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Racism faced by African Americans in Chloe Anthony Wofford Morrison selected novels

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Abstract
African American Literature is a significant contribution made by its African American writers. The author Chloe Anthony Wofford Morrison belongs to African American. She is born in Africa and settled in America. Then she started publishing the novels. Most of the novels are based on the theme African American Culture, traditions, Sufferings, Slavery, Racism and Social Equality. Her themes inspires the people, and touches the heart of the Africans and she became a famous writer. She clearly highlight in her writings the Sufferings, Pain, Racism, Sexism, Religion, Politics, Terrorism, Male Domination faced by African people, African women, Children, and Men and those who are caught in the web of Slavery. Her novels The Bluest Eye, Sula, Song of Solomon, Beloved, dealt with the Racism of Africans. Sufferings is the similar themes in her novels. This Paper presents the nature of the coloured people's struggle for their race and endurance in a predominantly multicultural post-colonial white America.

Keywords: atrocity, black identity, slavery, psychological haunt, racism

Introduction

Racism refers to various beliefs maintaining that the essential value of an individual can be determined according to a perceived or ascribed racial category and that social discrimination by race is therefore justifiable. Racial Prejudice often includes the belief that people of different races differ in aptitudes and abilities, such as Intelligence, physical prowess, or virtue. Most individuals who subscribe to racial categories believe that different races can be placed on a ranked, hierarchical scale. Racism has gone through a process of increasing occurrence and severity as people of different races encountered each other; from discriminatory attitudes, to genocide, to the establishment of social structure institutionalizing racial segregation.

In the first novel "The Bluest Eye" published in (1970). Morrison gained reputation internationally through this novel. In the novel "The Bluest Eye" Morrison focuses on this problem as it affects blacks and their psychological mechanism. Her novel "The Bluest Eye" is a moving portrayal of a black Woman's quest for ideal self. The novel is based on Morrison's conversation with a black girl during her childhood. Morrison endorses that her thoughts about why that black girl beseeches for blue eyes are stimulated when the racial beauty of "Black is Beautiful" is reclaimed. She says that, "it wasn't that easy of being a little black girl in this country--it was rough. The psychological trick you have to play in order to get through--and nobody said how it felt to be that. . . And I wanted to explore it". (Morrison, 7) The Bluest Eye strongly speaks of the voice of the demoralized black females in the insignificant society which has become muted. It is racial bigotry which is an obvious indication of Toni Morrison's concern to describe creatively the insensitivity of the white folk towards black. The novel is about a young girl Pecola who desires to have white skin, blond hair and blue eyes against her dark complexion as:

> "Each night, without fail, she prayed for blue eyes. Fervently, for a year she had prayed. Although somewhat discouraged, she was not without hope. To have something as wonderful as that happen would take a long, long time." (Morrison, 35)

Pecola's desire is the result of a misconception regarding race in the American society. The black people have to undergo a lot of oppressions and atrocities on the basis of racial inferiority. Pecola, the chief character, is the most woeful creation who consistently suffers from racial discrimination. She is always being abused by her own mother Pauline Breedlove Pecola treating the white girl of her employers as superior to her just because of the colour. She has never felt the love of her mother and perceives that it is because of her colour; her dark skin, dark eyes, and woolly hair. She develops that she is not seen as beautiful, and from these thoughts she begins to hate the beauty of the white children. She thinks of herself ugly and attributes their mistreatment of her to her physical appearance.

She develops a thought that no one would behave badly in front of her if she were beautiful. Blue eye which Pecola desires for is used basically a metaphor that is easily understood. When Pecola desires for blue eyes she is really saying that she want to escape her life and herself. She has defined herself only by her degree of blackness. Even, at only eleven years of age, she finds the feeling of inferiority and worthlessness acquiring the symbol of beauty in her community. Blue eyes are regarded as a beautiful by all the characters including mother and children who collectively admire Shirley Temple. Pecola is not appreciated and cared by her family. Furthermore Pecola has no other person or place where she is safe valued. In the surrounding community she is subjected to consider inter-racism by grown-ups and even her peers. Desiring blue eyes she is becoming more and more obsessed.

The desire is made because of she wants to escape her life by becoming something she is not. Pecola thinks that only blue can be the solution for her distressed situation. She is shunned and very lonely. The most important reason for her to desire blue eyes is that she wants to be treated differently in her family as it proves from the text like, "if she looked different, beautiful, maybe Cholly would be different, and Mrs. Breedlove too. Maybe they'd say "why, look at pretty-eyed Pecola.. We mustn't do bad things infront of those pretty eyes." (Morrison, 34) This shows that her primary concern is an escape from abuse and negligence within in home. The racism which penetrates every aspect of society is an important factor in understanding the actions of Pauline and Cholly, and most of their actions are the reactions to the oppression and racism. Pecola has not witnessed love and affection at home. She reacts about love as, "what did love feel like? She wondered how do Grown ups act when they are in love? Eat fish together?" (Morrison, 44).

Even One of the most traumatizing event in Pecola's life is the moment when she is raped by her father, gets pregnant and loses her sanity. Once Pecola walks to the grocery store to buy candy, Mr. Yacobowski, the shopkeeper, cannot bear Pecola's presence and he cannot look at her because of her blackness "How can a fifty-two-year-old white immigrant storekeeper… see a little black girl?" (Morrison, 36) .This shows the influence and phobia of the white-beauty. Claudia, the 11 year old girl, narrator of the story apprehends white beauty as terrible. She doesn't like the admiration of Frieda and Pecola towards Shirley Temple who is an icon of white beauty. There is another evidence of racism in The Bluest eye which is Young Junior's wicked deed towards Pecola.

Geraldine the mother of Young Junior is also a Black (light skinned) does not allow her son to play with other black children which made him dislike his own race. Once Young Junior have seen Pecola many times standing alone at recess and taking shortcut through playground. Nobody is ready to play with her because she is very black and ugly. By observing this One day Young Junior talks to her so gently and invites her to his home as to show her something at home. Pecola easily believes and follows him. She is scared to get in home but still she goes because she finds a big red-and-gold coloured Bible on the dining-room table and a colour picture of Jesus Christ on a wall. Hence it satisfied her to not befall any disaster. But Young Junior discloses his original wicked character by pulling her into another room and throws a big black cat right on her face. He laughs cruelly and runs around the room by saying "You can't get out. You're my prisoner," (Morrison, 89) Even his mother Geraldine insults her emotionally when she sees the girl trapped in her house. She speaks pinching and full of racial words which tell much more than words as:

> "Shut up!" Hair uncombed, dresses falling apart, shoes untied and caked with dirt. The end of the world lay in their eyes, and the beginning, and all the waste in between. They were everywhere. They slept six in a bed, all their pee mixing together in the night as they wet their beds each in his own candy-and-potato-chip dream. "Get out," she said, her voice quiet. "You nasty little black bitch. Get out of my house."(Morisson, 90)

It is not only Pecola who feel racial discrimination but even her father, Cholly, has also been a victim of racism and emotional abuse since his childhood; it makes him person who cannot show love or express his feelings. He feels racial discrimination when he is caught having sex with his friend Darlene. He is caught by two white men, act and scream, „„Get on wind it, nigger. . . . An "make it good, nigger, make it good." (Morrison, 148). Toni Morrison intellectually enlightens the sufferings of coloured people in a white society in The Bluest Eye. The novel shows "racism's damaging effects on the black community at large and on black families" (Morrison, 8).

Pecola Breedlove realizes the supremacy of white society and longs to have the features of white females. Her strong desire to have the bluest eye in the world itself reveals the eagerness to have even more finer features than white women. Even though slavery is abolished legally through the tough efforts of eminent leaders but still the African Americans are not considered equal to the whites. The Black people are trying to identify themselves with the white and their cultural ways. Morrison insists on Black cultural heritage and solicits the Afro-Americans to be proud of their Black identity. Morrison through her writing make blacks to understand that black identity is not inferior to white in any way. she make her point that physical appearance and culture may be different but that doesn"t mean servitude of the entire race.

Morrison published the novel "Sulla" in 1973. Toni Morrison's Sula deals with the relationships of Sula with others and with herself that influenced her identity formation. In Morrison's fiction identity is always temporary as her female characters faces three types of oppression – Whiteness, maleness, and bourgeois culture – search desperately for their genuine selves. It is interesting to see that while a body is despised as "ugly" due to its inability to satisfy men, the same body becomes an object of desire when it reaches adulthood because an adult black woman is seen in terms of her sexuality. Morrison considers in her second novel Sula a two fold predicament- the effect of racism upon black identity formation and the effect of racism and sexism upon the identity formation of female. In an interview conducted by Colette Dowling, Morrison suggests that "blacks, if they are to succeed in American society, must leave their native community, and in so doing, cut themselves off from their old lives." (Dowling 58)

Morrison's focus in Sula is on woman as an individual. Sula, the central figure of the novel, suffers at hands of whites and blacks. She rejects the traditional norms ascribed to women in society. In Sula Morrison is interested to show the individuality of an African-American woman, struggling for identity. Sula is basically a woman's novel, struggling towards freedom and selfhood. The male characters play no major roles. They are "superficial, immature, untrustworthy, and anonymous, as is suggested by their names – Jude (Judas), Green (naive), Boy-Boy (infantile), Chicken Little (fearful and diminutive), the Deweys (anonymous)." (Samuels and Hudson 46) Morrison's manner of exploring the nature of woman's exploitation is unique.

She has created two female characters – Nel and Sula – none is complete in herself. The idea that Nel and Sula represent two halves of one person reverberates throughout the entire novel. When Sula gets back to the Bottom, Nel thinks that her friend's return is like "getting an eye back" and that talking to Sula has always been "a conversation with herself". Morrison's comment is too significant: "their

friendship was so close; they themselves had difficulty distinguishing one's thoughts from the other's". (Sula 83) Nel and Sula then are separate faces of one being. Morrison recommends that to attain an ideal and holistic personality, "the part embodied in Sula has to be wedded to the safe conventional part represented by Nel." (Banyiwa 28)

For Nel and Sula the problem of losing their identity is a direct outcome of the Bottom's limiting definition of women as subservient self-sacrificing being. Nel takes the traditional role the community prescribes and maintains her social identity, although her personal identity is nonexistent. Sula comparatively is a free – spirited woman whose tenaciousness to prove her worth places her at odds with the culturally rich black community. In their quests for wholeness both girls find their world rife with contradictions and tensions. As M.L. Montgomery observes Nel and Sula, "experience a profound sense of alienation in a patriarchal world which evolves no terms for their existence." (Montgomery 132).

Morrison's most high- powered and eloquent statement regarding the degradation of the female comes in a paragraph that appears after the first encounter of Nel and Sula: "Because each had discovered years before they were neither white nor male and all freedom and triumph was forbidden to them they had set about creating something else to be". (Sula 52) The dilemma of the novel and its solution are found within this statement. Black women are oppressed, and in order to escape they should become self-propagators. Sula disallows the traditional role given to women by the society. However her exploitation as a woman is the result of an oppressive economic system, not men. Sula finds it's tough to escape all the traditionalisms associated with women. As a contemporary novel about female bonding,

> Sula "offers a view of female psychological development that defies traditional male-centered interpretations of female development and calls out for an expansion of the woman-centered paradigm". (Gillespie and Kubitschek 137).

Morrison's novel Sula is a deep study of friendship between two black girls, Nel Wright and Sula Peace, who face the tremendous contradictions of life. Their broken and scattered lives reveal the depth of their agony, which is the outcome of their loss of identity at the cultural, gender, and racial planes: "Their broken friendship is a measure of their broken lives that are cramped from the very start. As counterpoints all the other women in this book (Sula) must either fit themselves into the place of life has set for them or defy it with tragic circumstances proportionate to their degree of non-accommodation. (Christian 27-28).

Nel and Sula seek comfort in each other's company for they share the common link of being young, black and female in a world that is commonly geared to meet the designs of white men. Despite having different background both are close friends because "they found in each other's eyes the intimacy they were looking for". (Sula 52) Their intense friendship develops at the age of twelve. Each girls gets from the other security, love and identity blatantly denied to them in their homes. Barbara Smith writes that their friendship is "the necessary bonding that has always taken place between Black women for the barest survival. Together the two girls can find the courage to create themselves". (Barbara 168) Sula and Nel discover boys and together they become aware of their own sexuality. Naturally, Nel identifies Sula as her alter-ego. In the words of Naana Banyiwa Horne, "Sula is to Nel as Mr. Hyde is to Dr. Jekyll in Robet Louis Stevenson's classic novella, Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde." (Banyiwa 30). Nel and Sula are the two sides of the coin. Both are Morrison's favourite characters since they are symbolic of the good and the evil persistently present in the society.

> "Yet she (Sula) are very much alike. They compliment each other. They compliment each other. They support each other. I suppose the two of them together could have made a wonderful single human being. They are like a Janus' hand." (Parker 253).

Nel and Sula develop a strong bond out of the awareness that their lives are restricted by their community and by the outer society. Although they share strong bond, they are different from each other. Sula is passionate and Nel is traditionalist. Nel accepts slavery to racism and Sula turns into a liberated woman. Sula denies the traditional role of a woman. She refuses the sex, race and class definitions of the society. The families of Nel and Sula contrast with each other. Nel's mother, Helene, controls herself against racial humiliation. She is a conventional mother, while Sula's mother, Hannah, is hardly aware of her only daughter's need. In this way Nel and Sula feel isolated from their own mothers. Nel gets married to Jude and devotes her life to Jude and her three children. Sula's seduction of Jude makes Nel's marriage destroyed. Nel knows that she will have no other man. Sula continuously uses black and white men until she is deserted by the man she loves. Nel and Sula live in a world where women survive without men. Nel and Sula learn bitter and painful lessons from life. Nel never wants freedom, she always wishes for a life of conformity.

Sula loves freedom, and lives according to her own dictates. When she heard her mother saying that she does not love Sula, created a sense of indifference in her. After this she stopped feeling for others. Sula becomes so much inhumane that the burning scene of her mother could not move her. The quality of sacrificial love of her grandmother is not apparent in Sula. Furthermore Sula betrays Nel by seducing her husband, Jude. Nel and Sula totally vary from each other in their attitudes to society. Nel follows the traditions of the society, while Sula rejects them. Sula is a very daring character who feels that men are simply to be used and discarded. After the death of her father, Rekus, her mother refuses to marry again and become a seducer. She takes a number of lovers, mostly the spouses of her friends and neighbors. Sula is like her mother. She shocks the whole community with her manners. She does not accept the rules that reflect the community's traditional values. She rejects the advice of getting married and having babies. She replies, "I don't want to make somebody else. I want to make myself." (Sula 92)

The daring action of Sula makes her a recluse and alienates from her only friend, Nel. In order to search her true self, Sula leaves Medallion for a decade but she is a failure in her mission sula loves Ajax and learns the pleasure of companionship. She starts to make herself physically beautiful. After knowing this Ajax deserts her. Wade Gayles remarks: "(Sula) has finally internalized the assumptions about women's role and behavior in relationship with men

and she has ended her journey toward selfhood" (qtd. In Ray 93) Sula is presented as a very daring and adventurous character, which openly challenges the limitations imposed on her individuality and breaks all links of blood and human relationships in her quest for self. "Sula is a pariah whose values are often the polar opposites of those adopted by her provincial society. She becomes a pariah precisely because she rejects those values that aim at uniformity and strifle the self." (Horne 31)

Sula's rebelliousness appears itself in several ways. Sula encourages Nel to be aware of her rights and freedom. Sula wages against the widespread disparity, oppression and exploitation of society. She feels no pressure to please any one. Sula is more rebellious than other Morrison's characters. As she admits to Nel: "I got my mind. And what goes on in it."(Sula 43) Thus Sula is not like Pecola, she lives according to her own realities, and gets her own personal objectives. Sula's family is responsible for her rebellious, daring nature. She gets bravery from her grandmother, Eva peace who when deserted by her husband does not sit back and mourn, rather stands up to survive. Eva leaves her children in the hands of her neighbor, when the hunger and starvation became painful. She comes back with sufficient money to take care of her children but without a leg. People talk that Eva deliberately placed her leg on the railway track to claim the insurance money.

Moreover Morrison is successful in her use of Sula's rebelliousness; she describes the impact of racism and sexism on Sula's defiance but she is less convincing in her depiction. But a serious reading of the novel shows that Morrison's stress is on sexism. Morrison presents in Sula the struggle for individual and racial freedom. Morrison is concerned with issues of local and national importance that affects blacks. Blacks fight to lead a respectable and honorable life. Racial issues can be seen in the novel. The history of the Bottom with its roots in Slavery and the lack of development of the Deweys are examples of racism. The story of the Bottom denotes white man's lack of sympathy and concern for the survival of blacks.

> "the nigger got the hilly land, where planting was back-breaking, where the soil slid down and washed away the seeds and where the wind lingered all through the winter."(Sula 5).

Another example of racial discrimination in the novel is connected with Helene Wright, who is said to be "the epitome of ideal womanhood." (Heinze 80). When Nel is going to New Orleans with her mother to attend her grandmother's funeral, she finds that she is subhuman in the eyes of whites. When the train conductor publicly humiliates her, instead of showing any reaction her mother gives an artificial smile, as if nothing has happened: "Smile(s) dazzlingly and coquettishly at the salmon-colored face of the conductor."(Sula 21). By this action Helene covers her racial insult and oppression. Sula has accepted white values; she finds that she continues to be badly treated at the hands of the white people. The pain of humiliation of this incident gives a deep imprint on Nel's mind and she starts searching her identity: "I'm me. I'm not their daughter. I'm not Nel, I'm me. Me." (Morrison, 28)

After this effect Nel cultivates a close relationship with Sula despite the objection of her mother. Like The Bluest Eye, Sula explores the issues of gender, race and class, the focus being on sexism. Sula starts where The Bluest Eye ends. In The Bluest Eye, the focus is on racism where in Sula, the focus is on sexism. Pecola and Sula are similar at one point. Both searches for self-identity, not group identity. This selfish quest for self-identity makes Pecola mad and Sula, a recluse and pariah. At the end of the novel Pecola mentally dies while Sula physically dies. The principal aim of writing this novel is to show the damaging effect of disparity and false white values forced upon the stability of black families in general and women in particular. She describes the manner in which marriage is regarded by male and female alike under the influence of white culture. All the citizen of the Bottom shares the common belief that a woman is incomplete and powerless without a man.

She can find respectability and fulfillment only in the role of man's mate. For example Nel believes in marriage and the same repressive values that have left her bereft of imagination and a distinct sense of self. Nel cannot see anything singular about herself. By marring Jude, Nel dissolves herself and in this way distorts her own selfhood. Nel dissolves the strong and priceless bond of love and interdependence; she shares with Sula, who always helps and encourages having self – confidence. She regrets: "All that time, all that time, I thought I was missing Jude." And the loss passed down on her chest and came up into her throat." We was girls together," she said as though explaining something. "O Lord, Sula, "she cried, "girl, girl, girlgirlgirl."(Sula 174) At the end of the novel Nel admits that without Sula she is nothing, the loss of Sula is irreparable.

Morrisson third novel "Song Of Soloman" is published in 1977. It is also considered as the best novel. Usually when a particular ethnic group within a larger community comes to occupy a marginalized position there is a plea to admit them into the dominant social framework even while maintaining their distinct ethnic identities. That is what we see in the case of Afro-Americans. They try to keep alive their ancestral tradition brought from their homeland, Africa. Within the dominant modes of social and power structures which try to erase their tradition and culture, they pass on their heritage through techniques of their own-the oral tradition, folk arts, folk culture, etc. they have developed their own indigenous cultural cults-a distinct Afro-American one. And their activism is not just the Afro-American community, but for their whole race.

Thus racism also becomes a part of their ethnic tenets. Valerie Smith in her essay "Split affinities: the case of interracial rape" argues as follows within dominant discourses, race and gender are treated as if they are mutually exclusive categories of experience. In contrast, black feminism pursues the "intersectionality" of race and gender in the lives of black women, thereby rendering inapplicable to the lives of black women any "single axis" theory about racism or sexism. (272) Jane Freedman in Feminism, (2002) states that Nira Yuval-Davis and Floya Anthias point out that women are participants in ethnic and national processes in a number of specific ways: as biological reproducers of the ethnic community, as key actors in the transmission of the community's values as markers of ethnic or national distinctiveness, as active participants in national struggles. The key aspect of American identity is the experience of migration. The immigrants and their descendants have made an important contribution to the making of American history.

As Americans, they partake of a national identity, a communally determined and accepted sense of self and the same time as Americans and ethnics they define themselves in terms of their ancestry. This inherent tension in American identity accounts for the richness and complexity of the American literature and culture. Werner Sollors has argued that as a tenuous ancestry and the interplay of different ancestries, ethnicity may be regarded as the most crucial aspect of American national character. The concept of ethnicity holds within it a wide range of social, national, tribal, religious, linguistic and cultural features. The possible definition of an ethnic group is a group that is socially distinct in terms of cultural or national characteristics. Ethnicity is sometimes identifiable with nationality though it cannot have a total identification with it. But the term acquires relevance when placed in relation to the nationality of a particular group which is located within a larger national group. Thus are the cases of Jewish Americans, Afro-Americans, Black - British etc.

The concept of etimicity is relevant in the context colonization too, the most evident instance being the Africans whose culture has been destabilized by colonization. In the context of migration, W. W. Isajaw describes an ethnic group as

> "a group or category of persons who have a common ancestral origin and the same cultural traits, who have a sense of peoplehood and group belonging, who are of immigrant background and have either minority or majority status within a larger society" (118).

Thus a study of ethnicity includes a number of traits like the immigrant groups common national or geographic origin, same culture or customs, race or physical characteristics, religion, language, customs and even cuisines . In a number of cases, the practical and social implications of a group's status have been influenced by the memories of a past, of a common national origin. Thus they remain inter-related by a sense of solidarity which arises from a recognition of a lineage that can be traced back to a homeland. Ethnicity is inherently a matter of ancestry, of beliefs about the origin of one's forebears. They share myths of common ancestry, historical memories and elements of common culture. An essential feature of colonial domination is cultural colonization which results in the destabilization of a community's culture. But there cannot be a complete erasure of the culture. Thus it remains dormant within the tribal structure to be used later on as an edifice for future development. Black Americans are now redefining themselves on ethnic terms. Among blacks brought in as slaves, African ethnic traditions persisted as submerged fragments. Now they are trying to recreate an identity on the basis of cultural continuities rather than on the caste-racial criteria used in oppressing them-blacks in America are now seeking means of amplifying all the criteria comprising ethnicity.

Territorial origins in Africa and territorial and economic strongholds in present American settings, old folk and religious practices, features of life style, family relationships and artistic traditions are being scrutinized for their Afro-American flavor. In order to understand American identity, it is necessary to look to factors of "otherness" such as gender and etimicity. A study of ethnic women writers can reveal the female version of the American "national character". Literature by and about those who are marginalized can best represent what happens within that literature. Thus literature produced by American ethnic women presents not only the female or ethnic experience in America, but the American culture itself which places blacks within a secondary or tertiary space. Paul Marshall, in the words of Harihar Kulkarni, "is an avant-garde black woman novelist who insists on the reality of black culture not only as an antidote to white racism but primarily as an inevitable property of a people who, many thought, had no history, or culture of their own" (195). Paul Marshall's women are social and political activists, at the same time being the transmitters of Afro-centric culture.

The black women novelist's effort to deconstruct the existing image of black women and to inscribe a black feminine subject other than the discrete individual, has been done by an appropriation of black folk cultural forms. As a result of ethnocentrism in the culture, in 1960's, black folk culture was assigned an ideological value in order to suit nationalist intentions. This assertion on oral forms had proved useful for black women's fiction. The black folk cultural forms were used to subvert the dominant white literate culture. The novel that emerged as a predominant genre in 1970's experimented with black oral forms as an attempt to liberate a uniquely black narrative voice. Folk story telling devices animate the narrative medium of Carlene Polite's Sister X and the Victims of Foul Play and Alice Walker's Meridian and the blues determines the narrative voice and structure of Gayl Jones's Corregidora.

Thus we find that Afro-American writers use ethnic elements and techniques of story telling in their works as a device to retrieve and rejuvenate their heritage and culture, Folk arts and folk cultural forms are distinct aspects of ethnicity. Morrison' s novels address the black people to see themselves within a culture. The title of the novel Jazz itself reveals Morrison' s affinity to black folk arts and Tar Baby is based on a black American folk tale wherein a white farmer tries to trap a mischievous rabbit with the help of a tar baby he makes for the purpose. But he is out-witted by the rabbit. It is in Song of Solomon that we find exemplary instance of ethnic elements being employed in literary venture, An analysis of the novel reveals this fact. Morrison has created a whole autonomous world of blacks in Song of Solomon. The two major characters are symbolic of all blacks and are archetypal. They are typical representatives of black life-Milkman is symbolic of all blacks and his aunt, Pilate, is the archetype of all black women, the Great Mother.

In the novel Morrison depicts how blacks take pride in being black and revels in their sense of historical heritage as the backbone of their culture. The novel is an authentic assertive of Afro-centrism. Morrison's role as an Afro-centric storyteller is unmistakable and the orature of her foremothers as well as the oral traditions of the black community are evident both in the language and structure of the novel. In her works, Morrison more than often weaves into it the Afro-American folktales, folksongs and legends. Song of Solomon is based on a story that she heard from her maternal grandparents and it is imbued with folk myths and legends from the African diaspora. The author draws on Afro-American legends about Africans who could fly and who used this marvelous and magical ability to escape from slavery in America. Stories about Africans who either flew or jumped off slave ships as well as those who saw the

horrors of slavery when they landed in the America in their anguish sought to fly back to Africa are very popular among the Afro-Americans.

In Song of Solomon the main feature of Morrison's narration is her use of folklore, superstitions, children's games, songs, etc. The history spirits of the black culture are intensified in these old songs. Milkman's search for his ancestral roots finds meaning in such sources as the blues songs and especially in the Song of Solomon. He links himself with the past by unceasingly piercing it all together. Morrison recognizes that oral tradition or folklore can more directly convey the truth than relying on the analytical descriptions based on Western logic "and traditions. She wanted to utilize the black folklore, especially the magic and superstitious part of it, in her texts because black people believe in magic and it is part of their heritage. This, she says, is the reason for using flying as the central metaphor in Song of Solomon. Throughout the novel Morrison questions the imposed values and perceptions of the dominant culture.

As an alternative, Morrison tries to offer a cultural knowledge and belief situated in black America's African traditions and heritage. The song of Sugarman flying away to his home sung at the time of Milkman's birth is the key to Milkman's quest of his own roots. Moreover, it also highlights the function of the Afro-American women in passing on their legends to successive generations. Morrison's essay "Rootedness: The Ancestor as Foundation" explicates the relevance of past history and ancestral heritage in rebuilding the present of black culture. In her works she validates that past is something that cannot be erased from a black man's/woman's world. In the opening pages of Song of Solomon itself Morrison exemplifies it directly in the Sugarman's song sung by Pilate and a few pages later on, symbolically, through Ruth Dead, Milkman's mother: Ruth let the seaweed disintegrate, and later when its veins and stems dropped and curled into brown scabs on the table, she removed the bowl and brushed away the scabs.

But the water mark, hidden by the bowl all these years, was exposed. And once exposed, it behaved as though it were itself a plant and flourished into a huge suede-gray flower that throbbed like fever, and singled like the shift of sand dunes. This is metaphoric of the black cultural past which often lay hidden under the bowl of dominant culture. Once this submerged culture gains proper exposure it thrives and flowers and flourishes conjoining in the recreation of a cultural present situated in the past. Thus the Deads too, though they are alienated from the black community because of the alien values they hold on to, cannot escape from the influence of their ancestral values and traditions. This is further explicated by the journey taken on by Macon Dead Jr. (Milkman) as he travels to Virginia in this quest for an ancestral identity, which in turn helps him to identify himself with the black community in which he lives. Milkman's quest is undertaken initially to provide him access to gold which he believes Pilate, his aunt, has left behind. At the beginning, Milkman starts journey as an effort to gain freedom from obligation to others by taking possession of a familial treasure.

But instead of gold what he comes across is a treasure more valuable than gold-a treasure rich with the history of his ancestors. He develops a mature sense of familial obligations and discovers an informed knowledge of familial and tribal history and a profound comprehension of tribal wisdom. His experience at Shalimar, Virginia, brings over a complete change in Milkman and he passes on to a real black sensibility which had remained obscured by tile Western sensibility that he had adopted from his father. He had always considered himself too good for others of his community. His perception receives a hard blow at Shalimar when the people around view him with hostility because he was an arrogant, urbanite Negro who looked down upon the black men and made them feel worthless: His manner, his clothes were reminders that they had no crops of their own and no land to speak of either. Just vegetable gardens, which the women took care of and chicken and pigs that the children took care of. He was telling them that they weren't men, that they relied on women and children for their food. He hadn't found them fit enough or good enough to want to know their names, and believed himself too good to tell them his. They looked at his skin and saw it was as black as theirs, but they knew he had the heart of the white men who came to pick them up in the trucks when they needed anonymous faceless laborers. (269)

Milkman expected, in vain, that in his hometown he would be loved and respected by all just because at Danville, where he came across his family history, he was the object of hero worship. But soon he finds that his sense of superiority over the people at Shalimar has earned him only contempt and abhorration:

> "In his hometown his name spelled dread and grudging respect. But here, in his 'home', he was unknown, unloved, and damn near killed. These were some of the unlung niggers in the world" (273).

But during the course of an initiatory trial-by-fire in Shalimar in which black male elders invite the bourgeois urbanite on a hunting trek that is long and arduous, and then leaves him to fend for himself in the dark forest, a new knowledge of self and culture dawns on him. Left to himself in the dark forest filled with wild animals, Milkman tries to analyze the treatment he has received since his arrival, and also the ways he has mistreated others. He considers those people to be savages "Suspicious, Hot-tempered, Eager to find fault and despise any outsider, Touchy, Devious jealous, traitorous and evil. He had done nothing to receive their contempt" (279).

But gradually Milkman recognizes the necessity of abandoning such immature perspectives. It is the blues song sung by the children at Shalimar, while playing the Song of Solomon that brings about the total change in Milkman. It tosses his mind to an uncomfortable state. The feeling of hatred he nurtured until then towards his parents and sisters gradually dissolves. When he listened to the song carefully, it rings a bell in his ears. He discovers that the blues song the children were singing were about his own ancestors- his great grandfather, great grandmother, grandfather and grandmother. The song was about how Solomon, his great grandfather tried to fly back to Africa taking his son Jake along with him. But he dropped the boy in the course of his flying, near the porch of the house where Heddy, mother of Sing whom Jake later married, found him and brought him up. Milkman could identify all the names figured in the song to be of his ancestors-Solomon called Shalimar by Heddy, Jake, Ryna who is Jake' s mother, and Heddy the foster mother of Jake. These names reminds him of a number of places like Solomon's Leap, Ryna' s Gulch, the little village Shalimar, Not Doctor Street called so by Negroes in

memory of his grandfather because he was the first colored man of consequence in that city. The knowledge of his tribal and ancestral history thrills him. He is excited over the discovery that his great grandfather, Solomon, was a flying African and he had flown back to Africa.

This information that he belonged to this tribe of flying Africans fills him with a sense of pride. The self-alienated man who had left his hometown in search of gold, and in search of an identity discovers a whole history of his tribe, of his ancestors who had their roots in Africa. He develops a sense of community and also a strong black identity. He now discerns the significance of many of the actions of Pilate-the song of Sugarman often sung by her, collection of rocks from the places she had lived in and why Pilate hung her name as an earring. All these contribute to the re-creation of an identity with a black Afro-centric lineage in Milkman. Just as Shalimar surrendered to the air in order to ride it, Milkman too finally undertakes this expedition to fly back to his homeland. Thus we find Morrison reinforcing the fact that the roots of Afro-Americans lie in African heritage and culture. For the purpose, apart from the plot of the novel, she employs a number of elements towards enriching this sense of ancestorhood. In her novels, Morrison can be seen often dramatizing the traditions of her community. Thus her works often resemble the oral technique of the storyteller. Just as an African woman storyteller does, Morrison narrates the tale of the Flying Africans. This is done with a purpose to rejuvenate the traditions and culture of her community.

Morrison uses a number of storytellers in her text and Pilate is the most significant. Through Pilate Morrison tries to convey and retain the traditional role of African women as the guardians of rich cultural heritage and the transmitters of this cultural history to the future generations through oral techniques of storytelling. It is Pilate's remembering of her past which sows the seeds for Milkman's growth-both socially and psychologically. Moreover, the stories of his sister Lena, his mother Ruth, and his distant cousin Susan Byrd along with Pilate help Milkman to learn how to be a single separate Afro-American individual while remaining intricately entwined in relationship to a family, a community and a culture. Through Pilate Morrison asserts and exemplifies African values and African culture that has been brought to America by their forefathers. She has stature, strength and presence associated with an ideal African woman. Macon Dead, Pilate's brother himself states thus: "If you ever have a doubt we from Africa, look at Pilate. She look just like Papa and he looked like all them pictures you ever see of Africans" (54).

Another retrospection of African heritage can be had in the image of three generations of women living in harmony, plaiting hair and singing song. This recalls to our mind a scene from the African villages. But the difference with Afro-American life comes when we see that Pilate is unable to bring her extended family back together as a force to confront racial oppression. Morrison has very beautifully painted Pilate as the ancestor for Milkman whose nurturing transforms him into a responsible individual who is humane too. It is stories and songs, the children's songs turned into woman's blues which she passes on to her children that inspires Milkman to unravel the history and the lore of his family. The song that is sung by Pilate at his birth accompanies him throughout his life and helps Milkman to realize that he is a descendant of the Flying Africans who refused to exist under the confines and humilities of slavery. The myth of the Flying African, we can see, is being re-enacted from time to time as a ritual to enliven their past. This is what we draw from the novel.

The novel opens with the symbolic flying of Robert Smith. As a member of the Seven Days which functions to liberate the black community from slavery and yearns to fly to freedom, Smith's act can be viewed as a remembering and reenacting of their past. This myth of Flying Africans is kept alive from time to time through such acts of Robert Smith. From Smith the tradition is taken on by Milkman when he finally surrenders himself to air at Solomon's Leap. He realizes what Shalimar knew: "If you surrendered to the air, you could ride" (34).

Song of Solomon, thus is one of the most impressive and substantial fiction by Morrison which elucidates how the past of a community makes its impression in re-creating a present rooted in this cultural past. The concept of knowing one's name, tribe and cultural heritage, the importance of the knowledge of the ethnic elements of one's community and its retention in the present, is paramount and very evident in the novel. She exposes the conflict of Western and African cultural perceptions and reveals the importance of African roots, heritage and values for Black Americans. Through the text Morrison asserts the necessity of stripping off the layers of hegemonic discourse which is subversive and which conceals the values of a civilization that lies underneath. The work is thus a discourse on the construction of a strong ethnic identity by re-creating the past through recalling the traditions, customs, lore, culture, experience and values that had originally gone into the making of an individual belonging to a particular community and thereby a distinct ethnic identity.

The Novel “Beloved” is the famous novel written by Morisson, published in 1987. Beloved is based on fact, which makes it all that much more horrifying. Morrison's inspiration for the story was Margaret Garner, who killed her two-year-old daughter in 1856, to keep her from being returned to slavery. Before she could kill the rest of her children and herself, slave catchers pried the knife from her fingers. On the backbone of this gruesome story, Morrison builds Beloved, a novel of a baby who haunts the mother who killed her. This lesson will focus on the summary and analysis of Beloved. The story opens in Cincinnati, where former slave and current cook Sethe lives at 124 Bluestone Road with her daughter Denver and her mother-in-law, Baby Suggs. Fifteen years before the start of the story, Sethe killed her infant daughter, trying to keep her from being brought back into slavery. The community knows about the murder and rejects Sethe. Sethe's two sons, Buglar and Howard, left years before the novel's start. After Baby Sugg's death, Denver and Sethe are alone in the house…with the ghost of the baby who died years ago. Furniture, and even people, often move around mysteriously. Sethe has accepted her lot, at least until Paul D Garner, who knows Sethe from their slavery days, arrives at the house. Sethe welcomes Paul D into the house, and the two become a couple.

Denver is not happy about this arrangement. However, the ghost of the baby has seemed to disappear, and Denver and Sethe breathe a sigh of relief. When a strange woman shows up at their house, Denver is thrilled to have someone to talk to. The woman introduces herself as Beloved, which is the name of Sethe's murdered baby. Beloved knows things she

shouldn't be able to. Though she makes Sethe uncomfortable, she lets Beloved stay because Denver needs a friend. Sethe wonders if Beloved could be her own daughter, returned from the grave. Paul D wants the girl to leave, but he has no say. He doesn't own the house and isn't officially part of the family. Beloved wants to own everything Sethe has, including Paul D. She seduces him. Then Paul D hears from a family friend that Sethe killed her baby. When he challenges Sethe with the truth, they fight and he storms out. Sethe isn't bothered; she focuses all her attention on Beloved, leaving Denver wondering what has happened to her mother. Beloved's attention to Denver and Sethe changes. Sethe, spending all her time with Beloved, loses her job and soon money and food are scarce at 124 Bluestone Road.

Denver, who hasn't left the house in years, has to go and ask for help. She gets a job to provide for her mother and the pregnant Beloved. The women of the town decide Beloved is haunting Sethe and have an exorcism. Denver's employer Mr. Bodwin, who is a white man, arrives to take her to work. Seeing this, Sethe imagines again the slave catcher coming to take her children away, and attacks the man with an ice pick. When the craziness settles, Sethe is safe, and so is Mr. Bodwin. Beloved has simply disappeared. Paul D returns and he and Sethe make up. No one ever finds out what happened to Beloved. Beloved explores the physical, emotional, and spiritual devastation wrought by slavery, a devastation that continues to haunt those characters who are former slaves even in freedom. The most dangerous of slavery's effects is its negative impact on the former slaves' senses of self, and the novel contains multiple examples of self-alienation. Paul D, for instance, is so alienated from himself that at one point he cannot tell whether the screaming he hears is his own or someone else's.

Slaves were told they were subhuman and were traded as commodities whose worth could be expressed in dollars. Consequently, Paul D is very insecure about whether or not he could possibly be a real "man," and he frequently wonders about his value as a person. Sethe, also, was treated as a subhuman. She once walked in on schoolteacher giving his pupils a lesson on her "animal characteristics." She, too, seems to be alienated from herself and filled with self-loathing. Thus, she sees the best part of herself as her children. Yet her children also have volatile, unstable identities. Denver conflates her identity with Beloved's, and Beloved feels herself actually beginning to physically disintegrate. Slavery has also limited Baby Suggs's self-conception by shattering her family and denying her the opportunity to be a true wife, sister, daughter, or loving mother. As a result of their inability to believe in their own existences, both Baby Suggs and Paul D become depressed and tired.

Baby Suggs's fatigue is spiritual, while Paul D's is emotional. While a slave, Paul D developed self-defeating coping strategies to protect him from the emotional pain he was forced to endure. Any feelings he had were locked away in the rusted "tobacco tin" of his heart, and he concluded that one should love nothing too intensely. Other slaves—Jackson Till, Aunt Phyllis, and Halle—went insane and thus suffered a complete loss of self. Sethe fears that she, too, will end her days in madness. Indeed, she does prove to be mad when she kills her own daughter. Yet Sethe's act of infanticide illuminates the perverse forces of the institution of slavery: under slavery, a mother best expresses her love for her children by murdering them and thus protecting them from the more gradual destruction wrought by slavery. Stamp Paid muses that slavery's negative consequences are not limited to the slaves: he notes that slavery causes whites to become "changed and altered... made... bloody, silly, worse than they ever wanted to be." The insidious effects of the institution affect not only the identities of its black victims but those of the whites who perpetrate it and the collective identity of Americans. Where slavery exists, everyone suffers a loss of humanity and compassion.

For this reason, Morrison suggests that our nation's identity, like the novel's characters, must be healed. America's future depends on its understanding of the past: just as Sethe must come to terms with her past before she can secure a future with Denver and Paul D, before we can address slavery's legacy in the contemporary problems of racial discrimination and discord, we must confront the dark and hidden corners of our history. Crucially, in Beloved, we learn about the history and legacy of slavery not from schoolteacher's or even from the Bodwins' point of view but rather from Sethe's, Paul D's, Stamp Paid's, and Baby Suggs's. Morrison writes history with the voices of a people historically denied the power of language, and Beloved recuperates a history that had been lost—either due to willed forgetfulness (as in Sethe's repression of her memories) or to forced silence. "I was talking about time. It's so hard for me to believe in it. Some things go. Pass on. Some things just stay. I used to think it was my rememory. You know. Some things you forget. Other things you never do. But it's not. Places, places are still there. If a house burns down, it's gone, but the place—the picture of it—stays, and not just in my rememory, but out there, in the world. What I remember is a picture floating around out there outside my head. I mean, even if I don't think it, even if I die, the picture of what I did, or knew, or saw is still out there. Right in the place where it happened." (3.88).

The structure of the work is compounded with an ever-switching point of view. Every character, even the dead ones and half-alive ones, tell parts of the tale. At one point, Paul D and Sethe exchange flashbacks that finally meld into one whole (chapter 2). At another, the point of view switches off between four white people, who unreservedly show the biased point of view of some men who view slaves as tamed animals. The diversity of the point of view creates a tapestry of people who interact individuals joined by past or present into a community. Very few readers will miss the experimental structure of Beloved. It is not a linear tale, told from beginning to end. It is a story encompassing levels of past, from the slave ship to Sweet home, as well as the present. Sometimes the past is told in flashbacks, sometimes in stories, and sometimes it is plainly told, as if it were happening in the present (with highly unusual use of the present tense).

The novel is, in essence, written in fragments, pieces shattered and left for the reader to place together. The juxtaposition of past with present serves to reinforce the idea that the past is alive in the present, and by giving us fragments to work with Morrison melds the entire story into one inseparable piece to be gazed at. In forcing the reader to put back the pieces, Morrison forces him also to think about them and consider the worth of each. From a stylistic perspective, Morrison's artistry in this regard is nothing short of breath taking. Morrison's use of both verse and

stream of consciousness writing where necessary is unsurpassed and not often matched in literature. Strict narrative, she realizes, is not enough to capture the feelings of a people, and she manages to capture them in some of the most well-known passages of modern literature. Finally, her use of objective correlativism should be noted. The use of Biblical allusions and much ambiguous symbolism creates an atmosphere riddled with force and drama. Beloved is meant to be more than a story-it is a history, and it is a life.

In my research work, I Have chosen four novels of Morrison, "The Bluest Eye," "Sula," "Song of Soloman," "Beloved" this novels Considered as the best novels of Morrison. The novel clearly describes about the African – Americans Sufferings, Pain, Struggles, Racism, Slavery this are major themes all four of the novels. Her works are based on analytical based research. It has used a close, discursive analytical style which has drawn on the intersection of racism and sexism. As research and research concern is with the methodology of race and sex, it mainly falls back on Colette Guillaumin who suggest these issues are not separate but close to each other.

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