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**Achieving Racial Transformation through Ethical treason in Tony
Morrison's *The Bluest Eye***

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of *Master* in
Anglo-Saxon Literature and Civilization.

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Declaration of Originality

I hereby declare that this submission is my work and that, it contains no material previously published or written by another person nor material which has been accepted for the qualification of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution.

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Dedication

To My Mother

To My Family

To My Friends

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Abstract

Toni Morrison, the Nobel laureate, portrays the situation of black women in her works. In *The Bluest Eye* (1970), Morrison depicts the effects on racism and discrimination and their impact on African American women. The work aims to analyze how the concept of identity and racial transformation are portrayed in the novel, and how they relate to the white beauty standards hegemony. I affirm that *The Bluest Eye* protests against adopting beauty as a universal value, and that Morrison is proposing healthy identities in relation to the culture and tradition of a community. In order to do that, I start by revisiting the historical moment in which the novel was written. Then, I examine the goals and ideals of the African American literary movements and black feminist movements of the period. Then, I demonstrate how the victim becomes a victimizer as a result of oppression and racism. Finally, I conclude that Toni Morrison shows that the very concept of beauty is harmful and that the power of African Americans is in their culture, traditions and connection to the community.

Keywords:

The Bluest Eye – African American – oppression – identity – race- culture

“There comes a time when

Silence is betrayal.”

(Martin Luther King)

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General Introduction

Toni Morrison, the Nobel laureate, portrays the situation of black women in her works. In *The Bluest Eye* (1970), Morrison depicts the effects on racism and discrimination and their impact on African American women especially on the main character, a young innocent black girl “Pecola”. This latter has internalized white standards of beauty as a mean of survival that led her to a deep psychic damage. White racism and black sexism are at the heart of *The Bluest Eye*. Morrison shed light on the inhumanity of humans to each other. She gave voice to the voiceless by using a feminist literature that deals with women submission in order to change it. Morrison also believes that it is important for the African American woman to become aware of the oppression and the role she should play to educate her daughters, she also solicits colored people to stick on their black identity and be proud of their cultural heritage.

This research examines Toni Morrison’s novel, *The Bluest Eye* (1970) in the light of black feminism, racism, realism and naturalism. Morrison describes how the society undervalues the black female’s beauty that is defined by others, the hegemony of the white beauty standards.

Through history, women have always been seen as inferior in a particular society, especially women of color. This issue is Morrison main concern where she depicts the black women’s awareness of their oppression and the way they react.

The Bluest Eye contains many autobiographical elements, it is set in the town where Morrison grew up (Lorain Ohio) and it is told from the point of view of a nine years old girl Claudia in 1941, this could be the age of Morrison who was born in 1931.

Morrison’s family struggles to give a good education to her children and so did the MacTeer family, Claudia’s parents. After concluding her novel, Morrison explains that the story developed out of a conversation with an elementary school classmate who

wanted blue eyes. Morrison started to write her novel during the Black is Beautiful movement that reclaims the African American beauty.

In her writing, Morrison has used the stream of consciousness technique and flashbacks through the character of Claudia who narrates the story of her friend Pecola. Morrison also used figures of speech unique to the black community, a black vernacular.

This present study focuses on the achievement of racial transformation through ethical treason and its process. This investigation seeks to answer the following research questions:

- . Why do African Americans identify themselves with values of white society that rejects them?
- . Did Morrison manage to promote the black culture heritage in *The Bluest Eye*?

The hypothesis provided for the research questions are:

Hypothesis1: The research supports the hypothesis that claims that white beauty standard hegemony has been used in America to maintain domination and power and so did the characters of *The Bluest Eye*, their only chance to escape domination and oppression was to embrace the white beauty standards.

Hypothesis2: With the focus on The African American folklore practices, Morrison aims to maintain certain continuity with African culture and the conservation of African traditions.

This research relies on (Toni Morrison's novel *The Bluest Eye*) and other sources like websites, interviews, journals and articles.

The research is divided into three chapters:

Chapter one deals with Literature Review that investigates the ethical literary criticism, post moral criticism and contemporary African American Fiction. Chapter two examines

the betrayal by beauty to achieve racial transformation where we can read the characters of Pauline and Cholly empathically and as victims-victimizers. The third chapter focuses on the hardship of black woman in *The Bluest Eye* and their struggle to conform the white beauty standard.

In order to understand *The Bluest Eye*, it is important to have enough knowledge about the American history from the civil War 1861 to the rise of social justice.

a) The Civil Rights

After the slave trade was abolished in 1808 in Europe, The United States of America maintained slavery, and in 1850 The Fugitive Slave Act was passed to fugitive slaves to their masters.

Civil war was fought from 1861 to 1865 where slavery ended in a confederation of eleven states. Although the Civil War was not fought over the issue of slavery as some people might claim, slavery galvanized the tensions which exploded into war. However, the central cause was the issue of the states' rights over the power of the central government. The industrial Northern states and the predominantly agricultural states had contradictory views of the concepts of states' rights. The North saw the federal government as the country's primary and indisputable power; meanwhile, the South continued to claim that states retained much sovereignty. When eleven Southern states voted to establish the Confederate States of America, Abraham Lincoln denied their right to separate. As commander-in-chief, he inspired the Union forces to preserve the undivided nation.

However, in 1860, four million slaves were still under the clutch of seven million whites in the south; Abraham Lincoln abolished slavery in 1865 with the thirteenth Amendment. After the civil war and during the reconstruction (1865 to 1877) the fourteenth and fifteenth amendments were issued. These amendments gave the blacks the right to vote, free access to public schools and equal protection of laws.

Nevertheless, the southern elite started to mount violence against blacks via The Klu Klux Klan a terrorist organization. The union sent troupes to protect the blacks in south and guarantee the reconstruction. Unfortunately Jim Crow laws that enforce racial segregation and inequality between whites and blacks, has worsened the African American plight. Segregation became a fact in public transports, restaurants, hospitals, schools and many other public places.

In 1920, a black cultural movement called The Harlem Renaissance appeared for the rebirth of African American Art and the revitalization of the African pride. Fearing the growth of the communist party that promoted racial equality, President Harry Truman took action on the race issue and appointed a committee on Civil Rights to stop the black's segregation in 1946. However, blacks still experienced discrimination at their jobs and their daily life.

In 1948, Truman ended discrimination in the military, enacted racial equality and incited civil rights movements; these laws didn't stop segregation though. In 1955, after work Rosa Parks was sitting at the back of the bus, the seats designated for blacks, when the bus driver ordered her to give up her seat for a white man. Parks refused and was arrested. On September 1957 nine black students were prevented from Central High School.

Since reconstruction, the first major civil rights legislation was signed by President Eisenhower. It allowed federal prosecution of anyone who tries to prevent someone black from voting. Since then, many other movements and associations have drawn international attentions like: Woolworth's Lunch Counter where four college students refused to leave the counter without being served. The Freedom Riders were 7 black protestors and 6 white ones whose bus was bombed and who escaped the burning bus. They manage under the administration of Kennedy, to gain the prohibition of segregated bus terminals. Also Bloody Sunday, where violence broken as 600 demonstrators protested against the killing of Jimmy Lee Jackson by a white policeman.

The assassination of the civil rights leaders Malcolm (1965) and Martin Luther King (1968) have put more pressure on Johnson administration for additional civil rights laws.

b) Post- Civil Rights Era

The post-civil rights era can be defined from 1964 up today. Many civil rights acts have been passed: The Voting Act 1965, The Fair Housing Act 1968. In the field of politics African Americans have made a giant step in the post-civil rights era

Jess Jackson the civil rights leader, run for Democratic Party's presidential nomination in 1984 and 1988 which boosted many people of color in politics. On November 4th, 2008 Barack Obama was elected 44th president of The United States of America. Unfortunately black lives still don't matter to low enforcement, in February 2012, seventeen years old, Tryvon Martin was shot. On July 2014 Eric Garner was killed by a white police officer although Garner repeated "I can't breathe" ironically history repeated itself on May 2020 showing the black man George Floyd for some air!

Morrison's work has been deeply influenced by the African American history in The United States. Racial prejudice and discrimination have incited her to write and are seen in all her novels. Morrison finds herself emerged in a wider social critics, in every novel Morrison handles several social issues and tries to shed light on all sort of prejudice and injustice. She became the voice of oppressed women, abuse child, slaves, trauma victims and all the marginalized African American.

After her death on August 5th, 2019, many famous personalities like Barak Obama and Oprah Winfrey praised her evoking all what she were and all her additions and contribution to the American society.

1.1 Introduction

African Americans have refuted the dominant white culture. Through history, they have been subject to discrimination and racist attitudes. The prejudice has inspired some black writers, and enhanced them to account their lives as slaves and their cultural heritage and black identity during the early years of African American literature.

Besides the issue of racism and identity, these writers have used themes of freedom and independence by applying colorful, creative language of the African American culture and the use of imagery, songs and black vernacular. African American writers tend to incorporate oral forms like sermons, jazz, blues and gospel music.

The dissertation is about achieving racial transformation through ethical change in Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*. Toni Morrison is an African American novelist; she is also a literary critic. When starting to write in 1961 her first novel *The Bluest Eye* (1970), Morrison was marginalized for a long time. This marginalization was not due to the quality of her work but to the color of her skin and the misreading of her novels. Morrison herself argues in 1993, the year she won the Nobel Prize: "With every few exceptions, the initial publication of *The Bluest Eye* in 1970 was like Pocola's life: dismissed, trivialized, and misread" (Morrison 1999:211). However, despite these obstacles Morrison resumes writing until she becomes famous. "The colonization seldom granted to women writers and almost never to blacks"

(Tally2007:2)

Morrison explains her goal in writing the novel. She wants the audience to know about the damage racism can do to vulnerable members of the black community. Contemporary African American writers also investigate how their fiction attempts to remind people of color to survive

struggle challenge and change, so that they can insure the wellbeing and freedom of their community. They introduce literary and cultural traditions to accommodate the African American living in the cotemporary scene.

1.2 Ethical Literary Criticism

Ethical literary criticism is an approach used for reading, interpreting, and understanding, analyzing and evaluating literature from an ethical standpoint. Furthermore, it is an approach that seeks to introduce ethical methods and their assimilation into the texture of literary critical methods to read, interpret, understand, analyze and evaluate literary works. It doesn't interpret only the moral phenomena recorded in literature on a historical and dialectic basis, but also makes value judgment of those in the present literature based on the moral values in the reality. (nieZhenzhao) In this chapter we will include a brief study of ethical literary criticism with contemporary African-American fiction like trauma literature and perpetrators fiction which has a link with the topic tackled, Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*.

The word trauma means a mental condition caused by severe shock, especially when the harmful effects last for a long time (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary). Ruth Leys also explains that trauma is the wounding of mind brought about by sudden, unexpected, emotional shock" (leys2000:4) She describes the modern understanding of trauma:

"Owing to the emotions of terror and surprise caused by certain events, the mind is split or dissociated; it is unable to register the wound to psyche because the ordinary mechanisms of awareness and cognition are destroyed. As a result, the victim is unable to recollect and integrate the hurtful experience in normal consciousness; instead she is haunted or possessed by intrusive

traumatic memories. The experience of trauma, fixed or frozen in time, refuses to be represented as past, but is perpetually re-experienced in painful, dissociated, traumatic present.” (leys)

Traumatic experiences will lead the victim to become a danger to society, the case of Cholly and Pauline in Morrison’s *The Bluest Eye*. The concept of trauma theory gave rise to new literary genre called trauma fiction. A creative work should convey a message where good prevails upon evil and where moral values are respected. Ethical literary criticism is somewhat different from that of Greek literary theories as it could take a new approach to Greek tragedies and Homer’s epics. Generally speaking, ethical literary criticism is like moral criticism in the object of study but only different in terms of research methods.

On the other hand, ethical literary criticism, with basically a historical point of view, is still open to some contemporary theories and methods. It doesn’t simply evaluate a given literary work as good or bad on today’s moral principles. Taking the example of ZhenzhaoNie who developed a profound interest in Thomas Hardy’s writings, when doing his graduate degree at china university in 1980’s he devoted almost 10 years to working on Hardy’s novels that resulted in many publications such as: (Thomas Hardy: a study of his novels), where he presented in-depth exploration of Hardy’s novels from all perspectives of sociology, culture, ethics, esthetics and history and challenged the dominant belief that envisions Hardy as a pessimistic writer: In Nei’s opinion, Hardy was more a moralist and an idealist rather than a pessimist. After the Cultural Revolution, china has imported a huge number of western critical theories like comparative literature, psychoanalysis, feminism, structuralism, post colonialism and cultural criticism; However, Nei introduced his new concept, in which he elaborated on the relationships between literature and society, writers and then works and between readers and works. (2)

As for Toni Morrison who is a very socially engaged writer who tackled the historical cultural and literary context to stress on the importance of the moral duty each writer has. Morrison's writings condemn racism and shed light on issues like the loss of identity and shame, incest and their destructive effects on black men, women and children, in other words on the unspoken truth of inhumanity of humans to each other. To understand all these, it's important to know about American history and its culture. Morrison said: "In this country, American means white. Everybody else has to hyphenate". When writing her novel, Morrison depicts women through the approach of black feminism that demonstrates the manifestations of a woman as an individual or as a member of community and describes her in a specific social and cultural contexts where women's oppression is maintained and where gender determines destiny, especially if one is not only a woman but also black. In writing her first novel (*The Bluest Eye*), Morrison was "setting out to write a story that she herself wanted to read" (Suranyi12).

In her article on Morrison's fiction, Tally remarks that Morrison believes a writer's moral responsibility includes "'response-ability,' [ensuring] the capacity for a dialogue between writer and reading public" (2007: 1). Indeed in her foreword to *The Bluest Eye*, Morrison reveals that she sensitizes people by closely and personally involving the reader into her narrative or by encouraging dialogue between writer and public. She reveals that she does this by using African American colloquial, vernacular language, and choosing an opening sentence -"Quit as it's kept" (3) - that promotes intimacy between reader and text (Morrison1999: 211). Morrison writes in the afterword to *The Bluest Eye*: "Sudden familiarity or instant intimacy seemed crucial to me. I did not want the reader to have time to wonder, 'What do I have to do, to give up, in order to read this? What defense do I need, what distance maintain?" (Morrison1999: 209).

1.3 Post Moral Criticism and Contemporary African American Fiction

Any creative work must include the mentality, the habits and the culture of the era in which it takes shape. What makes a work last longer, is the element that satisfies the needs and the demands of the moment and which remains contemporary even with later times, the endurance and the greatness of a work depends on the insights that a writer brings to bear on his characters and their experiences associating them with the quality of universality.

After the end of World War II, The American novels began to reflect realism and authenticity, later with the emergence of Herbert Spencer's Social Darwinism that is naturalism, literature narrowed down realism to pave the way to naturalism with the background of morality. During the 20th century writers began to reflect a great concern about moral values to heal the chaos of the modern world. Among these great novelists were, William Faulkner, F.Scott Fitzgerald and Ernest Hemingway. These writers were more prominent in reviving the moral and traditional standard; the theme of their works includes the natural world of moral emptiness during the economic and the social upheaval, and up gradation of moral consciousness. Then, other writers like Theodore Dreiser, Sinclair Lewis and Stephen Crane expand fiction's social field and represent both high and low life which they sometimes connect to the naturalist school of realism.

Later, Fitzgerald express the mood of disillusionment of the war in "The Great Gatsby" eliciting some American ideas like liberty, social unity and good governance, William Faulkner manages to encompass an enormous range of humanity in "Yoknapatawpha County" a Mississippi region of his own invention, Hemingway adheres to a moral code where his protagonists were strong and silent in "The Old Man and The Sea", Steinbeck was the most socially aware of his time for his interpretation of human beings struggles to lead a decent and honest life in his novel "The Grapes Of wrath".

These writers were concerned with social consciousness, moral awareness, value revival and cultural survival than many contemporaries. They cope with their time and people, convey their feelings in their works and establish the Universality of Basic Human Tendencies.

Gardener, the writer of “*On Moral Fiction*” states: “I believe absolutely that art always affects life. If a creative work of art has no effect on life, then its effect on life is that it tells the reader that life is not that important” (Harvey77). Believing that hope for well-being, freedom and democracy, these young writers lay in a complete reorganization of the American society.

Paul Bellow in his essay “The Writer as Moralist” talks about the expectations of the readers in the writers. He says: “The public never hesitate to demand an inordinate amount of goodness from writers. It considers clergymen, school teachers, and novelists, its moral servants. This is not an altogether unfair conception of things, but there are certain inconsistencies in the situation which often produce strange effects” (60). He also challenges the pessimistic vision of man by defining art as community’s medicine for the worst disease of mind, the corruption of consciousness. Tolstoy also affirms that “a work is art only when it ‘inflects’ the reader, hearer, or viewer with the condition of the artist’s soul. If there is union between the artist and the audience through ‘inflection’- that is, if a communication of sympathetic feelings is not conveyed-then the work has failed as art” (*Encyclopedia Britannica Vol. 18 : 485*)

However, another literature flourished during the 1920’s, The African American literature that came to be called The Harlem Renaissance. Its themes include the exploration of the black identity, the condemnation of racism and the celebration of The African American culture, though the first African American fiction appeared in mid-1800s, with the writings of William Wells Brown and Charles Waddell Chesnutt whose writings were dominated by narrating their

autobiographies as slaves, and shedding light on the suffering and pains they encounter when escaping from slavery and racial injustice, unfortunately all these writings have been ignored.

Today, African American literature has become accepted as an integral part of American literature with books such as *Roots* by Alex Haley, *The Color Purple* by Alice Walker, and *Beloved* by Toni Morrison. These writers were inspired by the civil rights and Black Power Movements and whose fiction began to be defined and analyzed, achieving best-selling and award-winning statuses.

Meanwhile, Toni Morrison helped promote Black literature and authors when she worked as an editor in the 1960's and 70's. Morrison herself emerged as one of the most prominent African American writers of the 20th century. Her first novel *The Bluest Eye* was published in 1970. Her best novel is *Beloved* that makes her grant the Pulitzer Prize for fiction in 1988. The story describes a slave who found freedom but killed her infant daughter to save her from slavery. Morrison is the first African American to win The Nobel Prize in literature.

Other famous African American writers and poets who included literary fiction in recent years were: Gayl Jones, Rasheed Clark, Ishmael Reed, Rita Dove winner of Pulitzer prize, Laureate of United States from 1993 to 1995, Cyrus Cassells another Pulitzer prize winner in 1994 and 2007, Natasha Trethewey won Pulitzer prize for poetry with her book *Native Guard*. African Americans are also represented in the genre of science fiction, fantasy and horror with Samuel R Delany, Octavia E Butler, Sheree Thomas and Nalo Hopkins.

1.4 Conclusion

The intention of this review determines the importance of art in life of people and how female writers challenged the old beliefs of traditional theories and literature that was used to reflect the patriarchal ideology of the past that stated the first and foremost place for women is the home. However, the world is the woman's place not the home.

If today black women have won their freedom, it is because of the efforts of many others who struggled and never gave up and paved the way to many African American writers to break the glass by changing the way of dealing with literature like Toni Morrison whose main concern was "Women of Color" who want to free themselves from the clutches of injustice and white men dominated society, depicting them through the approach of black feminism and describing her characters in specific social and cultural context, showing the manner in which black women's oppression is maintained.

It was also very important to note the importance of the American contemporary writers who made drastic changes in social conditions by focusing on moral values and ethics in their works sweeping away the dead debris of the ancient orthodox ideologies which paved the way to the raise of so many theories like naturalism and morality.

Similarly, African American literature is within the framework of a larger American literature, but it also is independent. As a result new styles of storytelling and unique voices have been created in relative isolation. The benefit of this is that these new styles and voices can leave their isolation and help revitalize the larger literary world (McKay, 2004)

Finally, African American writers who have been discriminated and subject to racist attitudes, and have been influenced by black movements were able to challenge European American authors thanks to many other fellows African American like Oprah Winfrey who

promoted literature through the medium of her Oprah's Book Club when she brought African-American writers a far broader audience than they would expect.

Toni Morrison deals with racism and feminism and tries to portray the realistic image of what it is like to be an African American woman artistically especially through *The Bluest Eye*, where she propose how ugly are the effect of racism and rejection and how a victim becomes a victimizer.

1.2 Introduction

The chapter presents Toni Morrison's first novel *The Bluest Eye*. The novel deals with the hegemony of the white beauty standards in The United States of America and its effect on the lives of African Americans, and how it reduces them to madness, silence and child abuse. It also tackles the ethics of achieving racial transformation. However, Morrison's fiction is not just portraying this mayhem and chaos that the whites wrought over years on blacks, especially on women, but to demonstrate how these women managed to survive in a very hostile country that decimated the slave community completely.

Throughout history, the white culture has compelled black and female silence through illiteracy as well as through hysteria, through the metaphoric to complete silence. The purpose of Morrison's fiction, as mentioned earlier, is to give a voice to the voiceless, to speak the unspeakable on the part of the speechless, and to tell just "how offended the tongue is, held down by iron" (*Beloved*, 71). This is strongly demonstrated through her protagonist character Pecola Breedlove in *The Bluest Eye*. Many different scenes in the novel show Pecola's inability to tell her own story. Even when she manages to speak, she can hardly utter much beyond monosyllabic words. For example, the scenes in which Pecola faces the white owner of the candy store and can only point or nod in the direction of the Mary Janes she covets. "Christ. Kantcha talk?" he demands, and, in fact, Pecola cannot talk. She is completely enmeshed in a perpetual silence which prefigures the condition of hysteria in which she ends, "picking and plucking her way between the tire rims and the sunflowers, between Coke bottles and milkweed, among all the waste and beauty of the world—which is what she herself was" (Morrison 1970:159). Pecola's silence which is evidenced through her insane discourse with a virtual friend is but a representation of the muted condition of

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all women as well as the children's impotency in the face of cruelty and neglect. It is also an indication of a dominant culture that values speech over silence and presence over absence. Black characters are, in fact, no more than ghosts. They are bereft of both a place and a voice in this rhapsodized image of America. The very constituents of the primer, for instance, are schematized in such a way to oppose anything that may suggest the presence of African-Americans. This would certainly mean that their very existence was not worthy of representation.

2.2 Introduction to *the Bluest Eye*

Toni Morrison was born in Chloe Anthony Wofford in 1931 in Lorain, Ohio. Her father migrated from Georgia to Ohio and her mother's family had come from Alabama. Morrison grew up with love of literature and graduated from Harvard University, she received a master's degree completing a thesis on William Faulkner and Virginia Woolf. Morrison taught at Texas University and then at Harvard where she met her husband Harold Morrison, an architect from Jamaica. Her marriage lasted six years Morrison gave birth to two sons. After the divorce, she moved to New York and worked as an editor at Random House that was specialized in black fiction, she also taught at Yale and The State University of New York and The Robert F. Goheen Professor in the council of humanities at Prince Town where she taught creative writing..

During her struggling to raise two kids and being lonely, Morrison started writing. She published her first novel *The Bluest Eye* in 1970, and then published *Sula* in 1973 which was more successful and earned a nomination for The National Book Award. Morrison also wrote *Song of Solomon* (1977) making her winning The National Book Critics Circle Award. Her most successful work was *Beloved* that appeared in 1987, the book made her grants The Pulitzer Prize.

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Morrison wrote more other novels *Tar Baby* (1981), *Jazz* (1992), and *Paradise* (1998), In 1993 she became the first African American woman to receive The Nobel Prize in literature.

The Bluest Eye (1970), takes place in 1941 and *was* set in town where Morrison grew up, it contains a number of autobiographical elements. It is told from the point of view of a nine years old girl Claudia. The Morrison's struggled during the great depression just like The MacTeer family. Morrison's novel draws a specific historical moment trying to reconstruct the feeling of the era, racial prejudice and discrimination. This made her gain recognition for the aches of African Americans during slavery," More writers began to represent or make visible specific historical instances of trauma, we can think of Toni Morrison's attempt to gain political recognition for the suffering of African Americans during and after slavery" (whitehead)

The novel is set during the 1940sin Lorain Ohio. *The Bluest Eye* (1970) by Toni Morrison depicts the growth of a marginalized little black girl Pecola through Claudia MacTeer, the narrator another little girl who also suffers from racism and other discriminations with her sister Frieda. Pecola the main character is staying in the MacTeer's house for few days after her father Cholly "burned up his house" (Morrison17).

After school Claudia and Frieda are obliged to collect coal in the evenings to warm their old, cold and green house. Claudia doesn't understand her mother's anger when she gets sick: "great Jesus, get on that bed. How many times do I have to tell you to wear something on your head? you must be the biggest fool in this town" (Morrison10). Claudia doesn't care she still feels "love....everywhere in (the) house" (Morrison12)

During her stay with the MacTeer, Pecola got close to the sisters and closer to Frieda because they are both fascinated by Shirley Temple and her cute smile, while Claudia who hates her and all

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the white dolls. At a young age she doesn't understand the love expressed toward the dolls so she tries to "dismember it" (Morrison20) which was transformed into urge to hurt white girls as she describes it:" the truly horrifying thing was the transference of the same impulses to little white girls" (Morrison22)

Pecola's parents, Pauline and Cholly often verbally and physically fight each other this makes Pecola and her brother Sammy frequently run away .this makes them face all the danger and abuse outside, one day Pecola is lured into the house of Junior, a black boy who is also neglected by his parents. Junior locks Pecola up and throws a scratching cat in her face. Pecola was also bullied at school by other black boys, they make her hate herself and her black skin, she started to love white people and becomes fascinated with Shirley Temple, a white actress. Pecola wants blue eyes so that she will be accepted and loved, blue eyes are kind of protection against people's hatred, the frequent fights of her parents make Pecola's body parts inert except her eyes who witness the horrible fight. Each night she prays to God for blue eyes which make her adorable in the eyes of her parents, teachers and schoolmates so that her parents will say, "look at the pretty eyed Pecola, we mustn't do bad things in front of those pretty eyes" (*The Bluest Eye* 44). Pecola wants to embrace the value of white culture by drinking milk from the Shirley Temple cup; this makes MRS. MacTeer very angry.

When Cholly, Pecola's father is out of jail, the family moved in another house, a kind of an abandoned store front divided into two rooms furnished with old equipment. Claudia the narrator, announces that the Breedlove believe that they are really ugly from people's behavior towards them. However they accept to live in such ugly house "they lived there because they believed they were ugly "(Morrison38)

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Pecola frequently visits her neighbors, three prostitutes, who “were friendly”(Morrison52) the only human who accept her the way she is, they use to sing for her and tell her stories, they share a common element “ugliness”. These women are also seen ugly by the community, they say that their job makes them pretty; they exercise their authority over men.

Maureen Peel, a rich light skin girl fascinates Pecola and the two sisters, Claudia and Frieda who didn't like her “bemused, irritated and fascinated by her” (Morrison63). They decided to walk home together, Maureen asks Pecola if she has already seen a naked man, but Pecola replies that: “Nobody's father would be naked in front of his daughter” (Morrison71). The two sisters don't like this kind of conversation and urge Maureen to stop it which results in Maureen insulting them “ugly, black emos” (Morrison73).

Another character is introduced “Geraldine”, the black mother who is emotionally cold and never shows any affection towards “Junior” her son but teaches him to hate everything black, which makes him turn his hatred towards children and animals “she did not talk to him, soo him or indulge him in kissing bouts” (Morrison86).

The MacTeer get a new tenant, MR Henry Washington, he has the reputation of being a steady worker. The children adore him, he does magic tricks such as offering them a penny but makes it disappear. The girls must find it hidden on his person. In spring, one Saturday Claudia finds her sister Frieda crying because her father has a fight with MR Henry who sexually assaulted her.

Increasingly, Morrison attempts to demonstrate that her characters possess both physical and psychological potentials which widen their chances for survival and fulfillment. This would lead to the survival of the black community. However, having a black skin in her novels does not help promote unity within the community as there also exists racialization and class differences within

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the black collective. This is in fact, an act of betrayal. Pecola and many other characters like her are betrayed by their own black community as they interact, conflict with, and participate in society with its class differences which threaten the unity within the collective; as well as the family institution. It is through Pecola and many other protagonists that Morrison illustrates radicalized beauty and how African Americans have been stigmatized by white cultural definitions of beauty. Strange enough, in the absence of a consistent and organic theoretical focus on African American beauty, even the notion “black is beautiful” is commoditized. Where any attempt has been made to transcend this limitation, the natural recourse has been to quaint definitions and models from the white colonizer. (Amuta Chidi 1989) In *The Bluest Eye*, Morrison devaluates the myth of radicalized beauty and materialism. She stresses the need for her characters to find their own definitions and self-worth. Morrison’s anguish is to demonstrate how possible for the black consciousness to a powerful and inspirational metaphor about transformation and self-discovery be. This is particularly true to Pecola whose pregnancy becomes almost a sign of hope in *The Bluest Eye*.

2.3 Pecola’s parents Cholly and Pauline as victims-victimizers

2.3.1 Cholly as victim-victimizer

The narrator focuses on Pecola’s parents Cholly her father and Pauline her mother.

Pauline is disabled, she has a limping foot which made her growing up feeling isolated, she meets Cholly and marries him despite his flaws. Though they loved each other, their relationship declines when they move to Lorain, Ohio, they become stranger to each other. Pauline is a servant for the white Fisher family, she is obsessed with Hollywood movies and neglects her children Sammy and Pecola, she is even abusive to them.

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Cholly the father is rejected by his parents and grows up without knowing them, his aunt Jimmy raises him. Cholly gets deeply moved when she dies, he feels abused by two white hunters who surprised him with his girlfriend Darlene. When Cholly finds his father he rejects him, he doesn't want to know him, Cholly then becomes a street boy, this has made from him a bad husband and the worst father. Morrison used flashbacks to make the reader understand why do these characters, Pauline and Cholly act so; she avoids judging their moral responsibility. In the first chapter as an example the relationship between Pecola and her father was a miscued feeling of sympathy and antipathy a normal relation of father daughter.

We had dropped our seeds in our own little plot of black dirt just as Pecola's father had dropped his seeds in his own plot of black dirt. Our innocence and faith were no more productive than his lust or despair. What is clear now is that of all of that hope, fear, lust, love, and grief, nothing remains but Pecola and the unyielding earth. Cholly Breedlove is dead; our innocence too. The seeds shriveled and died; her baby too. (Morrison 3-4)

Then Cholly is introduced to be an incendiary by burning his own house, a criminal, a drunk, a domestic abuser by forcing himself on his wife . All these can make the reader describe Cholly as a low and a cheap person but Morrison catches up in chapter 7 and 8 to show Cholly's care and love for his first girlfriend Darlene and his wonder and fear that this latter would refuse him as he dates her "He waited for her to screw up her face and say no, or what for, or some such thing. His feelings about her were mostly fear—fear that she would not like him, and fear that she would" (Morrison142).

Cholly's behavior is the result of his own familiar sphere growing up in a confused family environment, not knowing his father, "His mother wrapped him in two blankets and one

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newspaper and placed him on junk heap by the railroad when he was 4 days old” (Morrison130). He was taken care by his good hearted aunt Jimmy for whom Cholly doesn’t have any emotional feeling because her “age, sex and interests were so remote from his own” (Morrison159). He also doesn’t have any connection with the rest of his family. “Nobody talked to him; that is they treat him like the child he was never engaging him in serious conversation” (Morrison138).

This family has always wondered whether Cholly really belongs to them:

There was some question, according to the adults, as to whether they were his real cousins or not, since Jimmy’s brother O. V. was only a half-brother, and Cholly’s mother had been the daughter of Jimmy’s sister, but that sister was from the second marriage of Jimmy’s father, and O. V. was from the first marriage. (Morrison141). Moreover, the 1940’s were a time of racism and segregation towards African American, Morrison recalls the horrible experience during first intercourse with Cholly and Darelene in the woods when two white hunters forced Cholly to continue while they watch.

They slid about furtively searching for shelter, while his [Cholly’s] body remained paralyzed. [...] “Heeheeheeheeee.” The snicker was a long asthmatic cough. The other raced the flashlight all over Cholly and Darlene. [...] “I said, get on wid it. An’ make it good, nigger, make it good.” [...] Darlene put her hands over her face as Cholly began to simulate what had gone on before. He could do no more than make-believe. (Morrison145)

This kind of “rape” by the two hunters weighs heavily on Cholly. He could think only of the flashlight, the Muscatine, and Darlene’s hands. And when he was not thinking of them, the vacancy in his head was like the space left by a newly pulled tooth still conscious of the rottenness that had once filled it” (Morrison148).

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This bad experience, converts his embarrassment and his feeling of powerlessness into self-hatred and anger. “Even a half-remembrance of this episode, along with myriad other humiliations, defeats, and emasculations, could stir him into flights of depravity” (Morrison40).

Moreover, to appease his burden, Cholly directs his anger to Darelene “Sullen, irritable, he cultivated his hatred of Darelene” (Morrison148)

Never did he once consider directing his hatred toward the hunters. Such an emotion would have destroyed him. They were big, white, armed men. He was small, black, and helpless. His subconscious knew what his conscious mind did not guess—that hating them would have consumed him, burned him up like a piece of soft coal, leaving only flakes of ash and a question mark of smoke. (Morrison149).

This event is one of the arguments Morrison chooses to prepare Cholly’s defense against eventual blaming from the reader. Besides, Cholly has not had many friends, he was alienated from the black community, his only friend was Blue to who he never revealed the trauma that happens to him when he was with Darelene. He couldn’t reveal his shame even to his best friend Blue. Cholly has no one to talk to, he feels lonely his only hope is finding his biological father who lives in Macon.

[Cholly] went to the colored side of the counter to buy his ticket. “How much to Macon, sir?” “Eleven dollars. Five-fifty for children under twelve.” Cholly had twelve dollars and four cents. “How old you be?” “Just on twelve, sir, but my mama only give me ten dollars.” [...] “Please, sir, I got to get to Macon. My mama’s sick.” [...] “I reckon I knows a lying nigger when I sees one” [...] Cholly heard nothing. The insults were part of the nuisances of life, like lice. (Morrison151)

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Cholly finally finds the father that he has never known, but unfortunately he gets violently rejected by him which makes him traumatized for the second time.

So he sat in the dripping honey sun, pulling every nerve and muscle into service to stop the fall of water from his eyes. While straining in this way, focusing every erg of energy on his eyes, his bowels suddenly opened up, and before he could realize what he knew, liquid stools were running down his legs. At the mouth of the alley where his father was, on an orange crate in the sun, on a street full of grown men and women, he had soiled himself like a baby. (Morrison154-5)

Cholly was abandoned by his family, his community and even his own father, he wanders in the street where he experiences more humiliations, trauma and poverty, he is now free.

Dangerously free. Free to feel whatever he felt—fear, guilt, shame, love, grief, pity. Free to be tender or violent, to whistle or weep. [...] He could go to jail and not feel imprisoned, for he had already seen the furtiveness in the eyes of his jailer, free to say, “No, suh,” and smile, for he had already killed three white men. Free to take a woman’s insults, for his body had already conquered hers. Free even to knock her in the head, for he had already cradled that head in his arms. [...] He was free to live his fantasies, and free even to die, the how and the when of which held no interest for him. In those days, Cholly was truly free. Abandoned in a junk heap by his mother, rejected for a crap game by his father, there was nothing more to lose. He was alone with his own perceptions and appetites, and they alone interested him. (Morrison157-8)

All these traumatic experiences that faced Cholly in his young age, have influenced his adult life as a husband and as a father. “Had he not been alone in the world since he was thirteen, [...] he might have felt a stable connection between himself and the [his] children” (Morrison158).

Cholly has not any connection with his children, Pecola was a stranger to him this allows Cholly to rape her, his own daughter, for him she is a stranger. “How dare she love him? Hadn’t she any sense at all? What was he supposed to do about that? Return it? How? [...] His hatred of her slimed in his stomach and threatened to become vomit” (Morrison 159-60).

2.3.2 Pauline as victim-victimizer

Chapter 7 is the focus of Pauline’s background. Unlike Cholly, Pauline suffers from distorted self-perception; she doesn’t have self-confidence or self-esteem because early in her life, she stepped on a nail, the wound doesn’t heal and makes her limp all her life. She also loses one front tooth. “The end of her lovely beginning was probably the cavity in one of her front teeth. She preferred, however, to think always of her foot” (Morrison 108).

When she loses her front tooth, Pauline loses her self-esteem, this has added more emotional break down and increases her trauma. “There I was [...] trying to look like Jean Harlow, and a front tooth gone. Everything went then. Look like I just didn’t care no more after that” (Morrison 121).

Moreover, Cholly and Pauline’s couple broke down, Cholly was violent with his wife, he physically and sexually abuses her.

When she was young, Pauline grows up in isolation, her parents make her take care of her two younger siblings and do the household, she doesn’t have any friends, her parents prevent her from her childhood, they make an adult from a child. When she grows older Pauline feels sad, empty and alone even after her marriage with Cholly. “[Pauline] [in her loneliness] turned to her husband for reassurance, entertainment, for things to fill the vacant places” (Morrison 115) unfortunately, this husband also rejects her and spends all his time out drinking with his friends while she stays home.

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Furthermore, the couple experience poverty because of Cholly's addiction to alcohol which makes Pauline loses her job. "She [the woman who fired Pauline because she saw Cholly drunk] didn't never give me the eleven dollars she owed me, neither. That hurt bad. The gas man had cut the gas off, and I couldn't cook none" (Morrison 118). Because of all these stress, Pauline seeks refuge in Hollywood movies from where she begins to be fascinated to compare herself and her life to that of the movies. "Along with the idea of romantic love, she was introduced to another—physical beauty. Probably the most destructive ideas in the history of human thought. Both originated in envy, thrived in insecurity, and ended in disillusion" (Morrison 120). Returning home make her waking up from her dream. "Them pictures gave me a lot of pleasure, but it made coming home hard, and looking at Cholly hard" (Morrison 121).

Although Pauline and Cholly love each other, when they get married but domestic problems make them grow apart from each other, only Pauline's work in the Fisher's household makes her run away from the hell she lives in with Cholly. "Power, praise, and luxury were hers in this household. They even gave her what she had never had—a nickname—Polly. It was her pleasure to stand in her kitchen at the end of a day and survey her handiwork"(Morrison 130).

Pauline starts neglecting her family. "More and more she neglected her house, her children, her man—they were like the afterthoughts one has just before sleep, the early-morning and late-evening edge of her day, the dark edges that made the daily life with the Fishers lighter, more delicate, more lovely" (Morrison 125).

By making flash backs in chapter 7 and 8 about Cholly and Pauline, Morrison shed light on the problems that Pauline and Cholly face in their childhood, which effect their adult lives and their emotional development. It gives them credit and urges the reader not to make judgment; consequently Cholly and Pauline are considered as victim-victimizers.

2.3.4 Otherness and Racial Internalization

The Bluest Eye is characterized with a lack of confident and self-loathing of most of its characters, Pecola Breedlove will be taken as an example. She rejects her own identity and considers herself as ugly black girl, she struggles to reach the white beauty and longs for blue eyes. She is depicted as being worthless, all her surrounding consider her as ugly and she accepted that “AS long as she was ugly, she would have to stay with these people, somehow she belonged to them. Long hours she sat looking in the mirror, trying to discover the secret of her ugliness, the ugliness that made her ignored or despised at school, by teachers and classmates alike” (Morrison 45).

Pecola internalizes the white beauty standard that makes her hates herself; this internalization traumatized her and affects her psychotic mental state that led her to insanity. In her life, Pecola suffers oppression and rejection from both her family and community. Her mother Pauline rejects her from her birth “Head full of pretty hair but Lord she was ugly” (Morrison 98).

On the other hand Pauline was caring and sweet with the daughter of the Fishers, the white family she works for. Pauline only teaches her daughter to lose her self-esteem and confident, to have fear “fear of life” (Morrison 100). This has made Pecola fully internalizing racial self-contempt and the white standards of beauty which was spread by Hollywood movies. Davis remarks: “The black woman is the antithesis of American beauty,... defined as the other, can never satisfy the gaze of society (Davis).

To change her dark skin and have blue eyes Pecola drinks milk from the Shirley Temple cup and asks for candies with the picture of little Mary Jane: “is somehow to eat the eyes, eat Mary Jane, love Mary Jane, be Mary Jane.” (Morrison38). Acting like this Pecola seeks acceptance in a

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community that internalized dominant white values. Her wish for blue eyes means racial internalization she rejects the real world and lives into a world of phantasy.

As Morrison writes, even the self-appointed psychic is “Wholly convinced that if black people were more like white people, they would be better off” (Stepito). Pecola became the scape goat for her community as a result of her broken family. As Magdalena Vallejo writes quoting Eric Newman: “It is socially underprivileged and marginalized groups that are more likely to become scapegoats” (Magdalena). Pecola finds refuge in insanity to escape from rejection, abuse and ill treatment from others. Her alienation and isolation were the result of her family and her community’s oppression and abuse.

On the other hand, Pecola’s insanity can be a part of a healing process. She resists oppression and chooses insanity as a weapon to face them. “Madness is not a sign of weakness or failure, but as Laing states: “a brave attempt to face terrible ordeal” ” (Koolish)

2.4 Conclusion

Morrison constructs the black image through her writing. It states how black people are denied from equality and treated as animals in their own community.

In the afterword to *The Bluest Eye*, Morrison explains why she writes her novel. She wants to make a statement about the damage that internalized racism can do to the most vulnerable member of a community, a young girl. She gives credit to people who hurt her and doesn’t dehumanize them. These perpetrators are also victims who became victimizers, Morrison treats them empathically. They haven’t chosen to act the way they did, they have been forced to do so. “The blacks have a story, and that story has to be read.” (Mc Kay)

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It is also important for black people to know their values and get their identity by themselves in the American society.

3.1 Introduction

This chapter attempts to reflect the powerlessness and the inhumanity that black women faced, and how they react to the injustice and prejudice imposed upon them by the whites as well as their own black community. Subsequently, Toni Morrison and many other writers and critics have developed several strategies to the fore by bringing home and foregrounding black experience most convincingly.

In *The Bluest Eye* Pauline and her daughter Pecola are the most traumatized characters. Both are exposed to the harsh treatments of their community and their family. Pauline was aware of her oppression and otherness. She tries to escape this reality by conforming to the white beauty standards which led to her self-loathing.

However, Pecola is taught to be passive and defenseless. She tries to survive the mistreatment imposed on her. Her father raped her, her classmates bully her and her mother rejects her. Her only salvation is obtaining blue eyes.

3.2 Blackness and Beauty

In her novel, Morrison unveils the harsh reality of how the white hegemony defines the beauty standards, and rejects the black considering them as ugly. Historically, in the United States of America, beauty was perceived as: “Milky white skin, long blond hair, and slim figures were deemed to be the most feminine within this interpretive context, skin color, body type, hair texture and facial features become important dimensions of femininity.” (Collins)

In Morrison’s *The Bluest Eye*, all the Breedlove family believe themselves to be ugly though they are not. This belief lays in their mind not their physical appearance, every member of the

family act according to his “ugliness”. Sammy, always runs away from home and hurt others encouraged by his mother Pauline. Pecola his sister feels her ugliness in a different way, she fears people and life, and this makes her fall in self-hatred. “Looking in the mirror, trying to discover the secret of the ugliness, the ugliness that made her ignored or despised at school, by teachers and classmates alike” (Morrison43).

In Pecola and Pauline’s mind, being black means being ugly. Pecola feels that her ugliness is the cause of all her problems. She needs beauty as a solution and develops a strong desire for blue eyes that will make her beautiful and bring happiness in her life.

Pauline during her teenage tries hard to be like the whites, she even named herself “polly” when she gets married. All her dreams faded away, her husband could not fulfill them. To achieve her dreams, she works at the Fishers and reduces her dignity and identity as a perfect servant in a white house. Being faithful to the Fishers and trying to adopt good qualities made her away from her familial problems, she even neglected her own children. The white environment Pauline works in makes her escape her ugliness, she identifies with the white family she works for. Comparing to “the little pink and yellow girl” (Ibid p. 87) her children have become ugly. Pauline also escapes her “ugly” family by turning to movies, a world of love and white physical beauty. “White men taking such good care of they women, and they all dressed up in big clean houses.” (Morrison 97)

After she loses her front tooth while eating candy at the movies, Pauline conclude that she will never be beautiful or cared for. She is no longer interested in her physical appearance and her house order. “Soon she stopped trying to keep her own house the things she could afford to buy did not last had no beauty or style” (Ibid 101). She believes that her physical appearance is as ugly as her home, whereas the Fishers are as beautiful as their home.

Pauline and Pecola are very affected by the conception of beauty. They internalize white standards of beauty and hate themselves.

3.3 Race, Violence and Incest as Intersectional Ethical Treason:

Toni Morrison portrays the harsh situation of black women in her works; the African American women condition was pitiful due to racism, gender and whites control. She has recurrently and concurrently done all that it behooved her to voice the silenced sensitizing writes: rash racism, enigma of black identity, slavery, and clash between black women and the whites. In fact, a challenging fervor for this black feminine sensitivity has been carried out by a myriad of outstanding critics and theorists such as Simon de Beauvoir, Elaine Showalter, Millet, Helena Cixous, to name but a few. They have elucidated how female consciousness has renounced the essential identities which have been carefully masked by patriarchy. In such a purely patriarchal background as a female writer Morrison's writing is an attempt to redeem the whole lot of women community. She adopts a kind of language to liberate the black women from trauma of race, the pain of rape and the ravage of rage and humiliation. Morrison succeeded to transcend the violation and have courage to put women's hardship into words. She found energy and possibility to express the women's frustration and helped them to have the shoulder of the wheel so as to rebuild and new life and construct a new identity. Miriam Harris seems to have uttered some words about this point. She thinks that "a woman discovers a new identity by becoming the 'subject who writes' rather than the victim who waits in silence." (Harris)

In *The Bluest Eye*, racism, violence and incest influence the lives of the female characters, especially, Pecola the most vulnerable member of the Breedlove family. She endures her mother's

rejection and her father's rape and her community violence. These perpetrators are also victims under other circumstances like colonialism, racism, objection and rape.

The "concept metaphor" that equates colonialism with rape has been used abundantly by colonizers themselves and has been reiterated by colonized subjects to emphasize the oppression of colonialism (Sharp)

Cholly sexually abused his own daughter Pecola. Morrison gave credit to this incestuous father by introducing the event that turns his life upside down and makes a monster from him. When he was a boy he was having his first sexual experience with his girlfriend Darlene. He was then interrupted by two white hunters who forced him to continue while they watch.

Cholly, moving faster, looked at Darelene. He hated her. He almost wished he could do it hard, long and painfully, he hated her so much. The flashlight wormed its way into his gut and turned the sweet taste of muscadine into rotten fetid bile. He stared at Darelene's hands covering her face in the moon and lamplight. They looked like baby claws. (Morrison48)

Ironically, while both agreed to spend beautiful moment of love and desire Cholly unwillingly raped Darelene, and he was himself raped by the gaze of the white hunters who threatened him with gun. They stole his own desire. Cholly's sexuality is now linked with humiliation and violence. Cholly's incestuous rape is kind of repeating what has been done to him. As Vanessa Dickerson notes, Pecola's rape "is the culmination of Cholly's own deflowered life, his own weakness and powerlessness, his own nakedness." (Dickerson121). Thus in this situation he is not the oppressed but oppressor of his own vulnerable daughter Pecola:

Her back hunched that way; her head to one side as though crouching from a permanent and unrelieved blow. Why did she have to look so whipped? She was a child – unburdened – why wasn't she happy? The clear statement of her misery was an accusation. He wanted to break her neck – but tenderly. Guilt and impotence rose in a bilious duet. What could he do for her – ever? (Morrison 161)

Strange enough, the ideological construction of home as synonymous to comfort and safety has been greatly disrupted and destabilized by the father's incestuous act. Linda Alcoff and Laura Gray believe, for example, that "[t]he notion that the 'home' signals safety and protection is a claim that is not only wrong but complicit with sexual violence." (Linda Alcoff and Laura Gray) The rape of Pecola may appear to be eternalized by forces outside the father's control. It, therefore, becomes a grotesque repetition of the encounter in the woods in which Cholly was obliged by whites to act what became, under their scrutiny, a contrived sex act. "This text of father-daughter incest emerges from a space in which both father and daughter are victimized, directly and indirectly, by the whiteness that encircles them both." (Wilson)

Morrison's characters have painfully acquired racial transformation. *The Bluest eye*, suggests that racism existed in America because of the beauty standards and the values of the American society, beautiful means to be white. Pecola hated her appearance; this belief is transferred to her from her mother Pauline. Both think that their blackness is source of their problems; they are ugly because they are black, so they want to get rid of this burden. Even Pecola's friend Maureen whose skin is lighter brown, thinks that she is more beautiful than the other black schoolmates. "I'm cute! And you ugly! Black and ugly." (Morrison)

Strange enough, not all the characters seek racial transformation in *The Bluest Eye*. Unlike Pauline, Claudia has always been brave; she refuses to be bullied by others. She takes side with Pecola; she is always here when someone tries to bully her. “You shut up bullet head, I had found my tongue” (Morrison 67). Claudia doesn’t worship the white beauty standards, she hates the fact that Pecola loves to drink milk from Shirley Temple cup. She doesn’t accept the idea of the superiority of the white beauty; she even dismembers her Christmas gift, a blue eyed baby doll. In a word Claudia is faithful to her blackness she doesn’t reject it; she has physical acceptance and feels comfortable in her skin.

Pauline is completely influenced by the white movie stars and their way of living, which reduces her to helplessness and powerlessness, she is a self-absorbed mother who neglects her duties. She struggles to make her voice listened to. She works for the white family and neglects her own one. She doesn’t like her daughter’s hair but is fascinated by the Fisher’s daughter. “Then, she brushed the yellow hair; enjoying the roll and slip of it between her fingers... not tangled black puffs of rough wool to comb” (Ibid 127). She rejects her blackness and accepts the racist ideology that is created by the white society.

One day Pauline abuses Pecola because she unwillingly spills the blueberry pie that was prepared for the Fisher’s

In one gallop she was on Pecola, and with the back of her hand knocked her to the floor. Pecola slid in the pie juice, one leg folding under her. Mrs. Breedlove yanked her up by the arm, slapped her again, and in a voice thin with anger, abused Pecola directly and Frieda and me by implication. “Crazy fool . . . my floor, mess . . . look what you . . . work . . . get on out . .

. now that . . . crazy . . . my floor, my floor . . . my floor.” Her words were hotter and darker than the smoking berries, and we backed away in dread. (Morrison 107)

This act of treason toward her race and her own daughter made from Pauline who became “Polly”, a “perfect servant” (Morrison 128). The Fishers were pleased with her servitude, “we could never find anybody like Polly” (Morrison 128).

On the other hand, Pauline works hard to support her family she is the only “breadwinner” (Morrison 128) of the family. Now she can say enough to Cholly’s bullying, Pauline has changed “defend herself mightily against Cholly, rose above him in every way.” (Morrison 128). Pauline even becomes “outraged by painted ladies who thought only of clothes and men Joined a church and became a member of the ladies circle No.3” (Morrison126). In a word Pauline changed into a good Christian woman; she regained control over her life. Her financial dependence strengthened her and made her free from Cholly’s claws; she is closer to her children and teaches them respect, they don’t call her mom, they call her Mrs. Breedlove.

Pecola thinks that possessing blue eyes will bring peace and love into her pitiful life. For, her change is a matter of survival, nobody loves her. Her mother’s love goes to the white family child and all her community considers her ugly. Pecola’s desire for change by owning blue eyes is a response to an ideal of chosen from models with blue eyes, blond hair and white skin like Shirley Temple or Mary Jane. “Learning from every bill board, every movie, every glance.” (Morrison34). Pecola’s desire for blue eyes is the key to her happiness and acceptance in her community. “It had occurred to Pecola sometime ago that if her eyes, those eyes that held the pictures, and knew the sights –if those eyes of her were different that is to say beautiful, she herself would be different” (Morrison 40).

She is so desperate for love and annoyed with her ugliness and her community and family's rejection that she naively asks Frieda and Claudia "do you get someone to love you?" (Morrison 29)

If we ask ourselves why is Pecola obsessed with blue eyes rather than white skin or blond hair? We can say that sight is very important in our lives; we see the reality that surrounds us. People don't believe what we say to them until they "see" it, to see is to accept "Excellence of vision is the distinguishing mark of realism." (Jeffrey Mehlman)

Pecola rejects the right seeing, the hatred and the abuse, she wants to transform her reality with a new pair of blue eyes. Morrison depicts Pecola's strong desire for those blue eyes: "Each night, without fail, she prayed for blue eyes. Fervently, for a year she had prayed" (1970:46). The fascination by the white beauty led to Pecola's loss of self-esteem and self-confidence, searching for a new happy life and for a positive transformation, Pecola takes a step towards madness. "she spent her days, her tendril, sap green days walking up and down, her head jerking to the beat of drummer so distant only she could hear" Morrison (204)

Pecola is completely insane. As Bakerman states: "Through her false belief that she, indeed, acquired blue eyes, beauty, Pecola escapes to the deepest isolation of all" Pecola is happy now, though she lost her common sense.

4.3 Conclusion

Finally, Pauline and Pecola have each fought the oppression of the patriarchal black society and the standards presented to them by the white culture. Pauline was entrapped in the African American Christianity and became a good Christian woman, rejecting all what is material and regaining her authority upon her husband's oppression.

Pecola undergoes her deception by believing that she blue eyes, her fear of ugliness has destroyed her, she became insane.

General Conclusion

The general conclusion opens paths of research connected to the impact of black women writers. Their fictional texts would offer a comprehensive overview of the vast body of African American women's literature. They are expected to provide their own aesthetic and political interventions that critically assessed the rhetoric of previous movements through myriad complicated perspectives. Their never ending massive contributions and innovative critical and theoretical production would certainly continue to evince an array of African American women's creativity.

Toni Morrison accounts the black community in Lorain Ohio, trying to question the society values and see their impact on the individuals. She bears witness to the failures of her society in writing her despair and helplessness over the destruction of a teenager Pecola Breedlove, the most vulnerable character in *The Bluest eye*. Thus, hope still exists. Pecola's insanity doesn't mean that all is lost, Claudia (Morrison) has never accepted the assimilation to the white society, she survived and told the story of her friend Pecola.

Morrison wanted to write a book that she herself wants to read, using the modernist and feminist techniques, influenced by William Faulkner and Virginia Woolf. These two writers were the subject of her graduation thesis.

The Bluest Eye shows the failure and despair of black people, who adopt the norms of white society in the characters of Pauline and Pecola. They found themselves lost and struggle to conform to the white beauty standards, they separate themselves from their heritage, both symbolize chaos and despair. So most African Americans have identified themselves with values of white society that reject them, to be loved, respected and protect themselves from oppression and racism. This answers the first problematic of this work.

In the center of her novel, Morrison promotes Black Nationalism and black esthetic through reclamation of racial pride. The character of Geraldine constitutes the internalization of the white beauty norms that Morrison critiques. Geraldine is completely

assimilated to the white culture neglecting all about her race and identity white is inappropriate behavior to the values of her community. The model of the cultural assimilation of the racial minorities became the emblem for the civil right movements.

Moreover, *The Bluest Eye* deals with different issues in the colored people's community and asks all Americans to stand up against the injustice and the hegemony of the white beauty standards that created chaos among the black community, leading to self-loathing, oppression and madness. Besides, Morrison promotes The African American culture; she explores the black identity and condemns racism. This is the evidence and the answers if Morrison did promote the black culture heritage and the answer to the second problematic.

Whereas Claudia has understood that their lives have value in both the past and the present, she is most in touch with reality, she is the symbol of hope. She mourns the loss of innocence and hopefulness; Claudia is the character that gives the answer to the second part of the research question "Did Morrison manage to promote the black cultural heritage in *The Bluest Eye*?" *The Bluest Eye* should be understood not only in the 1941 timeframe, the setting of the novel, but also during the struggle between the Black Art movement and the Civil Rights movement.

for gratification." (The Bluest
Eye 124)

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