instead, Junior never receives affection or love from his mother. Geraldine, like Pauline, neglects her children, and conforms to white culture. She would never "talk to him, coo to him, or indulge him in kissing bouts" when Junior was a child (80). This emotional carelessness by his mother is only surpassed by "the difference in his mother's behavior to himself and the cat" (80). The quotation illustrates that a lack of care and supervision from Geraldine drives Junior to recourse violence and take out his annoyance on Pecola.

Excepting sexual and physical violence as the norm, *The Bluest Eye* also shows examples of psychological violence directed at blacks by blacks. In most cases

black characters speak with each other in a harsh way. For instance, Maureen Peal shouts conceitedly at Pecola, Claudia and Frieda yelling, “I am cute! And you ugly! Black and ugly black emss. I am cute!” (56). Maureen’s behavior towards them mirrors a white master’s mentality, who now gone, has left black people to abuse, discriminate, and exploit among themselves. She is unconsciously hateful towards people of her own race; focusing her hatred on their physical features and color of skin. By expressing such harsh speech, Maureen attempts to negatively affect their psychologies: Touching on a very sensitive matter, attacking their weak points and viewing them as inferior. She knew that they secretly or not so secretly, loathe the color of their own skins. She overestimates herself and underestimates them as a human. This kind of treatment makes them suffer a great personal embarrassment. Indeed, they feel so bad and weird that they could not respond Maureen.

At the same time, Geraldine is another black female character in the novel. Like Pecola, she is obsessed with white beauty standards, and hates other black people. She expresses her speech in a snooty way so that her words make Pecola sense inferiority. “Get out. You nasty little black bitch. Get out of my house” (72). Her statement illustrates that Geraldine is uncomfortable being black. She is not proud of her blackness and removes herself from the black community. White culture is deeply embedded in her mind; she imitates the ways of the white community, and teaches herself to deny people of black color respect. She fails to appreciate her own gender and race in terms of its beauty, she believes beauty means white. Geraldine imagined that Pecola was the representative of all the negative characteristics of black females. Pecola felt deeply insulted by Geraldine’s words; but instead of

responding, she held her head down and moved homeward. Not only do Geraldine's words cause Pecola so much pain and misery, but they also planted the seeds of inferiority in her heart. All this violence makes Pecola feel like an outcast from the entire society, which traumatizes her, because people in her race, gender, and color constantly insult or assault her.

3.6 Racism

Intra-racial and inter-racial stigmatization is a dominant theme in The *Bluest Eye.* First; Morrison portraits white characters who treat black characters in a racist way. Mary Janes and Mr. Yacobowski immediately express discomfort when they saw Pecola in their candy store. Pecola faces "the total absence of human recognition— the glazed separateness" (47). Mr. Yacobowski's hatred towards black people made him turn a blind eye to Pecola's existence as he clearly cannot view her as a person. "How can a fifty-two-year-old white immigrant storekeeper… see a little black girl?" (47). The narrator shows how Pecola has been erased as a person by Mr. Yacobowski in terms of her race. Mr. Yacobowski sees himself as superior when compared to a black girl. Yet he is nothing more than "…a fifty-two-year-old white immigrant storekeeper with the taste of potatoes and beer in his mouth" (47). Nevertheless, he believes that he stands for all white men, as Pecola is in his opinion, all blacks, divide by the "glazed separateness ... lurking in the eyes of all white people" (48). Pecola is successful in comforting herself by seeing herself in her mind like a dandelion, which is beautiful even though some regard it to be a weed. She came to realize that beauty is valued by seeing instead of being seen. For the same reason, the concept of beauty can be redefined within herself as being beautiful

without having to have blue eyes. Miner argues that the “effect of popular American culture’s specular construction of beauty is that it bestows presence or absence” (93).

The issue of racism in the novel does not merely take place between white and black people. There are several examples in the novel where some black people are involved in acts of racism. First, Morrison presents the character Maureen Peal, a "high-yellow dream child with long brown hair braided into two lynch ropes that hung down her back" (58). Maureen who is a conceited, light-skinned and wealthy girl develops strong feelings of hatred towards Pecola, Frieda and Claudia. Thus, Maureen symbolizes racism within same race. At one point, Maureen began to defend Pecola, who is being molested by some black boys due to her skin color and the rumor that she and her father go to bed naked. Maureen expresses interest in befriending Pecola, but Pecola is paranoid. Pecola talks about her father and Maureen begins to mock her, asking if she has ever seen a man go to bed naked. Claudia attempts to beat up Maureen in defense of Pecola. Maureen’s reaction is to shout at them, "I am cute! And you ugly! Black and ugly emss. I am cute" (56). Maureen exploits her charm against her peers because in the end, rather than spurning her, they yearn to submit to her.

Similarly, internal racism can be observed when Pecola was Junior’s guest. Junior has frightened Pecola by throwing his mother’s cat at her. The cat scratches her face and chest, and at this moment Junior’s mother Geraldine comes home and instantly seeing only race, rather than Pecola herself. Geraldine acts with Pecola as if she is not black and she is not female like Pecola. Admiring white culture makes Geraldine hate people of own her race and gender. Geraldine did not insult Pecola

because her cat got hurt; she did because she could not stand seeing a black person in her house.

Claudia and Frieda visit Mrs. Breedlove's workplace to ask about Pecola, before their departure Pecola knocks Mrs. Breedlove's berry cobbler to the floor, which frightens the little white girl she watches over. Pecola and her friends are told to leave, and we are left watching the scene between Mrs. Breedlove and the little white girl. Mrs. Breedlove demonstrates her aversion for her own family and her race in this scene when the little girl asks her who the three other girls were. "'Who were they, Polly?' " she asks. " 'Don't worry none, baby.' 'You gonna make another pie?' ''Course I will.' 'Who were they, Polly?' 'Hush. Don't worry any…'" (109). It is in this scene that we see the shame in Mrs. Breedlove. She is ashamed of being black, due to dominance of white culture.

Morrison observes the concept of white privilege in *The Bluest Eye* by utilizing the white doll as a metaphor for this problem. The novelist highlights Claudia's disdain for the doll in order to show the excessive racism that was rooted in black families at that time. Those black people who suffered institutionalized racism or any kind of oppression due to their race and gender start to loathe anything that is black, Claudia is the exception.

> 'I had only one desire: to dismember it. To see of what it was made, to discover the dearness, to find the beauty that had escaped me, but apparently only me. The desirability 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 (22).

Claudia did not fancy her parent's gift. She would have rather had the gift of the parent's personal time and devotion. She was in need of parental care rather than a doll. What she really wanted was to sit "on the low stool in Big Mama's kitchen with [her] lap full of lilacs and listen to Big Papa play his violin for [her] alone" (23).

Pecola demonstrates abundant enthusiasm for Shirley Temple, her obsession to become white drove her to drink three quarts of milk per day. This can be interpreted as a part of her desire to internalize the values of white culture, a symbolic moment that foreshadows her desire to possess blue eyes. In yearning to be Shirley Temple, Pecola denies her own identity, "A little black girl yearns for the blue eyes of a little white girl, and the horror at the heart of her yearning is exceeded only by the evil of fulfillment" (184). Pecola has succumbed to the common belief that blue eyes are the ultimate in beauty and feels as many that they will afford her high standing, respect and love. The white standard of beauty physically and psychologically tortures Pecola and consequently makes her lose her mind. Pecola believes that blue eyes, blond hair and white colored skin equates beauty, which guarantees a happy life. It is not easy to blame the youth for this. Surely both white and black communities seem to favor the idea. In The Bluest Eye, Morrison tries to symbolize the entire community as having internalized the white standards of beauty for their own.

3.7 Mental Break Down of Women

There are numerous factors that directly contributed in deconstructing Pecola's psychology: like her rape by her father, ill-treatment within the family, outside of the family, and her obsession to observe white standards of beauty. The

novel shows what awaits a black protagonist when she faces rape, mistreatment, and does not conform to society's norms. Furthermore, indicates what may happen to Pecola where there is a complete lack of support, cooperation, unity, community, and nurturing family. Pecola in her earliest youth faced the worst kind of treatment by her father; she subjected to a terrible ordeal: being raped by her father in her own house. She faced her first trauma at the hands of her own father. Her father, Cholly, fails to encourage her daughter to grow and develop a positive 'self'. Instead destroys her love for him by exploiting her body and stimulating further self-hatred in her. This rape is a very traumatizing and horrifying event in Pecola's life and she never returns to normal.

Usually fathers provide emotional support and help to their daughters to cope with trauma after they are raped. Instead, Cholly is not only the rapist, but after the attack he wounded her psychologically, diminishing her reputation, dignity, integrity, and creating a situation which no one else could have survived. The rape makes Pecola's sense of helplessness, loss self-esteem, and lack of confidence complete while she was left unsupported emotionally. "Pecola tucked her head in — a funny, sad, helpless movement. A kind of hunching of the shoulders, pulling in of the neck, as though she wanted to cover her ears" (69). Family's support system is more important for the victims of rape but Pecola seems even deprived from this. After the sexual assault Pecola needed someone to reduce her anxiety, she tells Pauline her story that she has been raped by her father. However, Pauline does not believe her and starts to insult and beat her. Pecola attempts to create a close relationship with her mother by sharing her agony. Conversely, Pauline did the opposite remaining silent, while she does 'hear' the story, she ignored the raped, and didn't defend her

daughter; her behavior leads Pecola into the deepest sadness yet. Pecola‘s mother fails to offer a safe haven from the world‘s conflicts and instead, rejects Pecola and bringing her to the brink of mental breakdown. Moreover, other members of society demean Pecola’s character, denying that she was raped by her father, she can only be "a nasty little black bitch” (86). People around Pecola began to look at her with amusement. Such situations paved the way to her experiencing further trauma in her life.

Her mother Pauline also plays a role in ruining Pecola’s psychology. Pauline obsesses over white standards of beauty as well. She is unhappy with her identity as a black female. The economic power of white culture forces Pauline work as a servant for a white family, because it is one of the few jobs an uneducated black woman can get. Albeit she is a servant, Pauline considers herself as a part of this white world, enjoying the nickname of Polly and getting great satisfaction out of cleaning the beautiful house. Pauline gives her love freely to the white Fisher child, finding pleasure in “brushing the yellow hair, enjoying the roll and slip of it between her fingers” as compared to her own children’s “tangled black puffs of rough wool” (127). Pauline uses “honey in her words” when dealing with the white child, while “into her son she beat[s] a loud desire to run away, and into her daughter she beat[s] a fear of growing up, fear of other people, fear of life” (129). Pauline simply accepts that her familial situation is ugly and gives up completely on providing a sense of purpose or even love to her children. Therefore, she directly encourages Pecola to adopt white standards of beauty without questioning why. Under her mother’s influence, Pecola discards her own culture and conforms to white culture. Her

mother makes Pecola see herself through the eyes of white people rather than her own. Additionally, even within her community, Pecola was rejected, disliked, and almost hated. She was mocked by her teachers and classmates. Therefore, she begins to believe that if she had blue eyes, maybe others would love her as the loved white people. “Here was an ugly little black girl asking for beauty…A little black girl who wanted to rise up out of the pit of her blackness and see the world with blue eyes” 158). Because of this pressure, she was unable to establish her own sense of identity and open a new chapter in her life. Instead she devoted all her time on attaining social norms; how to possess beauty, and how to be loved. White culture makes Pecola neglect all other aspects in her life and view her life from one angle, white beauty. Obsessed with white beauty, Pecola Breedlove keeps attempting in vain to release herself from her black identity.

Because Pecola is a dark-skinned and has a more African complexion, both black and white society push her to view herself as an ugly when compared to whites or even light skinned blacks. Pecola’s physical appearance dooms her to misery, misfortune and consequently to be a victim of classical racism, which is a concept that argues that “physical ugliness of blackness is a sign of a deeper ugliness and depravity” (Taylor 16). This concept paves the way for ill-treatment of dark-skinned people based on the color of their skin which is associated to a “dark past” and to uncivilized ways. Pecola does not represent a white standard of beauty, because she lacks the preferable white skin and blue eyes, and as a result she is viewed as an ugly individual and undesirable events will definitely occur to her because she is not beautiful. The upper hand belongs to white society, and Pecola reveals her desire to

mirror white society. “The concept of physical beauty as a virtue is one of the dumbest, most pernicious and destructive ideas of the western world, and we should have nothing to do with it.” (Morrison 89) Her excessive desire to have white beauty makes her eat Mary Jane candies, hoping that the candies will change her color. “Smiling white face. Blond hair in gentle disarray, blue eyes looking at her out of clean comfort…To eat the candy is somehow to eat the eyes, eat Mary Jane. Love Mary Jane. Be Mary Jane” (49). She repressed all of her feelings, and her obsession with gaining lighter skin kept her helpless and ultimately made her insane, because her hope of becoming a different person always ended in failure. Eventually, she finds no way to survive by herself in her traumatic life; she surrenders to the demon known as colorism and abandons the entire of society for the delusions of her mind. She could not stand the abuse of her parents and other black people because she internalized all traumas. For Pecola insanity is the only way to escape her traumatic life. As Morrison states that “She has surrendered completely to the so-called. Master Narrative, the whole notion of what is ugliness, what is worthlessness. She got it from her family; she got it from school; she got it from the movies; she got it from everywhere” (Moyers). Pecola is psychologically fragmented and begins to have a mental breakdown both her self-denial and the denial of her problems by the community. At that time society showed excessive interest in the outward appearances of people and completely turned a blind eye to their inner beauty.

4. The Color Purple

4.1 Introduction

This chapter examines Alice Walker's literary works. A synopsis of *The Color Purple* will be balanced against an analysis of the sexual, physical, psychological violence, racism, and eventual emancipation of black women in the novel. Walker's family background has reflected upon most of her works, because she linked her grandmother's traumatic life, she had viciously been raped, with narrative in *The Color Purple*. Walker wove all the bitterness and suffering in her life into her literary works. In her works she portrayed how hard life can be for black females. Violence is the most recurrent scene in *The Color Purple*. Black female characters tended to be the victims of violence by black men, who were inclined to play the dominant role in a black patriarchal society. In a system of patriarchy older men dominate younger men and husbands dominate their wives, and in addition to fathers dominate their sons and daughters. Black men exercised all types of violence against their wives, daughters and lovers including; sexual, physical and psychological violence in order to enforce this system. Black men committed sexual violence against black women, raping them because of sexual desire or merely to make women sense like they were an inferior class. Black men used violence as a tool to keep black females subjected to their authority. However, the way black female characters reacted to racism differs totally. Some were psychologically ruined by racism, but some showed their determination to swim against the wave, after suffering from racism many women prove that they will not be ruined by it. The

personal emancipation of women is the most important aspect of the narrative of *The Color Purple*. This is evidenced in the protagonist, the character of Celie, and her transformation from submissive, powerless and non-independent black woman into a strong, active, independent, and self-reliant character, in which the novelist's message is obvious. This is not a story for entertainment alone. It is shrouded in the politics of black feminism and personal struggle for power and freedom. However, it is other female characters that assist with the hero's transformation. Celie reaches this point of selfhood and self-esteem through two of the other black female characters Shug and Sofia. They help Celie to fighting back giving Celie self-esteem, something she cannot give to herself. They taught her how to fight for her rights and how to view life in a positive way. With their help Celie survives spiritually and physically, as she developed into the powerful woman they knew she could be.

4.2 Alice Walker's Literary Works

Most of Alice Walker's works are associated with her own life experience as a black woman, living in a white patriarchal society. The sources of her writings embrace her tradition, her anguish as a victim of racism in Georgia, and the violence exercised by men against herself and her daughter. "She is one of the first African American women writers investigat[ing] the paralyzing effects of being a woman in a world that almost ignores issues like black-on-black subjugation and female circumcision" (Brum 18). Alice Walker literary works are intimately connected to their depictions of African-American woman's life, and focus on the fights of black women against sexist, racist and violent society. In an interview to O'Brien in 1973, she states that: "I am committed to exploring the oppressions, the insanities, the loyalties, and the triumphs of black women" (O'Brien 192).

In 1970, Walker's career as a writer began. She will focus on subjects like racism and sexism, the role of the artist, the relation between art and life, the process towards "spiritual health and self-definition" of the characters and environmental problems run as threads throughout her work. Yet she clearly places special emphasis on the repressions, the insanities, the allegiances, and the victories of black women… (Walker 250), she says herself that she is "preoccupied with the spiritual survival, the survival whole of her people." (250). She also frequently integrates nonfictional modules in her work which illustrate the political, social and ethical issue of the South. In 1970, Walker published her first novel, *The Third Life of Grange Copeland*. With its publication, Walker becomes part of what critics call "The Second Black Renaissance" in which black women authors (like Maya Angelou, Paule Marshall and Toni Morrison) play a key role.

In her short story collection, entitled *In Love and Trouble*, published in 1973, Walker portrays thirteen African-American female characters, who, as Barbara T. Christian points out, "against their own conscious wills in the face of pain, abuse, even death, challenge the conventions of sex, race, and age that attempt to restrict them" (Encyclopedia of African-American Women Writers). In 1974 Walker becomes the editor at *Ms*. Magazine and in 1976 her novel *Meridian* is published. This book is lauded because it highlights to the Civil Rights Movement from the viewpoint of a young black woman, one of the first of its kind. In 1979 she publishes a new collection of poetry, *Good Night, Willie Lee, I'll See You in the Morning*. The novel, *The Color Purple*, which is the focus of this chapter, was published in 1982 and unites all the themes Walker had explored in her previous works. The novel becomes a great achievement and defining her personality as a writer once and for

all, winning her both the Pulitzer Prize and the American Book Award in 1983. Walker focuses on the theme of the oppression of black women in American society. Walker maintains that black women suffer twice: first, at the hands of a white dominated society and second, at the hands of black men in their own community. Walker represent in almost hyper-realistic detail, the rural, black south in her novel, *The Color Purple*. All of the character's depiction of the land and the labor it takes to grow crops shows the hard work ethic that was introduced in black southerners after the war. Walker also presented the ignorant side of blacks through their dialogue by using incorrect grammar and spelling in the novel. Lastly, Walker illustrates and highlights the struggle of black women living in the South, facing both racism and sexism, along with the day-to-day struggles taking care children and cleaning the house. Thus, Walker is capable to symbolize geography of the locale after the Civil War, aiding the reader to develop a vivid depiction of the South in his or her mind.

In 1989, *The Temple of My Familiar*, an aspiring novel of ideas, is also published. Throughout the years, Walker also showed an interest in global problems and issues that went beyond questions of a sexual or racial nature. For example, in 1987, she is detained while blocking a door at the Concord Naval Weapons Station in California. In 1991, Walker publishes a short story for children *Finding the Green Stone* and in 1992 she writes another novel, *Possessing the Secret of Joy*. She also writes non-fictional novels like *Warrior Marks: Female Genital Mutilation and the Sexual Blinding of Women* (1993), while working on the documentary film, under the same name, that she made with Pratibha Parmar about the sexual violence. In 1997 she published *Anything We Love Can Be Saved: A Writer's Activism*, which examines with her personal social and political viewpoint. Her 1998 novel, *By the*

Light of My Father's Smile, investigates women's sexual issue. In 2000 she published more than one short story: *The Way Forward Is with a Broken Heart,* for a second time is full of nonfictional references. After a lengthy break, Walker returned to writing poetry in 2003 with *Absolute Trust in the Goodness of the Earth*. In 2004, she published her seventh novel, *Now Is the Time to Open Your Heart* where the protagonist is a black female novelist.

4.3 Synopsis of the Color Purple

The Color Purple is a novel written by Alice Walker in 1982. The story of the novel is about the life of Celie, a young black woman rising in the poverty-stricken South. The novel explores the development of her central character, Celie, from being a sexually molested girl to a submissive wife and finally to a liberated woman.

> *The Color Purple* fits primarily into the private example, advocated by its choice of the epistolary mode —by definition personal and private—and the finite focus of the Celie letters. One of their most remarkable features is the obvious absence of any reference to the 'outside' world. Instead, like epistolary novels generically, *The Color Purple* focuses the spiritual growth of character (McDowell 143).

Celie believes she is unattractive and is sexually abused when she was fourteen by her stepfather, Alphonso. She bears him two children who are taken from her, and she falls into a miserable depression. Due to her rape and ill-treatment by her stepfather she begins to write letters to God. While her sick mother goes to receive treatment for her illness, her stepfather brutally rapes her "You gonna do what your mammy wouldn't" (Walker 3). Celie's ill mother dies after cursing Celie on her deathbed. Subsequently, her sister Nettie escapes from Alphonso and takes

shelter at Celie’s house, where Albert, Ciele’s husband, attempts to rape her. Celie then recommends Nettie seek help from a stylish black woman that she had seen in the general store awhile back; the woman had unwittingly fostered Celie's daughter and was the only black woman that Celie had ever seen with money of her own. Nettie is obliged to leave her sister’s home after promising to write letters to Celie. However, Celie never gets any letters and considers that her sister is passed away.

When Celie meets her step-daughter-in-law Sofia, she is impressed by Sofia’s defiant rejection to succumb to her husband Harpo's attempts to dominant her. Celie advises Harpo not to try to dominate Sofia; she also tells Harpo that Sofia loves him, confessing that she merely submits Mr.__ out of fear. Harpo follows Celie's advice temporarily, but soon falls back under his father’s sway. A briefly jealous Celie recommends that Harpo beat Sofia. Sofia fights back, causing serious injuries to Harpo. After Sofia challenges her, Celie, who was already feeling embarrassed about her recommendation, express regret and reveals to her all the abuse she suffers at Albert's hands. She also begins to consider Sofia's advice to stand up against further abuse from Mr.___.

Shug Avery, a lounge singer and Albert’s lover, gets sick and Albert takes her into his house for Celie to care for. Celie, who had been interested in the pictures of Shug she found in Albert’s luggage, wonders why Albert’s father didn’t allow his son marry Shug. She finds out it is because Shug has three children born out-of-wedlock. Shug is first impolite to Celie, who has taken the responsibility of nursing her, but the two women eventually become close friends. Celie finds herself besotted with Shug. Shug starts a sexual relationship with Celie on her next visit. Shug aids Celie in discovery the letters from Nettie that Albert has been hiding from her. The

letters show that Nettie has made friends with a missionary couple, Samuel and Corrine. Nettie ultimately escorted them to Africa to spread Christianity. Samuel and Corrine have also unwittingly fostered Celie's son and daughter, Adam and Olivia. Corrine, seeing that her adopted children look like Nettie, wonders if Samuel fathered the children with her. Progressively doubtful, Corrine attempts to reduce Nettie's role in her family. Through her letters, Nettie admits that she has become disappointed with her missionary work. Corrine becomes ill. Nettie asks Samuel to tell her how he adopted Olivia and Adam. Understanding that Adam and Olivia are Celie's children, Nettie also discovers that Alphonso is their stepfather. Celie's biological father was a businessman who was hanged by white men because they begrudged his success. Nettie explains to Samuel and Corrine that she is in fact their children's biological aunt. Corrine does not believe her until Nettie reminds her of her prior meeting with Celie in the store. Afterwards, Corrine dies, having accepted Nettie's story. In the meantime, Celie visits Alphonso, who affirms Nettie's story. Celie begins to lose her faith in God, confiding in Shug, who tells her own religious views to her.

4.4 Sexual Violence

In *The Color Purple* black women endured a double-edged oppression: One they were oppressed as workers in the house as well as on the farm; two as an object of sexual abuse by both white and black men. Celie is the main character in the novel. She is at the lowest of social class: she is an ugly, black, poor, and uneducated female. Her mother's lack of physical and emotion power overburdens Celie, who responsible not only for household duties, but she must also satisfy her stepfather's lust since her mother cannot or will not. She faces incessant violence from her

stepfather, and later in her life, by her husband. Her stepfather Alfonso is an unkind, uncaring and sexually obsessed man that appears to be typical man in a patriarchal society, personifying all negative aspects of such a culture. When Celie was only fourteen, she was savagely raped by her stepfather. “First he put his thing up gainst my hip and sort of wiggle it around. Then he grab hold my titties. Then he push his thing inside my pussy” (5). Leslie argues that “Rape is immoral. Rape is gendered. Rape is sexual. In yet another three-word sentence, rape is. But rape is controversial accurately because it is a crime that involves sex act” (16). Her stepfather raped her, leaving emotional scars that will never completely heal. This rape has a negative impact on her life, essentially destroying any hope of a better one. At the first, her stepfather starts to rape her when her mother is not at home. Then he says “you better shut up and git used to it” (Walker 4). Celie replies “But I don’t never git used to it. And now I feel sick used to it. I be the one to cook. My mama she fuss at me an look at me. She happy, cause he good to her now. But too sick to last long” (5). Celie’s words express the hugeness of her suffering, and her misery clearly shows the agony which she is going through. After the rape her father threatens Celie, telling her to hide the reality of being raped. Alfonso, Celie’s stepfather forces her to stay silent about her trauma. “"You better not never tell nobody but God. It'd kill your mammy" (6). Celie did exactly as she is told and became silent about her abuse, only disclosing her feelings through letters written to God. This rape causes Celie low self-esteem, low self-worth, nervousness, and disconnection, and makes her seem defenseless against her abuser. “I don’t know how to fight. All I know how to do is stay alive” (19). Seeing herself as a victim of sexual assault, she has no ability to regard herself of someone worthy respect and love. Due to the sexual assault, Celie

no longer can imagine herself as someone of value. Her stepfather's brutality begins to affect all aspects of her life; she starts to lose interest in everything, even in life itself. Her sufferings are expressed in the letters to God. She tells God about her life of cruelty and abuse at the hands of men she has faced during her life (McDowell 143).

The rape makes Celie abhor all men without exception. She looks at men as savages not as humans. She suffered a lot at the hands of the men. Men only added misery to her life. She is already destined to live as a black female in a patriarchal society. Both her stepfather and husband marginalized Celie and keep her voiceless and without an option to defend herself. That is why in her life, Celie is more happy with women than with men. "I don't even look at mens. I look at women, tho, cause I'm not scared of them" (7). Walker's heroine in *The Color Purple* proves that a rape victim could survive sexual violations, heal from this violence, and go on to live a happy and fulfilling life. The narrator is firm about her abhorrence of rape, describing it as "[m]orally wrong," "not to be excused," "[s]shameful," and "politically corrupt" ("Luna" 98).

Heterosexual intercourse in *The Color Purple* seems to be presented as rape or abuse. Albert has sex with Celie in a cold and uncaring way. When the couple has sexual intercourse, Celie seems to lack of interest in Albert's sexual pleasure. In their sexual activity Celie doesn't see Albert as an intimate partner. Celie sees the sexual relationship with her husband as something that is not essential to her, because he never cares for her pleasure. Their sexual relationship looks like rape because it lacks affection and mutual pleasure. Celie is deeply unhappy with sex and is not at all attracted to Albert. Celie does not feel love and respect from Albert and their

marriage is not based on love, which is why she is not satisfied with her sexual experience.

This is also reflected in Sofia's relationship with Harpo, where normal sexual intercourse is also seen as rape. Sofia has lost hope of sexual affairs in Harpo, and she doesn't think he even notices. Sofia only wants sex when it involves love and affection. Harpo, on the other hand, uses sex just for the physical experience or as a means force Sophia to submit to him. Sofia describes her sexual act with Harpo:

> I don't like to go to bed with him no more, she say. Used to be when he touch me I'd go all out my head. Now when he touch me I just don't want to be bothered. Once he git on top of me I think bout how that's where he Always want to be. She sip her lemonad I use to love that part of it, she say. I use to chase him home from the fiel from the field. Git all hot just watching him put the children to bed. But no more. Now I feels tired all the time. No interest (67).

This speech by Sofia indicated that this not sexual intercourse, it is sexual violence. "Sexual violence is any sexual act that is perpetrated against someone's will. Encompasses a range of offenses, including a completed nonconsensual sex act" (Basile 112). Basile's definition shows that Sophia makes love unwillingly. Sophia is in need of love more than sex, but her husband in need of sex more than love.

The way the black men treat their wives, daughters, and lovers in *The Color Purple* resembles the conduct of the white persecutors. In the traditional southern African-American family, as well as in the houses of the slaveholders, the black woman is treated as an inanimate object, a status which allows for the claim of the husband's dominance. Black men inherited the same culture as their white masters.

They act with their girls, wives, and lovers in same way white men treated them. Sexual violence against black women is rooted in slavery. In black woman, the white man found somebody whom he might use without making any vows. This leads to continuous use and abuse.

Black women during slavery clearly encountered frightening levels of sexual violence in particular and all types of violence in general, committed by white masters or their agents. Black men consciously or unconsciously carried these violent desires. As a result, black men started to continue this violence which had been applied to their own race, but now specifically on black women.

4.5 Physical and Psychological Violence

Physical and psychological violence was another type of violence used by black men to oppress black women. Physical violence is a common occurrence in *The Color Purple*. Celie lives in a male-dominated southern African-American community and during most of her life Celie has been property in hands of sex-starved men. Her stepfather treats her very harshly, torturing her physically and psychologically. He never cares about Celie's feelings, emotions, only her body, and treats her as less than human. He made deep emotional harm by never showing any level of respect for her as human being; he gives orders to her without ever considering saying anything soothing to her. "He beat me today cause he say I winked at a boy in church. I may have got something in my eye but I didn't wink. I don't even look" (7).

After Celie and Albert got married, the way men treated her did not change at all. Celie was beaten in the same way by her husband as she was by her stepfather.

Albert's behaviors are appallingly even crueler than those of Celie's stepfather. Her husband beats Celie constantly, physical violence becoming a tool to suppress her spirit. On their wedding day, a day that must be celebrated with affection and love, Albert mistreats his new wife. Worse but not unexpected, his brutal streak has been passed onto his children, for they also insult and beat Celie.

Albert urged his children to also act violently towards their new stepmother. One child throws a stone at her head, causing her to bleed. "Harpo ast his daddy why he beat me. Mr._____ say, Cause he my wife. Plus, she stubborn. All women good for—he don't finish. He just tuck his chin over the paper like he do. Remind me of Pa" (24). When, Harpo asks why his father beats Celie and Mr._____ tells him that whipping a wife is a manly and husbandly duty. He beats her because she is his wife, and moreover because he believes she is obstinate. From his limited perspective, these are appropriate and justifiable reasons for such unmanly violence. Throughout all the trauma and tragedy, Celie began to lose respect for herself, even forgetting how to love. Her life seemed like a dark tunnel without a ray of hope. Albert uses the same strategies of violence as Alphonso employed against Celie. For Celie, Mr. ____ is another nightmare that makes her life much miserable. Mr. ____ believes that the best way to make a woman submit is to insult her. Consequently, he lashes Celie repeatedly and never shows her love. He needs a wife just cleaning house, serving him and looking after his naughty children.

Mr. ____ orally and physically ill-treated her. He forced her to do all the housework and wanted that she look after of his family. "They look at me there struggling with Mr.____ children" (Walker 45). If Celie rejected, she was punished. Celie calls her husband "Mr.-" which is a reflection of her silenced

condition and of his brutality. Mr.___ beats Celie all the time, she writes, in one of her letters to God, "I make myself wood. I say to myself, Celie, you a tree. That's how come I know trees fear men" (24. Her father and husband dominate Celie and make her feel like she was evil, as if she did something to worth this trauma. She felt she was worth little because she allowed her stepfather and husband to do thing like this to her. She felt controlled, dominated, and therefore subordinate to men.

Physical violence is also seen in the relationship between Harpo and his wife Sofia. He beats his wife because "the woman s'pose to mind" (65). In Harpo's sight, it is a good thing for a man to do to his wife. Albeit Harpo and Sophia have a successful marriage, Harpo wants to establish his upper hands in treating Sophia. His father encourages Harpo to control Sophia by using violence. When Harpo asks Celie how he can control Sophia and Celie tells Harpo to beat her, even though Celie believes the couple to be happy as they are. Sofia confronts Celie about her advice to Harpo; beating Sofia in order to control her and Celie takes the first step toward personal uplift and an end to her silence. She feels ashamed and admits for the first time in her life that she feels jealous of Sofia's ability to do what she can never do, that is, fighting back against whoever dares to abuse her. Celie tells Sofia, "I say it cause I'm jealous of you. I say it cause you do what I can't […] Fight" (40). Although Celie knows that violence is the main reason of damaging marriage, she incites violence in Harpo's house. Celie is jealous of intimate relationship between Harpo and Sophia. Soon, Celie feels guiltily about what she did against the couple.

There are many ways of harassing a woman with psychological brutality. One of the most common is using verbal oppression which means that women are humiliated and often seen less intelligent. Secondly, isolating the woman, stopping

her from keeping in touch with relatives and friends or social institutions, is regarded as a form of brutality which prohibits her from receiving aid and support. Thirdly, the woman is forced to depend on her husband economically. Furthermore, the woman is frequently petrified and menaced by the cruel relationship she lives in. Apparently, in Celie's case these criteria can be applied to her psychological trauma. Indubitably, she is the object of humiliating and dehumanizing remarks and perspectives by her life partner. Celie is also repeatedly exposed to sexual molestation. Furthermore, her husband deprives her of contact with her sister Nettie.

His inquiring of his wife's decision to leave him for Memphis can be seen as effort from his sides to terror her: "Nothing up North for nobody like you… He laugh. Maybe somebody let you work on the railroad" (Walker 186). Clearly, he warns his wife what she must do and through his speech he seems to ask Celie to not leave him. The patriarchal order is observed by fulfilling his wish. Moreover, for the patriarchal maintenance Celie is repeatedly beaten, as a way of being obedient wife and not to question the brutal authority of her husband. She is certainly dehumanized by her husband's remarks which make it obvious when she makes up her mind to call him in *The Color Purple*. Celie's way of calling or naming her husband, she addresses him only as Mr ___, seems to denote the social distance between them. It might symbolize the authority he is fixed with both as a man and advocate of the white man's norms. In addition, Celie encounters another kind of oppression by being separated from family members and close friends, evidenced by Albert concealing the letters to Celie from her sister. This can be considered indicator of the visibility of patriarchy system in her life. Albert controls his wife's life in every sense of the

word. The patriarchal oppression can be seen at the beginning of the novel, because her voiced is silenced.

Because of the fact that Mr _____ is hiding the letters to Celie from her sister Nettie she is deprived of her honesty. Celie thinks Nettie lied about keeping in touch. This can be realized as a sign of how patriarchy becomes visible in the way in which Mr _____ takes control over his wife's life. At the beginning of the novel and her relationship with Mr _____, when Celie faces patriarchal oppression most heavily, her voice marginalized, she ceases to exist as an individual. Clearly, this highlights how Albert is taking over his wife and undermining her status as a person and her individuality. His power over her is once again revealed, in one of her letters to her sister, when Celie puts her feelings into words and complains about male domination: "Well, you know wherever there's a man, there's trouble" (Walker 186).

4.6 Racism

Racism in *The Color Purple* is depicted as permeating all parts of life in the South. In the novel, Celie is a victim of racism which has deeply affected her character. Her biological father is killed because of the culture of racism, because he was successful as a businessman in the South when black people were not supposed to be successful. "Your daddy didn't know how to git along. White folks lynch him" (204). White people were envious of his business success, and there was always the intimidation that, if black people demand too many of their rights, they will be silenced by the white people who lead the local and state government. Thus, all the traumatic events that Celie experienced are the aftermath of racism. Racism profoundly determines the destiny of Celie's life, because as a result of her father's

lynching she became an orphan and her life turns to misery at the hands of her stepfather and husband. When Alphonoso confirms Celies that her biological father was lynched by white people: Celie decides to no longer write letters to God, and instead, she writes to her sister Nettie. Celie believes that God would never listen to a poor black woman. "What God do for me?" (216). Shug asks Celie what her God looks like, and Celie replies that her God is a white man. Shug says this is the problem, God can be whatever she wants, and that Celie should not to internalize a concept of God that is foreign to her, created by white people. Celie thinks this makes sense, in light of what Nettie once told her: that Jesus had hair "like lamb's wool." Celie had rejected God because she had been taught to see God as white, as being like the people who had oppressed her and those like her.

One of the most striking acts racism is seen when the mayor's wife asks Sofia to clean her house and be her maid, Sofia replies "Hell no." The mayor then slaps Sofia for her reply, and she punched him. Sofia is imprisoned and abused to where:

> They crack her skull, they crack her ribs. They tear her nose loose on one side. They blind her in one eye. She swole from head to foot. Her tongue the size of my arm, it stick out tween her teef like a piece of rubber. She can't talk. And she just about the color of a eggplant'(93).

Clearly, Sophia's injuries were not caused by the mayor, but by law enforcement. Here Sofia is oppressed by a cultural understanding of the law. Then, just because a black woman punches a white man, Sofia is put into jail and then later forced to work as a housemaid for the mayor's wife. "They put Sofia to work in the prison laundry. All day long from five to eight she washing clothes. Dirty convict uniforms, nasty sheets and blankets piled way over her head" (93). This shows the

injustice of treatment blacks suffer at the hands of white people in the South. This is racist because the only reason Ms. Millie asked Sofia to be her maid was because the color of her skin. Sofia experiences severe conditions at the hands of the racism system, and because of that brutality, she wishes to be executed rather than submit to this kind of oppressions. These harsh punishments make Sophia begin to hate and have negative reactions toward white people “Some colored people so scared of white folks they claim to love the cotton gin” (320) Sophia’s quotation illustrates how black people have a general sense of fear about the white people.

On the other hand, internalized racism contributes tremendously to the torment black females in *The Color Purple* endure persistently in their lives. The way that black males treat black females is based on racism. Racism has a great impact on the way that black men dealt with the members of their own family. Black females feel the same sense of oppression as if they were being treated this way by a white racist. Black men apply the same white norms on their wives and girls. Despite the fact that racism was responsible for Celie’s father’s death, her stepfather instead of helping Celie to overcome the effects of racism in her life, roots the principle of racism in his treatment of her. He flagrantly attacks her look, frequently destroying her personality. For example, when he says, "You’ve got the ugliest smile this side of creation" (25). Her stepfather uses the white dominant race’s rules and prejudices against Celie to make her feel less than she is and make her easily controllable. Racism is an incessant nightmare in Celie’s life, even her husband treats with her as if he were an extreme racist. “You can’t curse nobody. Look at you. You black, you pore, you ugly, you a woman. You nothing at all” (Walker 187). Her husband attempts to create a separation between himself and Celie, seeing Celie as ‘the other’;

while he denies his own origin as a black man. “By illuminating Celie’s origin and ethnicity while defining her as ‘the other’ he seems to be performing a double oppression” (McLeod 175). Mr _____ behaves toward Celie as if he was not black and he sees his race as a superior and Celie’s race as inferior. Because of this racism, throughout of the novel “bright skin” is seen as more attractive and desirable. Squeak, who is of mixed race, is conscious of this division and asks Harpo, “Do you really love me, or just my color?” (Walker 99). Bright skin is valued, because it is better than the dark skin, which causes so much trouble. For example, when visiting Celie, Mr. ____’s sister insults his ex-wife for being “too black,” and because she was “too black,” she was murdered. Celie is black and her stepfather is black, and her husband is black as well. All racist acts against Celie and other black female characters show that life for black females in a black family is hazardous.

4.7 Emancipation of Women

Although Celie, the central character, agonizes terribly from the impact of sexism and racism, she does not abandon her goals and finally she was victorious, escaping the oppression that has kept her down so long. Celie goes through a notable personal change, shifting gradually from being miserable, passive, and abused by her husband, to managing her own business, possessing her own house and feels satisfaction with her life. Despite all of the various miseries of her life, Celie is able to liberate herself from the plights of patriarchy. At the end of the novel, she becomes a completely liberated woman; she liberates herself physically, psychologically and economically. Her stepdaughter Sofia and her best friend Shug are behind her emancipation. Sofia and Shug aid Celie, aiding her make many new discoveries; bestowing on her the idea that woman can struggle too, and helping her

to discover her own sense of identity. Furthermore, Sofia and Shug help her to realize that she is not destined to serve black men without appreciation. By introducing Shug and Sophia, the quality of Celie's life turns much better than before. They threat Celie in the best way that she has never experience it in prior. Through Shug and Sophia, Celie gains some sorts of confidence, trust, and love. Thus, Celie is opens the new chapter in her life. (Tyson 101).

Sofia plays an essential role in developing Celie's character. Sofia represents an example of strong black female character, one of few Celie has ever seen. Celie admires her personality and later on her great personal charisma affects Celie's positive transformation. Sofia is the first woman Celie meets who strongly fights male abuse; she confronts Celie's silence and influences her development into self-determining woman. Sofia's active resistance of her abuse draws Celie's attention to her own problems. Celie describes Sofia as a woman who owns her physical space as well as possessing a powerful inner determination, "[Sofia is] Solid. Like if she sit down on something, it be mash" (36). Unlike Celie, Sofia leaves Harpo because of his bad treatment. She has never accepted ill-treatment by her husband, nor will she ever. She fights back when Harpo attempts to rule her with an iron fist. Sofia reacts fiercely to a fault. In fact, it is her refusal to lesson her pride, or belittle herself that almost leads to her destruction. Sofia shows Celie how to defy men and how to stand up to prejudice and inequality.

> No need to say no more, Mr.___ say. You know what happen if somebody slap Sofia. Squeak go white as a sheet. Naw, she say. Naw nothing, I say. Sofia knock the man down. The polices come, start

> slinging the children off the mayor, bang they heads together. Sofia really start to fight (Walker85):

Sofia attempts to arouse Celie's consciousness, her voice inspires Celie to act and release her carefully controlled emotions. Sofia's boldness gives Celie the strength to struggle to be a stronger person. Eventually, Sofia's bravery reflects on Celie's behavior and actions. For example, when Celie found out that Albert hid her sister's letters she curses out Albert, she acted like Sofia, and Sofia comes to both encourage and appreciate her new attitude towards Albert. Through Sofia's courage Celie learns how to defy her husband, how not to let black men persecute her anymore. Sofia is the one who guides Celie in in her journey towards the discovery her long suppressed selfhood.

Like Sofia, Shug Avery helps Celie develop in various ways. Before Celie met Shug, Celie saw a picture of Shug and was excited about her picture, impressed by her beauty, and felt a very strong feeling of womanhood towards her. Celie writes, "Shug Avery was a woman. The most beautiful woman I ever saw" (16). Celie realizes that Shug's realm is entirely different from hers. Shug's world is free while Celie's world is stained by restrictions and limitations. Shug motivates Celie to leave Albert if he continues to torture her. Both Celie and Shug spend their time together talking to each other highlighting their mutual interests and love for each other, Celie describes their time together, "Me and Shug cook, talk, clean the house, talk, fix up the tree, talk, wake up in the morning, talk" (106). Shug's friendship gives Celie a voice. She starts to help and guide other female friends like Sofia. While Sofia is in prison, Celie visits her and takes care of her. Sofia's strong spirit is crushed when she is tortured in prison, and she begins to act like Celie.

Shug and Celie's relationship begins to strengthen when Shug finds out what happened to Celie and how she endured all kinds of miseries. One day, Celie narrates her life story for Shug how she was raped repeatedly by her stepfather when she was only fourteen. When both Celie and Shug start to cry, Shug treats Celie very kindly trying to alleviate her sorrow. LaGrone states that "Shug is the first person that Celie tells about Alphonso's rapes and therefore enables Celie's first active refusal of her stepfather's command to "shut up" and "git used to it" (5) Celie in telling Shug about her trauma, experiences the comforting and responsive love of an attentive listener for the first time. This enables Celie to mourn her past life because someone finally understands her story. Shug helped Celie to find her sister's letters by revealing their place and consequently, through the letters, Celie found her sister Nettie. Finding these letters were a turning point in her life as she began to explore hope once again and began to rebel her husband's authority for the first time.

Celie planned to murder Albert by using a razor as retaliation for her suffering, but Shug intervened making Celie reconsider her decision. Shug acts as a spiritual guide for Celie. "Nobody feel better for killing nothing" (134). Shug wants to soothe Celie's anger and sorrow hence, she suggests that, in "times like this, […] us ought to do something different. […] let's make you some pants". (136) Celie agrees and with a needle in hand, she begins to create her new life. Celie's sewing

> like Shug singing […] creates her self-determination and prevents her from being owned". Now Celie no longer considers her husband as Mr.__, but as Albert, this truth marks a change in her view of herself as an equivalent to him. Shug advises that Celie "git man off [her] eyeball (179).

When Celie does decide to do this, she is able to purify her soul with not violence but the effectiveness of words. One evening Celie starts to challenge her husband Albert in a family dinner and was determined to fight eye for an eye, tooth for a tooth. She informs Albert that she is going to part with him and go with Shug to Memphis. When Albert attempts to stop her from going, but Celie now has an iron will and determination that enables her to face him will all her strength she possesses.

At the end Celie, decides to go with Shug to Memphis. Shug regards Celie as a close friend, saying, "I brought you here to love you and help you get on your feet" (190). Shug gives Celie a big bedroom which "overlook[s] the backyard and the bushes down by the creek" (188). It is the first time that someone has thought of Celie's own comfort. Her comfortable life with Shug makes her explore her own creativity in sewing pants. Walker points out that “Shug's successful singing career provides Celie with the material support and domestic shelter she needs when she finally breaks from Mr __" (32). Shug encourages Celie to recover her creativity by designing pants. She invests her time, money, and love to help her friend to define herself and be financially independent. Celie's stitching links her with an ideal group of female characters in American literature who use their arts not to expose their indignity, but to transplant it, placing it where it really belongs on their male tyrants. The most noticeable character of this type is Hester Prynne in *The Scarlet Letter*. Hester is forced by the patriarchs of Salem to wear a scarlet letter A as a symbol of shame for her adultery. Instead, Hester exploits her skill to mark a letter that signifies, to the narrator who figures out it two centuries later, a "mystic symbol" giving evidence "of a now forgotten art” (27). Motivated by this symbol, Hawthorne

crafts a story in which the bearers of shame are the Puritan patriarchs who attempt to brutalize Hester for her rejection to give in to their rules.

The friendship between Celie and Shug changes them both as individuals. Shug aids Celie to establish her identity as an independent woman free from the chains and constraints of black make abuse by fathers and husbands. Shug relates to Celie the story of her relationship with Albert and his now dead wife. Shug loved Albert in the past; however their circumstances prevented them from getting married. Shug was unkind to Albert's wife, Annie Julia. She attempted to spoil their marriage hoping that Albert would love her again. Nonetheless, when Annie Julia died, Albert married Celie instead of Shug. Shug also despised Celie at the beginning of their relationship. Celie's friendship enabled Shug to let go of the past. She now feels remorse about her past feelings of hatred, especially towards Albert who she now thinks was not worthy of her love. Telling Celie, "anyhow, once you told me he beat you, and won't work, I felt different about him". (106). Colton states:

> Shug is able to identify that her special emphasis on her relationship with a man put a wedge between her and potential women friends. Women siding with men over women is one of the values of patriarchy. With the replacement of this value with womanist values, Shug is able to change her personality and keep strong relationships with women and in the end, with Albert as well (38).

Shug also assists Celie in exploring and recovering her own inner beauty in addition to her external beauty. Giving her strength and self-value, she arouses Celie’s creativity who explores her aptitude in sewing pants, she also acts as Celie’s teacher, show Celie how to love and how she should receive love from other people. As soon

as Celie begins to love herself, she is capable of breaking out of her emotional shell and begins to love everybody around her.

Celie's very survival is hugely ascribed to Shug. As Marvin argues "Shug sweeps through *The Color Purple* like a force of nature" (23). Shug is considered to be a force of nature because of her ability to have positive effects on the people around her. Thus, Celie starts to rely on herself and starts to a new chapter in her life. Thus, Celie transforms from the passive state of abused girl/woman into the positive state of strong independent woman. As LaGrone gives a good description of Celie;

> *The Color Purple,* I thought it was a perfect story about personal development and liberation. Celie was at the "bottom" of America's social caste. Her story showed how being passive about a negative condition creates victimhood. Her example presented that by fighting back against hardship; one can instantaneously examine identity, discover selfhood, and free the spirit from the bondage of cruel (LaGrone xiii).

This depiction of the transformation from victimhood into self-sufficient character displays an image of a courageous and strong woman. It might be interpreted that Walker as a feminist wants to convey this message. She maps out how women should fight and struggle to attain their rights, no matter how cruel or brutal the conditions.

5. Conclusion

As argued in the introduction this thesis compares and contrasts gender violence in Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* (1970) and Alice Walker's *The Color Purple* (1982), showing how black females were subjected to persecution and trauma both in the texts and in the history of the United States. The term gender is used to indicate those aspects of male and female which are socially rather than biologically fixed. Thus, gender is a social perspective with insight in to how the traits and behaviors of males and females are fixed in a society. In this context, males are positioned to be in control of most aspects of life such as the economy, politics, business, and trade. On the basis of established gender roles, males often blamed for constantly persecuting females. Males see themselves as superior and powerful and they often misuse their powers when dealing with females. The issue of gender plays a central role in Toni Morrison’s *The Bluest Eye* and Alice Walker’s *The Color Purple*. These novels tell stories where African-American women were beaten, raped, degraded, and abused simply because of their gender.

In both novels black males used all types of violence against their wives, daughters and lovers as a means of oppression. The use of violence by black males against black females is a reflection of their historical suffering under white masters during slavery, as indicated in both novels. It is further noted that during the time of slavery in the colonies and the United States, black females experienced trauma from both white masters and their black men. Black men embraced the culture of white masters and this culture to their wives, daughters and lovers, further suppressing black females instead of reducing their plight. Slavery had a destructive effect on

black families, negatively affecting the black family structure. When black people were enslaved they agonized over their lack of self-esteem and were made victims of a society that classified them as inferior beings. Hence, blacks saw themselves as inferior as well. This lack of self-esteem leads them to self-destructive behavior and the belief that they would never be wholly recognized as equal members of society. Those who accept the oppressed view see themselves through the mirror of the oppressor. This way of thinking was passed down from one generation to another. Slavery in America started when the first African slaves were displaced to the North American colony of Jamestown, Virginia, in 1619, to aid in harvesting. Black females faced severe circumstances from their white masters such as rape, whipping, daily long-hours of working, torture, insulting and punishing them as a means of discipline. During the time of slavery white masters were allowed to legally as well as physically, control black women's body, mind, and desires. The most revolting method of oppressing black people was banning education; slaves were not allowed to teach their children. Slaves were legally prevented from becoming literate to hamper their desire for escape or rebellion. The institution of slavery prohibited marriage among slaves unless approved by the master. Colonial and state laws regard them property and commodities, not as legal persons who could enter into bonds and marriage. Slavery violated black female's rights on a massive scale and negatively changed the pattern of their lives. It also imposed inhuman and degrading conditions on African people; who were exploited as a means of production and were deprived from all the pleasures of life.

Thus, the decision to liberate slaves in the United States was an inevitable and belated step in the direction to making the country free and independent. The triumph of Abraham Lincoln in 1860 in presidential election marked a turning point in American history as a whole and specifically for the Black Americans. The Southern states separated from the Union, as they fiercely opposed the end of slavery and consequently this led to American Civil War breakout in 1860. In 1863, Lincoln declared the Emancipation Proclamation, which emancipated slaves held in the Confederate States; the thirteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution 1865 illegalized slavery throughout the country. The concept of slavery was essentially degrading to both the slave and the slave owner. In 1865 slavery was abolished however this did not mean that life would be fair and easy for Black Americans. Discrimination would continue through such things as racial segregation over the following century. The civil rights movements, led by such names as Martin Luther King, finally accomplished success in establishing legal equality.

The two protagonists Pecola and Celie shared the same destiny. They found very few people to help with their problems. Both of them are uneducated and black females, both are humiliated by society. They are raped by their fathers and become pregnant, this act of sexual abuse contributed negatively in shaping their later on lives. They came from the same family background and their families added even more misery to their lives. Both lived their lives as disappointment. Their trauma started at the hands of their fathers; they maliciously experienced rape, violence, racism, torture and insult. They suffered even more degradation when the dominant white society imposed its norms on them. Both the women experienced insult,

humiliation, and discrimination both from white racists and more importantly, people in her own race. But their attitudes and reactions to this brutality were quite different. Pecola unlike Celie could not form her identity and develop to adulthood; she lacked wisdom and insight to aid her in deal with her trauma in a more rationally knowing way. Pecola was daydreaming of being a white beauty, she was living in a world of her own , her life turned into a complete illusion, she was supposed to fight harder to obtain and establish her identity in the society and probably helping other black females to be free from the restrictions imposed by the white dominated society. Furthermore, Pecola never attempted to fight for her liberty and independency; she essentially conforms to white society norms.

Celie, unlike Pecola, did not plunge into despair but she rose to all challenges. Celie believed that she was ugly; but found her beauty through her sewing. She was successful in finding herself because she was more mature than Pecola. She challenged all those people who brutalized her and thus, was able to change the course of her life from inferior to superior, from submissive to assertive, from powerless to powerful. She knew that freedom cannot be obtained only through wishes and dreams. Consequently, she gradually developed her own personality as people around her were getting tougher; her personality was getting stronger and stronger. She moves with Shug to Memphis and opens a new chapter of her life with her work of making pants that she established living in Shug's house. She makes client pants for her family and then everybody wanted a pair. Through her skill of sewing, she made money, built strength, increased feeling of self-worth, and gained power. Her job was thriving and everyone was ordering pants from her. Her job

provided Celie with her own identify; people began see her as a strong, independent and courageous woman. Finally, she overcame many personal hardships and became a powerful symbol of defiance.

Works Cited

Anderson, James D. *The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860–1935.* Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988. Print.

Atkinson, D. R. *Counseling American Minorities*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2004 Print.

Baldwin, James. "The struggle for identity". *British Journal of Sociology*. 17. (1996) 107–121. Print.

Basile, K C. *Sexual Violence in the Lives of Girls and Women*. New York: Brunner-Routledge, 2005. Print.

Bates, Gerri. *Alice Walker: A Critical Companion.* Westport CN: Greenwood Press, 2005. Print.

Bearn, Emily. "Toni Morrison: Voice of America's Conscience," *Times Online* (November 28 2008) http://entertainment.timesonline.co.uk/tol/artsand entertainment/books/article5097332.ece. WEB.

Bell, Bernard W. *The Afro-American Novel and Its Tradition*, Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1987. Print.

Bharati, Megan and L.M. Joshi. "Race, Class & Gender Bias as Reflected in Toni Morrison's First Novel *The Bluest Eye*." *Journal of Literature, Culture & Media Studies.* 1 (Summer 2009) 37-45.

Blassingam, John. *The Slave Community: Plantation Life in the Antebellum South*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1972. Print.

Bloom, Harold, *Toni Morrison's The Bluest Eye*. New York: Chelsea House. 1999. Print.

Brum, Gabriela Eltz. *Sexual Blinding of Women*. Porto Alegre: Ufrgs Instituto. 2005. Print.

Carabi, Angels. "African American Masculinities." *Constructing New Masculinities: The Representation of Masculinity in U.S. Literature and Cinema (1980-2003).* http://www.ub.edu/filoan/Memoria Angles.Pdf. (15 April 2011). 2003. WEB.

Cardyn, Lisa. "Sexualized Racism/Gendered Violence: Outraging the Body Politic in the Reconstruction South." *Michigan Law Review* 100.4. (Feb 2002) 675-867. JSTOR Web.

Deford, Deborah H. *Slavery in the Americas.* New York: Chelsea House, 2006. Print.

Department of State. United States. *Free At Last*: The U.S. Civil Rights Movement. Washington: Bureau of International Information Programs. November 2006. http://www.america.gov. Web. 11 Nov 2013.

Dickson-Carr, Darryl. *The Columbia Guide to Contemporary African American Fiction.* New York: Columbia University Press, 2005. Print.

Douglass, Fredrick. *My Bondage and My Freedom***.** New York: Miller, Orton & Mulligan, 1855. http:// docsouth.unc.edu/neh/douglass55/ douglass55.html. WEB.

Engerman, Stantley L. "Slavery and its Consequences for the South in the Nineteenth Century." *The Cambridge Economic History of the United States*, Vol. ll. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008. Print.

Engles, Friedrich. *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State.* Chicago: Charles H. Kerr & Company, 1909. Print.

Feeney, Mark. "Rosa Parks, Civil Rights Icon, Dead at 92." *Boston Globe*. (October 25 2005). www.bostonglobe.com.Web.

Fehrenbacher, Donald E. *The Slaveholding Republic***.** New York: Oxford University Press, 2001. Print.

Finley, Moses I. *Classical Slavery*. London: Newbury House, 1987. Print.

Francis, Leslie. ed. *Date Rape: Feminism, Philosophy, and the Law*. State College: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996. Print.

Gidding, Paul. "When and Where I Enter." *The Impact of Black Woman on Race and Sex in America*. New York: HarperCollins, 1892.

Gillespie, Carmen. *Critical Companion to Toni Morrison*: *A Literary Reference To Her Life and Work*. New York: Facts on File, 2008. Print.

Guneeta, Chadha. "Depiction of Violence in Visual Art," *Violence and Conflict Resolution: Contemporary perspectives.* New Delhi: Global Vision Publishing House. 2000. Print.

Hare, Ken. "Overview", *The Montgomery Advertiser: The Story of the Montgomery Bus Boycott*. June 7, 2005. www.montgomeryboycott.com/article overview.htm. (June 26, 2010). Web.

Hernton, Calvin C. *Sex and Racism in America.* New York: Grove Press, 1965. Print.

Hooks, bell. *Black women and Feminism*. Boston: South End Press, 1981. Print.

Husain, Hasan. *Human Behavior & the Social Environment.* Beirut: Al-Majid House, 2005.

James, Oliver. *Slavery and the Making of America*. New York: Gale Group, 2001. Print.

Jordan, Margaret. *Servitude and Historical Imagination: Perspective Fiction and Representation.* New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004. Print

King Jr., Martin Luther. *The Martin Luther King, Jr. Companion: Quotations from the Speeches, Essays, and Books of Martin Luther King, Jr*. New York: St. Martin's Press. 1993. Print.

LaGrone, Kheven. "Introduction to Follow the Hero's Journey". *Alice Walker's The Color Purple.* Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2009.

La Rue, Linda. "The Black Movement and Women's Liberation." *The Black Scholar*, Vol. I. May, 1970. Print.

Macklin, John Moffat. *The Ku Klux Klan***:** *A Study of the American Mind*. New York: Kissinger Publishing**,** 1924. Print.

Marisco, Katie. *The Montgomery of Bus Boycott: Milestone of the Civil Rights Movement.* New York: Marshall Cavendish Benchmark, 2012. Print.

McDowell, Deborah E. *Alice Walker: Generational Connections and Black Women Novelists*. New York: Chelsea House, 1989. Print.

McLeod, John. *Beginning Post colonialism*. Manchester: Manchester University Press. 2000.

Mecklin, J. Moffatt. *The Ku Klux Klan: A Study of the American Mind*. New York: Kessinger: Publishing, 2006. Print.

Miner, Madonne. *Lady no Longer Sings the Blues: Rape, Madness, and Sadness.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press. 1985.

Morgan, Edmund S. "Slavery and Freedom: The American Paradox". *Journal of American History*, 59.1 (June 1972). 5-29. JSTOR. Web.

Morrison, Toni. *The Bluest Eye.* London: Random House, Vintage.1999. ebook.

---. *The Bluest Eye*. New York: Penguin, 1970. Print.

Moyers, Bill. Conversation with Toni Morrison" YouTube. 6 June 1990. Web. 6 April. 2013.

O'Brien, John. "Interviews with Black Writers". New York: Liveright Publishing. 1973. Print.

Page, Yolanda. ed. *Encyclopedia of African American Women Writers*. Westport CN: Greenwood, 2007. Print.

Raynor, Deider J. and Johannella E. Butler. "Morrison and the Critical Community" *The Cambridge Companion to Toni Morrison*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007. Print.

Robin, Gayle. "The Traffic of Women". *Toward An Anthropology of Women.* Rayna R. Reiter, ed. New York: Monthly Review Press, 1975. Print.

Rose, Gloria. *The Color Purple: Cliff Notes*. New York: Cliffs Notes, 1999. Print.

Rothonberg, Paul S. *Race, Class, and Gender in the* United *States*. New York: Catherine Woods, 2001.Print.

Roy, P. Basler. *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln.* Volume VII. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1864. Print.

Rubenstein, Roberta."Pariahs and Community." *Toni Morrison, Critical Perspectives Past and Present.* Henry Louis Gates, ed. New York: Amistad. 1993. Print.

Samuels, Wilfred D., and Clenora Hudson Weems. *Toni Morrison.* New York: Twayne Publishers, 1990. Print.

Shackelford, Todd K, and Ranald D Hansen. *The Evolution Of Violence*. New York : Springer. Print.

Showalter, Elaine. *Feminism:* An Anthology of Literary Theory and Criticism. Robin Warhol ed. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press. 1997. Print.

Stampp, Kenneth. *The Peculiar Institution*: *Slavery in the Ante-Bellum South*. New York: Vintage, 1956. Print.

Stepto, Roberto.*"Intimate Things in Place": A Conversation with Toni Morrison*. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1994. Print.

Sylvester, Theodore M. *Slavery throughout History.* New York: Thomson, 1987. Print.

Taylor, Paul. "Malcom's Conk and Donto's Colors; or Four Logical Petitions Concerning, Race, Beauty, and Aesthetics." *Journal of Aesthetics & Art Criticism* 57.1. (2000) np. Academic Search Complete. EBSCO. Web. March 2011.

Thomson, Gale. *The Civil Rights Movement.* New York. Chelsea House, 1999. Print.

Trouillot, Michel-Rolph. *Silencing the Past*: *Power and the Production of History.* Boston: Beacon. 1995. Print.

Tyson, Lois. *Critical Theory Today: A User-Friendly Guide*. New York: Garlan Publishing, 1999. Print.

Wade-Gayle, Gloria. *No Crystal Stair: Visions of Race and Sex in Black Women's Fiction.* New York: The Pilgrim Press, 1984. Print.

Walker, Alice. *In Search of Our Mother's Gardens: Womanist Prose*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1984. Print.

---. *The Color Purple*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jbvanovich, 1982. Print.

William, Lisa. *Artist as Outsider in the Novels of Toni Morrison and Virgina Woolf.* Westport CN: Greenwood Press, 2001. Print.

Williams, Oliver. "Healing and Confronting the African-American Male Who Batters," *Healing the Male Spirit: Men of Color and Domestic Violence.* R. Carrillo and J. Tello eds. New York: Springer Publishing, 1998. Print.

Zinn, Howard. *A People's History of the United States, 1492-Present*. New York: Harper, 2005. Print.

ÖZET

Bu tez Toni Morrison'un *The Bluest Eye* (1970) ve Alice Walker'ın *The Color Purple* (1982) de yazdıkları iki romandaki cinsiyet şiddetlerini açıklayıp analiz etmektedir.Özellikle şiddet uygulama,tecavüz,ensest ilişkiler ve cinsiyet kavramı bu romanlarda bu konulara dikkat çekmek için incelenmiştir.Bu iki kitapta da travmalar siyah kadın ve kızlar tarafından yaşanmakta olup,ten renginin önder kişiler olan Pecola ve Celie için nasıl bir istenmeyen kişi durumuna düştüklerinin üstü çizilir.Esasen bu tezin dayandığı nokta kölelik,cinsel istismar ve ırkçlıkığın nasıl Amerikan kadınları üstünde hem psikolojik olarak hemde fiziksel olarak acınası bir siyah insanlar tablosunu gözümüzün önünde resmeder.Bu tez yine siyah kadınlara uygulanan gaddarca davranışları tek yanlı olarak açıklamamıştır,bunu sadece beyaz insanlar suç olarak bu gaddarlığı göstermişlerdir.Bunun yerine bu tez kafamızda siyah erkeklerin yine siyah kadınlara karşı tecavüzü hakkında fikir yaratmaktadır,ve bunu içselleşmiş gaddarlığın büyün oranla siyah kadınların yaşadığı yerlerde olmasıda bir fikir yaratmaktadır.

Bu tez giriş bölümü ve sonuç bölümü dahil olmak üzere bes ayrı bölüme ayrılmıştır.İlk bölüm ise uckısıma ayrılmış ve her kısım özel konuları ele almaktadır.İlk kısım siyah kadınların hem beyaz hemde siyah erkeklerden gördüğü acılardan bahseder.İkinci kısım ise cinsiyet konusunu hem sosyolojik olarak hemde psikolojik bakış açısıyla analiz etmektedir.Üçüncü kısma gelindiğinde ise her iki romanda geçen uzun köleliğin etkileri hakkında bilgi verir.Üçüncü bölüm Amerika Bİrleşik Devletinin kölelik hakkında tarihi arkaplanını açıklar.Bunu da ırkçılığın ve Afrikalı amerikanlaırn yaşadığı etkileri ve Sivil haklar hareketinin oluşumu ile

vermektedir.Üçüncü bölüm siyah insanların nasıl fiziksel,seks kölesi olarak ve siyah kadınlara fiziksel şiddetin olduğundan bahsederken;önderlerin sinirsel çöküntülerinin sebep olduğu olayları da açıklamaya çalışır.Dördüncü bölüm kölelikten azat edilen siyah kadınların romanın elebaşı olan siyah adamlar tarafından fiziksel kullanımlarını,psikoljik baskının kısıtlandığı her iki güç ve kendi izzetinefislerini kısıtlanmasını açıklamıştır.Son bölümde ise son cümlelerin içerdiği Afro-Amerikalıların tarihi ve yazılmış bu tecrübeleirn edebiyatı arasında yeni bir bağlantının yeniden kurulmasından bahseder.

ABSTRACT

This thesis is explains and analyzes gender violence in two novels, Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* (1970), and Alice Walker's *The Color Purple (*1982). Specifically, the treatment of violence, rape, incest and gender identity in the novels are examined in order to highlight. The trauma suffered by black women and girls in both novels, highlighting how the color of their skin becomes an undesirable identity for the protagonists Pecola and Celie. The primarily goal of the thesis is the analyses of slavery, sexual abuse, and racism, illustrating how since being forcibly taken to America, black people agonized both psychologically and physically over their place in the world and in America. The thesis will also make clear that the brutal treatment of black women was not single sided: that only white people perpetrated this brutality. Instead, the thesis builds on ideas about black male aggression against black women, an internalized system of brutality, which hugely affected black women's lives.

The thesis is divided into five chapters inclusive of introduction and conclusion. The first chapter is divided into three sections, each introducing a specific subject. The first section deals with the suffering of black women at hands of both white and black men. The second section highlights violence in *The Bluest Eye* and *The Color Purple*. The third section deals with the long reaching impact of slavery in both novels. The second chapter explains the historical background of slavery in The United States of America, while analyzing racism and its impact on the lives of African-Americans and concluding with the genesis of the Civil Rights Movement. Chapter three deals with how black males use physical, sexual, and psychological violence towards black females; which explains the cause of

protagonist's mental breakdowns. Chapter four highlights the strategies used by black women which lead to the emancipation of the novels' protagonist from black men's use of physical, sexual, and psychological violence to limit both their power and their sense of self-esteem. The final chapter is the conclusion that reestablished the connections between the history of African-Americans and the literature written about their experience.