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Feminism Expansion from Womanism in Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* and *Beloved* to Afropolitanism in Adichie's *Americanah*

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Presented by

Miss Yousra SERIR

Supervised by

Dr. Wassila HAMZA-REGUIG MOURO

Board of Examiners

Prof. Gouti Hadjoui	Chairman	<i>University of Tlemcen</i>
Dr. Wassila Hamza-Reguig Mouro	Supervisor	<i>University of Tlemcen</i>
Prof. Abbès Bahous	External Examiner	<i>University of Mostagnem</i>
Prof. Fewzia Bedjaoui	External Examiner	<i>University of Sidi Bel Abbes</i>
Dr. Mohammed Kheladi	Internal Examiner	<i>University of Tlemcen</i>

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Statement of Originality

I herewith attest that this document, which at present I submit for assessment on the programme of study that leads as award of a Doctorate, is wholly my own work, and has not been undertaken from the others' work save and to the extent that such work has been cited and acknowledged within the aim of my work.

Signed:

Dedications

Proceeding in this PhD has been one of my accurate life challenges, and reaching the edge of breaking the ice and persisting was not straightforward and could never been possible without the push, the motivation and the support of many people.

To my dearest parents, I know, it was not easy to support me with all your power and from the bottom of your heart, to back me up when I stumble and to blaze my trail from my childhood till now and in all the domains. My beloved father and mother, I am very grateful for your efforts, caring, sacrifices, education and love and I am really thankful to have you in my life, without you, I would never have the courage to accomplish this thesis and nothing could be achievable.

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Abstract

There are many writers whose pathbreaking works tried to fix feminism as a concept; but it was difficult to put it in a name as to what it fits all the societies. This research work is an attempt to set epistemological set of definitions about feminism which has been changing through time by distinct academic communities, in particular, black women who were faced with challenges to voice self identity and to break silence. Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* and *Beloved*, and Adichie's *Americanah*, are the research sample novels, used as primary sources to analyzing a better comprehension of black women issues. Both Morrison and Adichie, though never planned to do it together, worked as a collectivity, each in her own region, and her own standpoint to visualize, for the public, black womanhood. Adichie's *Americanah* is selected to talk back about what was formerly unthinkable; and bravely voiced in Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* and *Beloved*. One of the research findings indicates the contribution of both Morrison and Adichie to defend and assess brilliantly the position of black women. Further, the research reflects close attention that Morrison is a context responsive observer; while Adichie is a critically global reporter of the incidents of Black women. Accordingly, both novelists are natural and realist, to voice the experience of the woman under the prejudice of "blackness" and "africanness" wrongly viewed as negative.

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General Introduction

General Introduction

Reading literature, to me, has long been for leisure time more than for professionalism. When the first scrambled ideas to investigate a research topic for the thesis started to be an urgent inquiry, Afro American novels were directly settled as a choice to explore research, about what used to be unspeakable and unthinkable. Thus, the challenge to read for research bothers the comfortable position to read for fun; more fuelled to unveil the story incidents and lives of women of colour. Investigating the struggle in the sexual war and the racial war, to point triumph in the war of existence, was the main targets of black novelists, to support women to design their own strategies, to attain freedom, and construct self independent identity. Accordingly, three research novels, *The Bluest Eye* (1970) and *Beloved* (1987) by Toni Morrison and *Americanah* (2013) by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, are selected to examine the novelists' endeavour, to mirror a transparent and discernible reflection of the black woman in an objective way, to a large extent. Conducted by anger; yet unbiased, both Morrison and Adichie were realist to reveal uncomfortable realities of black women respectively in 1960s, 1990s and 21st century. Portraits of black characters represented in Pecola, Sethe and Ifemelu are correspondingly zoomed through these novels selected for research scrutiny.

Feminism has long been theorized; yet, more often from the lens of white writers. This is why, the essence of this study is to seek notional assumptions in black narrative forms penned, in the scope of this research, by Morrison and Adichie. For this reason, the selection of the novels was made to apply a stretch of the development for the concept of black feminism as regards to the position of the black female.

The focus on women in general and the critiques of a patriarchal system dominated by gender, race, colour, education and religion are feminist approaches used to analyze transnational and black feminism in Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* and *Beloved*; plus seeking further investigations about transnationalism and Afropolitan feminism in its global context with Adichie's *Americanah*. Many studies

highlighted the issue of the black women; yet, the unexplored is still questioned about feminism as an ideology and a political trick. Feminism has been widely defined in theories; but in the terrain, the selected novelists portray it realistically with the anger of the strangled, the cry of the injured, the fear of the alienated, the worry of the immigrant, the destiny of the dehumanized, the dark future of the hopeless, and all those psychological attitudes that the black woman has endured in front of voiceless echoes.

The post colonial approach is used in this research to foster a postcolonial reading of the selected novels, where Morrison and Adichie come to speak the unspeakable, and unravel the unthinkable in their narratives, which share the same themes about power imbalance, spaces of conflict, marginalization, racial inequities, crisis identities, and the pervasive psyche of the blacks inside and outside their homelands.

Therefore, the following research questions are set

- Has feminism change from a wave to another succeeded to represent the Black woman?
- What experience do black women undergo in Morrison's novels *The Bluest Eye* and *Beloved* ?
- How does Adichie continue to re-examine the racialised female identity?
- How can the cause of black identity be revisited from Morrison to Adichie?

In parallel, the following hypotheses are respectively set:

- Feminism has, since its early appearance, come to represent the Black woman.
- Morrison's novels *The Bluest Eye* and *Beloved* reflect continual stigmatization of black sexuality
- Adichie accedes to reflect new emerging Afropolitan voices
- Black identity has been globally configured from turmoil to diasporic compromise in the selected novels.

In the first chapter, the literature review is exposed to set notional and epistemological assumptions about the exclusion of the white cultures to the black who was traumatized throughout history as a ‘Negro’, a ‘slave’, or an ‘object’. Chapter one, also, sums up the main revolting writers who have denounced the dehumanization of the black society in their chefs d’oeuvres. This chapter, also, fosters the attempts of revolutionary writers who unmask secrecy and break the silence about stuffed black voices.

Chapter two, rather, scrutinizes the black society as portrayed by Morrison through fictional black characters like Pecola in *The Bluest Eye* and Sethe in *Beloved*, where she elucidates the challenge of identity formation facing the detriments of a racist white society. Morrison denounces the cultural trauma, her characters, men and women in particular, endure in severe and repressed cultural and social context. Morrison exhibits in *The Bluest Eye* and *Beloved* issues like oppression and slavery, the premeditated and the brutal dehumanization of African slaves, who are frail, disabled physically and spiritually. Pecola ends delirious and schizophrenic; while, with Sethe, the crime turns to a sacrifice under the bewilderment of coercion, by seeking safety to her own children through killing them.

As for chapter three, Adichie’s *Americanah* is focused to view the position of the black woman from another standpoint. Ifemelu is centered as a representative character of unstable immigrant, struggling again to reconstruct her identity and the only means she finds utile to express herself, was via non-American black anonymous blogging; this helps her start to build up a transformation towards herself as an independent woman. The main concern of this chapter is to speak out the drawbacks of a racist, white society which fractures the identity of diasporic minorities, who seek to relocate themselves. As a result, feminism evolved to mirror transcultural critical category of new Afropolitans.

In the light of the three novels, two of Morrison’s *The Bluest Eye* and *Beloved*, plus Adichie’s *Americanah*, this research work raises common issues shared between Morrison and Adichie as shown in chapter four; since their novels

are recipients of the international award about common African American views on the politics of “blackness”. Both novelists contribute to the revival of consciousness for the black woman, who struggles for her well being as demonstrated in the fourth chapter.

Thus the research topic highlights the conceptual extension of feminism from black to Afropolitan, moving from Morrison to Adichie, using the feminist and postcolonial approaches for the evolution of feminism, from a simple notion to a political ideology.

Chapter One

Theoretical Framework

1.1. Introduction

The theoretical framework of this chapter, in this research work, basically stands upon introducing movements and concepts related to Feminism, Womanism and shades from history of African American literature. Referenced to a host of sources from anthropological history, religious studies, gender\ feminist studies, novels, pamphlets, poems, public discourse, and interviews, this chapter comprises a bulk of achievements held by activists, politicians, playwrights, poets, novelists and public speakers from both men and women, black and white, sensitive to resound voices of the woman of colour; to echo global terms about Black human rights and their emancipation. Many historical events help to explain the movement of Feminism from different angles, like the contribution of Suffragists to lead a long revolt and patriarchal rebellion. Moreover, one of the sections in this chapter focuses on the point that feminism develops from a word to a concept, from a movement to a philosophy, from propositions to a theory, and from individual talk to public discourse; all united to defend women, and debate sexism in important domains of life.

1.2. African American Literature

African American literature has focused on a large scale of domains in different countries throughout the world, though its beginning was never granted such success. Starting by few humble writings of revolt against the white view on the black, who was considered as a slave, captive, servant tortured, and whipped like an animal. Who could imagine persons of African descent become writers, par excellence, and contribute to the making of a literature reaching the zenith of triumph? Especially, in a time, speaking out was banned, and writing down was sanctioned, by enslaving absolute authorities, empowered by the force of the white, usually occupying the position of the despotic master of tyranny over the black.

1.2.1. African American Literature Evolution

For the sake of a good understanding of Afro American evolution in their society, it is necessary to focus on the black literary project, and its endeavour to evolve.

1.2.1.1. The Pre Harlem Movement

If 1619 was the year that attracted the appearance of the Africans in Virginia, history has proven that Africans were originally great storytellers, long before that date. They migrated to the United States, holding with them a good bulk of West African Folklore.

African American literature, usually set in the United States, is the embodiment literature written and produced by writers of African origin to duplicate voice and authority, like Phillis Wheatley whose writings extremely marked the launching of such literature, by the late of the eighteenth century. An example of her book, which created revolt and attracted readership, was *Poems on Various Subjects, Religious and Moral* in 1773. In this vein, Wheatley is famous to speak about slavery and religion in her poems without including her personal life-though she was herself a black slave when the white owners used to sell and buy slaves; "On being brought from Africa to America" is one of her poetry collection and an excellent sample as showed in the following rhymed coupled excerpt¹:

Twas mercy brought me from my Pagan land,
Taught my benighted soul to understand
That there's a God, that there's a Saviour too:
Once I redemption neither sought nor knew.
Some view our sable race with scornful eye,
"Their colour is a diabolic dye."
Remember, Christians, Negroes, black as Cain,
May be refin'd, and join th' angelic train (Wheatley,1773)

¹ (www.poets.org)

What is particular with Wheatley is that she was the first black woman to publish her book in America and this should have deserved a Nobel Prize. It relied first on individual or personal experiences narrated in the form of autobiographies, which later on in the nineteenth century they developed to a separate well minded set genre known as slave narratives. The latter focused on recounting tales for slaves life, prisons, labour, and more frequently about their attempts to escape usually doomed to failure; plus other memoirs about those who escaped from slavery to freedom.

In this context, Ellen Gruber Garvey was excellent when she terms this type of writers, during the shift from civil war to renaissance “Writing with Scissors” (Garvey 2013). The period of reconstruction after the civil war contribute to implant the first seeds for the Harlem renaissance by writers whose ancestry was mainly composed of slaves who endured torture in a beating way that left memories to retell for coming generations.

1.2.1.2. Harlem Renaissance

The very striking movement that has marked Afro American literature is The Harlem Renaissance by the 1920s, an era where the blossom of such literature reaches its full ripe to settle down and grow up large and wide; embracing writers and artists from different countries like Jamaica and other Caribbean islands. African-American writers have been identified, distinguished and highly awarded.

The Harlem movement is also known as The New Negro Movement; a reawakening of the black intellectual to visualize a new life explodes out of pain to revolve culturally artistically and socially.

Other scholars like A. Phillip Randolph rather stretches the new term back to the period he terms as the “Old Negro” which embraced:

Political conservatism, accommodationist politics, opposition to organized labor, and dependence upon white benefactors who had nothing but disdain for the working class,” and they “stood in the way of racial progress (...) because of their involvement with the “Old crowd of White Americans – a group which viciously opposes every demand made by organized labor for an opportunity to live a better life” (Bernard, 2011, p. 273).

This is why, the Harlem movement came to erase falsifications about the Old Negro and moves from negative to positive prospects about the black.

By the 1920s, a district called Harlem in New York from where the movement spread out to end by the Great Depression in the early 1930s, a group of black intellectuals in art, sociology, and literature endeavours to reshape the New Negro: a striking decade revolutionary enough to draw radical change in the history of the Black. This is why some critics assert that the movement is not just a rebirth nor a revival only, it jumps to contribute to the evolution of Afro American literature:

However, some historians and critics believe that what took place during the years of Harlem Renaissance was not a rebirth, as such, but only another stage in the evolution of African and African American art that had begun with the inception of African presence in America (Bernard, 2011, p.269)

The Harlem Renaissance, therefore, can be considered as the most influential movement in African American literature and history.

1.2.1.3. Post Modern Era

Another remarkable turn in the twentieth century occurred to drive Afro American literature forward to tackling radical themes like slavery abolition,

redemption to freedom, and then more empowered to oppose racism in their communities and throughout the United States. Booker T. Washington and W. E. B. Du Bois were famous for debating the case with bravery in their non fiction works. Du Bois coined the concept of “double consciousness”, as mentioned by Michael Gomez in an issue of Black Studies Journal on the occasion of 30 years of African American studies. The term up to Dubois refers to the identity of African Americans torn between blackness and Americanness. In this vein Gomez said: “The nation signified in the latter term oppresses people based on the former term” this is the diasporic position of the time. (Gomez, 2004, p.175-194)

Other writers also played essential role especially during the *Civil Rights Movement*, like Richard Wright and Gwendolyn Brooks who tackled with might and main subject matters of discrimination, segregation and Apartheid. In this sense, the poet Langston Hughes in his short essay “The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain” said:

We younger Negro artists who create now intend to express our individual dark-skinned selves without fear or shame. If white people are pleased we are glad. If they are not, it doesn't matter. We know we are beautiful. And ugly too. The tom-tom cries and the tom-tom laughs. (Hughes, 1926, p.692)

He continues to show black self confidence in this way: “If coloured people are pleased we are glad. If they are not, their displeasure doesn't matter either. We build our temples for tomorrow, strong as we know how, and we stand on top of the mountain, free within ourselves.” (Hughes, 1926, 693)

Hughes explicitly revolt proudly about his black body that is combined with beauty which means he does not need to be white as he says:

To my mind, it is the duty of the young Negro artist to change through the force of his art that old whispering 'I want to be white' hidden in the aspirations of his people, to 'Why should I want to be white? I am a Negro – and beautiful (Hughes, 1926, p.693)

Nowadays, African-American literature has become admitted, welcome and especially approved as a fundamental branch of American literature. Carl Van Doren explicitly told a "Talented Tenth" audience when he considers openly "What American literature decidedly needs at the moment is colour, music, gusto.....if the Negroes are not in position to contribute these items I do not know what Americans are." (Doren, 1924 in Washington 2001, p. 27).

Some scholars went further to speak about a new genre of the period called neo Slave Narratives which (Harris, 2011, 475) divides into four categories:

- 1- Margaret Walker's *Jubilee* (1966), Sherley Anne Williams' *Dessa Rose* (1986), Toni Morrison's *Beloved* (1987), J. California Cooper's *Family* (1991).
- 2- (Gayl Jones's *Corregidora* (1975), Octavia Butler's *Kindred* (1979), David Bradley's *The Chaneyville Incident* (1981), and Phyllis Alesia Perry's *Stigmata* (1998)
- 3- (Ishmael Reed's *Flight to Canada* (1976), Charles Johnson's *Middle Passage* (1990)
- 4- Jones's *Corregidora*

The writers during the Harlem movement believe in new era and call for reform, change and reconstitute the portrait of the new Negro to highlight a cultural and ethnic enlightenment.

1.2.2. Themes and Concerns

After reaching a high academic status renowned internationally, Afro American literature has been included in the realm of post colonial literature. It, thus, focused on important issues usually categorized as typically Afro-American:

- Cultural practice and Afro American civilization
- Traditions and popular culture typically black
- Religious issues
- Racism and the white segregation
- Slavery and bondage
- Social and political identity
- Servitude, enslavement and captivity
- Injustice from the white public
- Independent black republic
- Migration
- Appropriate position in colonial America and metropolitan Britain
- Black feminism, and more

Exploring these issues in this literature contributes to the success of many claims, like a free republic with black identity liberated from the white public community. By this, they overcome their depression by supporting their peers to resist, defy and endure with perseverance that resistance for the sake of autonomy politically and socially and mostly individually. These were the main concerns exposed in the revolutionary Afro American literature, written by black citizens for today America. This literature was demarcated by popular oral elements of folkloric culture incorporating idioms, riddles, gospel music, rap or the blues, dances, spirituals, prayers, sermons, jokes, and tales.

These distinguished black narratives addressed several themes about slavery, injustice and racism usually ignored or neglected in scholarly papers of the time.

1.2.3. Slave Narratives

A lay reader of Afro American literature cannot escape the remembrance of Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852) which directly addressed the issue of slavery abolition. Many pamphlets which were usually categorized as slave narratives focusing on

- Religious salvation and emancipation which occupied a great deal of this category like Olaudah Equiano's *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African*, (1782)
- Encouraging tales to support the fight back of abolition adopting the motif of autobiographical accounts and this enabled them to be the most attractive and adoptive forms in slave narratives. *Twelve Years a Slave*, Narrative of Solomon Northup, 1853 is a good example.
- Other tales of progress, to move forward in a post free America, were also integral part of the genre. Some examples of the period were *The Underground Railroad Records* by William Still (1872) and *From the Darkness Cometh the Light*, by Lucy Delaney, (1892).

The slave narratives were usually produced by 19th-century writers considered as African Americans among whom Harriet Jacobs and Frederick Douglass are pioneers. They were devoted and succeed to reach the zenith by their remarkable legendary works of Frederick Douglass's autobiography *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*, which was published in 1845, later revised and expanded to *My Bondage and My Freedom* (1855), and Harriet Jacob's *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* by Harriet Jacobs (1861).

Harriet Jacobs, a slave born woman, launched the movement as the first slave narrative in the United States through her epistolary book centering on the battle, and the black resistance to the white dictatorship and torture often with tenacity, endurance and determination. The whites contribute to the story as cruel slave driver dehumanizing the black from their human nature. A woman struggling for the

freedom of herself and her two children with audacity, and heroism; this is the way Jacobs's revolt and prowess were depicted as the mostly unimagined courage.

Not too much different from Harriet Jacobs was Frederick Douglass dexterity and command in exposing slavery abolition in an oratory eloquent style. He is an author and lecturer of American civilization. The pillar on which stands Afro American literature is the slave narratives genre that helped express freedom of body and soul in multiple facets. Alice Walker properly terms it in her essay *Saving the Life that is Your Own: The Importance of Models in the Artist's Life*:

Black writers seem always involved in a moral and/or physical struggle, the result of which is expected to be some kind of larger freedom. Perhaps this is because our literary tradition is based on the slave narratives, where escape for the body and freedom for the soul went together. (Walker, 1983, In Search 5)

Composed of writers, artists and political activists, pamphlets turn to be slave narratives for the sake of freedom; this is how Frances Smith Foster, introduces slave narratives to be "the personal accounts by black slaves and ex-slaves of their experiences in slavery and of their efforts to obtain freedom" (Foster, 1979, p3).

Some scholars, like Gates, prefer to define the genre by linking it to "two separate literary traditions – the novel of sentiment (confession) and the picaresque and became its own form" (Cited in Spikes, 1997, p.50). Gates also highlights the language of the slave narrative which is based on "the expression of the self, a conduit for particularly personal emotion" (Cited in Spikes, 1997, p.59).

Morrison asserts that a slave narrative is a collection, which is varied and distinguished. It extends:

From the adventure-packed life of Oloudah Equiano's *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Oloudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African, Written by Himself*(1782) to the quiet desperation of Harriet Jacob's (Linda Brent's) *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl: Written*

by Herself (1861); from the political savvy of Frederick Douglass's *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave, Written by Himself* (1845) to the subtlety and modesty of Henry Bibb's *Life and Adventures of Henry Bibb, an American Slave, Written by Himself* (1849). (Morrison, 2008, p.65-66)

Accordingly, slave narratives attracted scholarly consideration and awareness in the current academy to become part of the American literary canon.

1.3. Women's Writing

Women's writing is an academic discipline, which, in its simplest meaning, delineates the position and the status of women in society, more precisely, within the literary world in which they are defined by their gender. This term has been coined the moment, when feminism developed after feminist literary criticism has emerged. This literary category started as a discrete area of research but becomes particularly distinct, not for being writes of daring texts of the time but the problem lies in the gender.

A category unfound in the time to compose group of women addressing men and imposing their proposals by speaking aloud and attracting men usually indifferent to them to hear them: "Their texts emerge from and intervene in conditions usually very different from those which produced most writing by men" (Blain, 1990, p.46). G. Eliot confirms the gendering of this literature by saying "a cluster of great names, both living and dead, rush to our memories, in evidence that women can produce novels not only fine, but among the very finest" (Blain, 1990, p.73).

The field of research of women's writing was marginalized and put aside mainly because of the dominance of men over women that has been noticed in all the domains whether in scholarship or daily life. This led to the ignorance of the

woman often considered as the housewife, the household, cleaning, cooking and keeping children. Because of her gender, she was degraded and demeaned in her position in the society.

If we look back to women's literary history, we find that they represent the inferior part of writers except for few of them like Austen, The Bronte Sisters, Mrs. Gaskell, Eliot and Woolf who belonged to the literary canon that was itself controlled by male readers and critics in a society held by men ascendancy. This is why these women writers often wrote their novels under pseudonyms and were discovered in their real names posthumously.

It was high time for modern womanhood to shine and break the silence as nicely put by the poet Amy Lowell in her famous poem *The Sisters* (1925)²

Taking us by and large, we're a queer lot
We women who write poetry. And when you think
How few of us there've been, it's queerer still.
I wonder what it is that makes us do it,
Singles us out to scribble down, man-wise,
The fragments of ourselves. Why are we
Already mother-creatures, double-bearing,
With matrices in body and in brain?
I rather think that there is just the reason
We are so sparse a kind of human being;
The strength of forty thousand Atlases
Is needed for our every-day concerns.

How sublime Lowell is when she says that 40000 Atlases do not suffice to be fair towards women's burdening concerns.

The aim of women's writings is to push the world to recognize their literary studies and to share their voice, allow them to speak and to be heard, and to take into account the feminist literary criticism of women's writings throughout time in

² www.poetrynook.com

order to enable them appear within the literary world, echo their voices, unlock the impenetrable, impose their identity, reveal their personality, be existent, be recognized as the right of any human being.

1.4. Feminism

The term feminism came into use towards the end of the nineteenth century. It is defined by supporting and upholding the equality between sexes to set up, entrench and confirm social, political, economic and personal equivalence for both female and male sexes.

This comprehends looking up and aspiring to establish same opportunities obtained for women as those for men including same professional, educational and social chances. Feminism, then, represents a set of different movements and ideologies that involve and strive for the same common target: quest for and demand reliable responses to achieve equality between sexes in all the domains.

As movements are elastic, the history of feminism comprises different developments divided on three waves by analyzing the inequality and the discrimination between genders.

1.4.1. The First Wave Feminism

The first period; the first phase of feminism covers roughly the century from the French Revolution to the First World War and it is the phase concerned with the emancipation and the liberation of women and the advocacy of women's rights.

Feminism was used in Britain and America in the 1890's but the word begins to be accepted about 100 years after, what most feminists would see as its beginning.

1.4.1.1. First Wave Feminism and Wollstonecraft

The start of feminism as we understand it, occurred in the late eightieth century, in lots of ways in conjunction with the French Revolution and it was at a time when there are new constitutions being written, when declarations of the rights of man are being promulgated and expanded, and when it becomes absolutely clear that the rights of man are sex specific, they do not extend to women as well.

Mary Wollstonecraft (1759-1797) (Source : by John Opie, c. 1797)



The scholar Mary Wollstonecraft (1759-1797) who is seen by many as one of the pillars and constructing figures of Anglo-American feminism, this was interpreted in her first book, called, *A Vindication on the Rights of Woman* which was written in 1792 in a period where white hot anger prevailed over for six weeks, so she said:

Consider, I address you as a legislator, whether, when men contend for their freedom, and to be allowed to judge for themselves respecting their own happiness, it be not inconsistent and unjust to subjugate women, even though you firmly believe that you are acting in the manner best calculated to promote their happiness? Who made man the exclusive judge, if woman partake with him of the gift of reason? (Wollstonecraft, 1792, p. 35)

Wollstonecraft acts in response and replies to those who ignored women's rights and did not believe on their prerogative for education and hold up discrimination and support all sorts of inequality that encompass the societies.

In fact, in Wollstonecraft's prologue, she wrote about one of the people involved in framing the French constitution and her preface was addressed to them. She asks a very important question in the last sentence when she said, "Who made man the exclusive judge, if woman partake with him of the gift of reason?" (Wollstonecraft, 1792, preface); so she wonders about what makes it true, if men are considered as righteous to have political rights as an asset of their humanity, and mainly their ability for reason, so why it should absolutely be the case and in particular for men.

So, it is that concept and idea that men are being given rights for qualities that women have too, but they are being rejected to women that is somehow a kind of stimulus for the nineteenth century feminism.

Wollstonecraft's text is thoroughly comprehensive in the way it elaborates the differences in sexes; especially those who work against women denying their role as free women, able to be housekeeper and action doer outside. For this reason it is almost a crime to deny them the education that makes them lucid, balanced and rational. Schooling and training them has become a necessity a right to get urgently.

Thus, the vindication of women rights was the first requirement of Wollstonecraft to ask for, not only the right for education but also call for other

political and social structures though it was still 1890s where coining a woman a feminist was not yet fixed but her rebellion in that patriarchal society enables her to be the lawyer of the time to advocate new daring even enraging suggestions for the woman of the time.

In that time, there were no similar attitudes of Wollstonecraft vis a vis women. Indeed, no feminist movement was advocated by whoever, which justifies the author's endeavour to settle words that have become theories later on advocating women reason. Taylor Barbara thinks that introducing Wollstonecraft as a feminist is problematic, she endeavours to define her philosophy after meditation and deep consideration, as she herself explains in her seminal work on Wollstonecraft thought and philosophy: "Treating Wollstonecraft's thought as an anticipation of nineteenth and twentieth-century feminist argument has meant sacrificing or distorting some of its key elements". (Taylor, 2003, p12). Taylor focuses women neglect by the public when she says:

Leading examples of this . . . have been the widespread neglect of her religious beliefs, and the misrepresentation of her as a bourgeois liberal, which together have resulted in the displacement of a religiously inspired utopian radicalism by a secular, class-partisan reformism as alien to Wollstonecraft's political project as her dream of a divinely promised age of universal happiness is to our own. (Taylor, 2003, p12)

Calling for women liberation, freedom, work, education was combined by the condition of virtue for Wollstonecraft:

Even more important however has been the imposition on Wollstonecraft of a heroic-individualist brand of politics utterly at odds with her own ethically driven case for women's emancipation. Wollstonecraft's leading ambition for women was that they should attain virtue, and it was to this end that she sought their liberation. (Taylor, 2003, p12)

Series of questions so heated but debatable were tackled right throughout the nineteenth century and it creates issues newly set in an intricate way linking the nineteenth with the twentieth century, like:

- What would be the type of women whose rights are being vindicated urgently in any specific area throughout the world?
- Who is the woman, the portrait, whose rights Wollstonecraft is calling painstakingly for?
- And who is the woman, the area under discussion, of all the nineteenth century campaigns for women's rights?

She is in fact a white woman, usually beautiful, nicely clothed, a European woman, but jailed, enclosed, dominated by the man as a property of his.

Accordingly, nineteenth century feminism immediately questions and covers the woman's demand for including her in politics by her insertion in the state, rights of man and citizenship. Though the defense was set for some women, but by no means, all of them were meant to include in the case.

1.4.1.2. Epistemological Insights on 1st Wave Feminism

Feminist activity and thought were the pillars of first wave Feminism. Thus, the women's movements and the feminist movements began in the middle of the nineteenth century in the United States and the United Kingdom, asking for a number of a parcel of rights so long neglected from the public demand, especially when devoted to women: rights to education, guardianship rights, and rights to work, but most predominantly citizenship and legal and political rights.

The nineteenth century women's movements, particularly in the mid nineteenth century, held attractive perspectives for the status and the future of women. These women were combined strongly with abolitionist movements, like with movements for the abolition of slavery and the liberation of slaves. With time,

1st wave feminism movement turn from individual calls scattered sometimes, denied another so often, to an intellectual commitment and political movements touching hot topics like slaves emancipation, slavery, race, ethnicity, to farther end with sex difference in all domains.

From philosophical viewpoint, the movement was not limited to a political revolt or rebellion, 1st wave feminism was linked to a set of theories and ideologies usually meant to interpret philosophical topics from a feminist opinion, which was acclaimed by the 1960s and reached by the second Wave Feminism.

While in the first wave feminism different domains in law, politics, sociology and literature contribute to the launching of the movements to empower it and great participation was from the suffrage leaders who marked history by their efficient involvement.

1.4.1.3. The Suffrage Leaders' Contribution

Many suffragists' women contribute from different domains in the success of rights emancipation and vindication and indeed their writings and claims were echoed to the authorities proclaiming many legal demands often thrown aside when the subject of woman is tackled

1.4.1.3.1 Elizabeth Cady Stanton

Indeed, the American suffrage leader Elizabeth Cady Stanton, starts her career as an activist and as campaigner for the abolitionist cause. Right after she moves to focus on women's rights when she was at a meeting in Britain and was deprived to hold a public from the stage as a woman. She proceeds later on, when she went to the United States, to fix the first women's rights convention. John Stuart Mill plainly explains it in his book entitled *The Subjection of Women* when he said:

Meanwhile the wife is the actual bond servant of her husband: no less so, as far as legal obligation goes, than slaves commonly so called. She vows a livelong obedience to him at the altar, and is held to it all through her life by law...She can do no act whatever but by his permission, at least tacit. (Mill, 1896, p.55)

He also insists that:

She can acquire no property but for him; the instant it becomes hers, even if by inheritance, it becomes ipso facto his... I am far from pretending that wives are in general no better treated than slaves; but no slave is a slave to the same lengths, and in so full a sense of the word, as a wife is. . (Mill, 1896, p.55)

The strong common sense of parallel between the position of women especially married women, and of slaves, and the point that Mill spots, is unquestionably linked to marriage as a law; an institution that deprives the woman from her identity and be passed as an ownership legally to her husband subduing to him her name, her life, her soul and body.

Accordingly, the right of divorce and the right of vote where the two pillars on which Elizabeth Cady Stanton proclaims violently in her claims . She adopts the role of women rights and being herself married and mother of three sons could only motivate her to move forward. She nicely put it in her own writing *Eighty Years and More*:

The general discontent I felt with woman's portion as wife, housekeeper, physician, and spiritual guide, the chaotic conditions into which everything fell without her constant supervision, and the wearied, anxious look of the majority of women, impressed me with a strong feeling that some active measures should be taken to remedy the wrongs of society in general, and of women in particular. (Stanton, 1993, p 148)

She also witnessed women oppression as a personal experience that she decides to protest by publically spreading freely her opinion to the world to save the dignity of the ones exposed to traumatic nature of slavery as she puts “It seemed as if all the elements had conspired to impel me to some onward step. I could not see what to do or where to begin—my only thought was a public meeting for protest and discussion” (Stanton, 1993, p 148)

So, a nineteenth century married woman in Britain, the United States, Australia, most other countries, was deprived from many legal rights like money, inheritance, earnings, work, and the worse is of being the ownership of her husband, plus her children who are under the pledge of her husband especially in case she thinks to abandon him. The most horrible and cruel matter is that he can imprison her to guarantee her complete submission and yielding to fulfill any wanted domestic and sexual services.

With great care to preserve notions of femininity, involved the women in the suffrage campaign insist to look very respectful, kind and reasonable. Their target was to convince and try to influence male legislatures, or members of their own relatives.

This is why there was a policy of beauty applied among women who wrestle for their rights; in the suffrage movement, the front stage was left specially for pretty women while very severe looking women were given the back to occupy. Their aim was not at all bodily but a way to attract male attention to her views openly said publically for the first time. It was the only vital way to claim their demand and be heard by men.

Suffragists: Millicent Fawcett and the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies (NUWSS)



The women who advocated for women's suffrage were suffragists, highly regarded women, well thought and constantly correctly clothed.

1.4.1.3.2. Emmeline and Christabel Pankhurst

Whenever the developmental position of the new woman in English literature is evoked in the 1890's, where it becomes apparent to the public that drastic change is prepared, there is a revolution against Victorian sexual demeanor and Victorian sexual modes. However, the real change begins in the early twentieth century with the introduction of the women's social and political union (WSPU), the militant campaign that is associated with Emmeline and her daughter Christabel Pankhurst and their followers.

Christabel Pankhurst began this campaign in 1905. The British suffragette interrupted a political campaign and she claimed this in her book: *Unshackled: The Story of How We Won the Vote* in which she wrote: "Women, we must do the work ourselves. We must have an independent women's movement. Come to my house tomorrow and we will arrange it!"(Christabel, 1959, p45)

The suffragettes accept as true that you have to essentially take the struggle to political parties, and make political parties approve women's suffrage. In light of the early twentieth century, the UK witnessed an initiation led by the Pankhursts, who denounced the most compelling arguments while seeking the full equality with men in voting rights.

Notwithstanding the organized protest that advocates female rights and mainly female suffrage, Pankhurst recommended publicly the Union's slogan "Deeds not Words"³ In this vein, she interrupted the Liberal party meeting in 1905 with Annie Kenney, and made an epic moment while raising a banner demanding "Votes for Women" and therefore there was a certain strictness, or even cruelty at times, in the impulse of her heroic action. There was, of course, an abrupt insurgency that resulted her imprisoning for her defiance of the authority. However, she reached a different conclusion and took the suffrage campaign to another uplift which required hunger strikes and a rigid assembly of energies for the counterattack.

Notably, actual figures like Pankhurst and her followers were gifted to procreate well considered ideas by drawing attention to the shrine of truth. Significantly, they punctured big demonstrations which raised thorny aphorisms to back up their case. Suffragettes also confronted the forces of law and order. Moreover, they bore every seizure by legal authority including jail and arrest.

Pankhurst proclaims her experience in Manchester's workhouse where she was witness on the suffering of little girls at a very early age, as she said: "The first time I went into the place I was horrified to see little girls seven and eight years old

³.(www.britannica.com).

on their knees scrubbing the cold stones of the long corridors ... bronchitis was epidemic among them most of the time.” (Pankhurst, 1914, p 25–28) of course, the segregation of the female gender does not know any limitation; for such suffering does not offer any exceptions. Pankhurst was left in awe when she “found that there were pregnant women in that workhouse, scrubbing floors, doing the hardest kind of work, almost until their babies came into the world ... Of course the babies are very badly protected ... These poor, unprotected mothers and their babies I am sure were potent factors in my education as a militant.” (Pankhurst, 1914, p 25–28)

The term suffragette is coined at this time by the “Daily Mail”⁴ first recorded in 1900-1905 and it is intended initially, it differentiates the suffragettes from the suffragists (suffrage+ette). It is coined at the beginning as a way of kind of demeaning that is to say making diminutive. They are degraded and become a much bigger nuisance. Coupled with the suffragette’s demands, they took the lion’s share of all events of the twentieth century when it comes to women rights and especially to advocate the female suffrage.

1.4.1.4. The WSPU (Women’s Social and Political Union)

In a country that rejected any female involvement in voting at that time, all women had occasionally had to wrestle against the governing authorities. Thus, another key point to highlight is the WSPU (Women’s Social and Political Union) amongst the suffragettes, was created in Manchester under the leadership of Emmeline Pankhurst after the women suffrage was brutally revoked in 1832.⁵ Hostility increased in intensity and in some degree, it was attracted to be involved with these political campaign speeches, but in the period from 1906 to 1913 the suffragettes moved on with this into property damage. Their pacific disposition resulted nothing but more injustice, their voice was mute and their demands had been laughed on. All sort of devastation seemed to be the most approachable solution in order to echo their words. The movement captivated a lot of attraction especially when they sought violence and disobedience as refuge. It was an

⁴ (www.oxfordreference.com)

⁵ (www.britannica.com).

unfamiliar strategy done by respectable ladies, yet rebellious and vigorous at the same time. They burnt letter boxes, destroyed shop windows, and even set on fire buildings in towns. In fact, the conflict was carried by force when they did not find any ears to listen and minds to reflect their demands.

It was always property that was damaged, they were careful not to cause any harm to people. The movement's main aim was to attract more attention. The reason why it was done quite publicly because they were determined to hold the result of their revolt. In fact, suffragettes sought to be arrested, go to prison, speak from the dock and then have the whole big celebration coming out of prison. According to their beliefs, this seemed to be the most persuasive act to earn the public opinion.



Pankhurst released from Holloway prison, 1908

For women who were arrested and imprisoned did not surrender even when their freedom was enchained. All things considered, it seemed reasonable to demand a special treatment as political prisoners and not viewed as common

criminals. In sum, the struggle became more serious and in 1908, the suffragettes in prison went on hunger strikes:

Believing they had found a powerful weapon with which to fight an obdurate Liberal government, other imprisoned suffragettes began hunger striking too. The government responded by forcibly feeding them, arguing that this “ordinary hospital treatment” was necessary to preserve the women’s lives. So began a vicious circle of events that was to shape the representation of the suffragette movement for years to come.⁶

For the government, that was an unexpected move and not in the favour of their interests. As long as public opinion was not really stirred, parliament was not interested in the suffragettes in any franchise. Rather they wanted to get rid of every tinge of the movement while trying to deactivate its effectiveness. Hence, they decided to introduce forced feeding as a way to deal with this problem. In other words, hunger strike was a common type of protest against improper treatment and basically imprisonment and women opt for this option to put pressure on the government and to perpetuate the submission of the parliament through continuous acts likewise.

1.4.2. The Second Wave Feminism

The second wave started first in the United States then arose in Australia and spread in much of the most other developed western countries by 1960s with the goal of gaining more equalities and more rights for all women beyond the movement of the suffrage political franchise which was just about having the right to vote, but they did not call it feminism. The Women’s Liberation movement (WLM) as Stephen Trombley and Bullock have claimed in their book entitled: *The New Fontana Dictionary of Modern Thought* where they said: “The WLM branch of Radical feminism, based in contemporary philosophy, comprised women of

⁶(www.historyextra.com)

racially- and culturally-diverse backgrounds who proposed that economic, psychological, and social freedom were necessary for women to progress from being second-class citizens in their societies.” (Bullock; Trombley 1999, p314)

In 1950s, the idea of the housewife keeper was spread in all the society and it was expected and supposed that only function of woman at that time was to uphold her home and take care of her husband and her children and maintain everything that has a relation with her marital situation. Therefore, America in 1960s began to change when all women across the nation and the globe started their demands of change and rebel against this idea; they call for new rights and try to express their opinions on their own society that had a big and a strict contrast with what they were supposed to be in the past. This moment in history is known as the second wave of feminism. Betty Friedan in her famous book *The Feminine Mystique* claimed that: “A woman is handicapped by her sex, and handicaps society, either by slavishly copying the pattern of man’s advance in the professions, or by refusing to compete with man at all.” (Friedan, 1963, p361)

The second wave of feminism defined the transformation and the renewal of women’s rights with the help of the new concepts and thoughts expressed in the publication of feminist books like Betty Friedan *The Feminine Mystique* and by famous feminists emerging at that time. Thus, women began to have stronger demands and wishes to change the ordinary beginning in the early 1960s and persist and carry on into the 70s and the 80s until the present time.

Women across the nation saw this as a call for more rights for women and more notable government action followed. Around the time of the 1960s, all people in the society had accepted that the principal and the most important duty of women was to take the responsibility of their families and to tend to all the demands of their husbands or children at home. At this time, women spent an average of about 55 hours a week primarily on tending to household tasks around the home, for this reason they were not able to hold a job and a place in the workforce because they had not enough time to be responsible of other tasks.

The 1960s follows World War two that took place from 1939 to 1945, when many job opportunities opened because men were shipped off to war and demands for supplies boosted. This was an occasion that provided a lot of women more than ever before with new opportunities and chances to go to work and have a job. Following the World War two, during this time, women who worked were those who gained special jobs and occupied works such as: nursing care, teaching or working as secretaries.

Working women had repeatedly less payment than that of men, as it was expected that they would bear children while holding the job and to tend to the duties at home, earning fifty eight cents compared to the men's dollar in the 1963 as demonstrates the following diagram. And also, it shows the gender wage gap narrowed by 20% in the four decades following the 1970s with woman earning 79 cents to the man's dollar as of 2012.

77 Cents for Every Dollar

Median earnings of full-time, year-round workers, age 15 and older

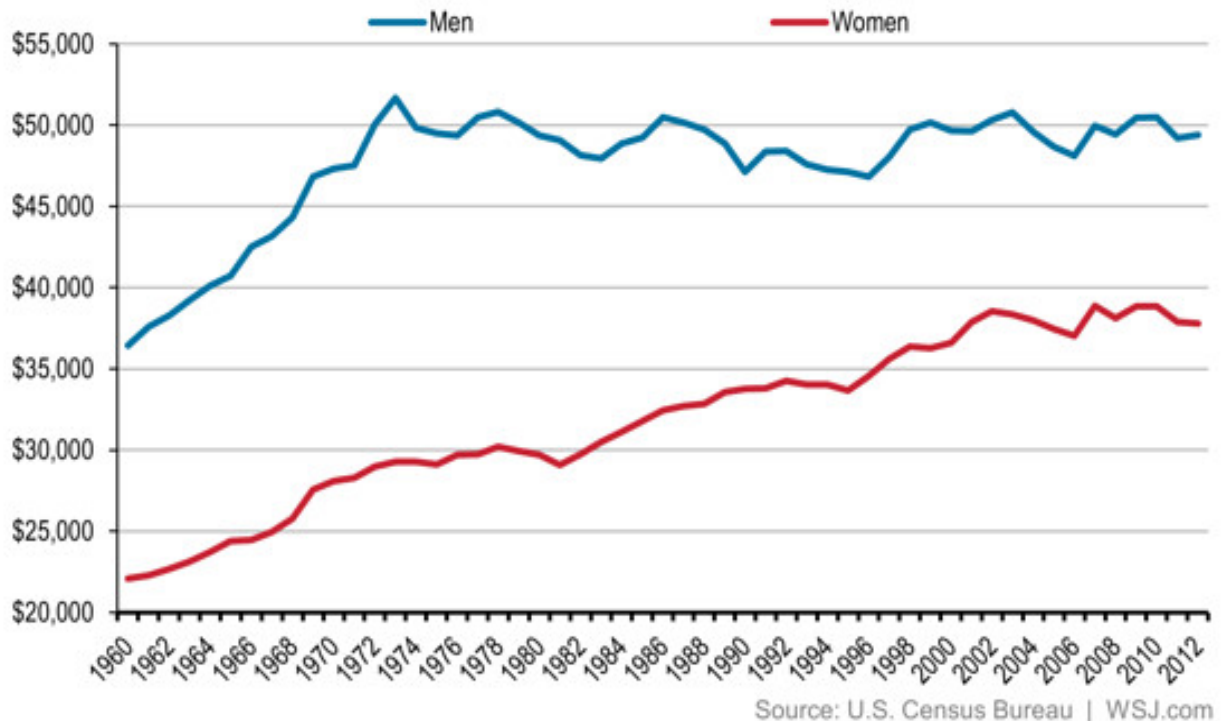
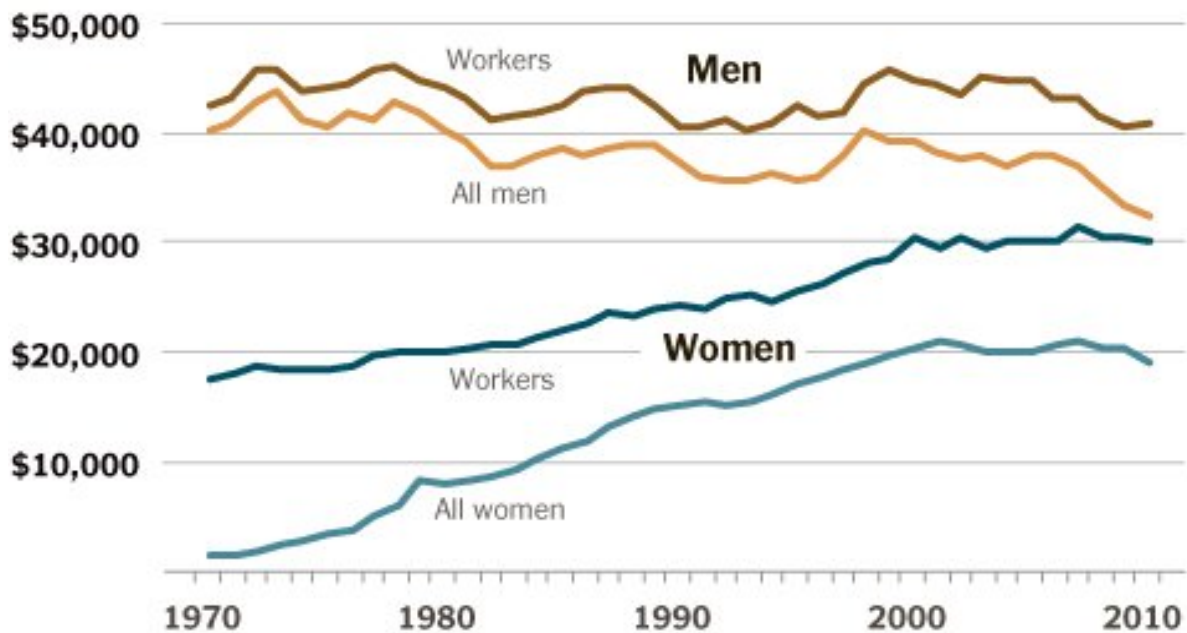


Figure 1.1: earnings among women and men from 1960 to 2012

(U.S. Census Bureau/ WSJ.com)

Women were totally discriminated comparing with men, even when they had their job interviews they were told that if they were a man they could have the job but they do not want to risk that type of position on a woman.

EARNINGS of people ages 25-64



NOTE: Adjusted for inflation, in 2010 dollars.

Source: U.S. Census via The Hamilton Project, The Brookings Institution THE NEW YORK TIMES

Figure 1-2: Earnings among men and women from 1970 to 2010

(U.S. Census via The Hamilton Project, www.hamiltonproject.org)

This diagram shows the earnings of all people who are between 25 and 64 years old, according to the gender wage gap, women be them workers or not have always a less salary than men.

While much progress has been made over the years as clearly showed in Figure 1-1 and figure 1-2, the problem of gender equality is still very prominent, discrimination of women can still be seen in and out of the workplace, today the wage gap although improved is still present and employers are often biased towards

men in higher job positions with women still in middle skilled jobs. However, with every single passing day women and men are working towards true and total equality.

1.4.2.1. Women's Liberation Movement

In 1963, Betty Friedan published *The Feminine Mystique*, this book stemmed from her past experiences from attending college finding work as a reporter in New York but then losing her job when she was pregnant with her second child.

In the *Feminine Mystique*, New York academic Betty Friedan wrote a devastating critique of the modern woman's situation and she said: "Women as well as men can only find their identity in work that uses their full capacities. A woman cannot find her identity in the dull routine of housework" (Friedan, 1963, p324).

This brought attention to the real unhappiness of women at that time. This book questioned the woman's role and the distinct separation of spheres between women and men, she started her writings about the sufferings of women as housewives and demonstrates their situation by calling it: "the problem that has no name" and this was explained in the beginning of her book, *The Feminine Mystique*, when she wrote: The problem lay buried, unspoken, for many years in the minds of American women. It was a strange stirring, a sense of dissatisfaction, a yearning [that is, a longing] that women suffered in the middle of the twentieth century in the United States." As a matter of fact, Friedan directly commented on the position of women at that time as she continues: "Each suburban [house] wife struggled with it alone. As she made the beds, shopped for groceries ... she was afraid to ask even of herself the silent question — "Is this all?" (Friedan, 1963, p15)

The ideas expressed Friedan's book caught like wildfire. In fact, there was no manner to identify the distinct reason of the second wave of feminism, but it was believed that Friedan's book was a great contributor that helped to the emergence of the opening of this movement.

The women of the 1960s followed a strict set of beauty standards, they were expected to wear skirts and dresses, keep their hair in fashion and have makeup that would look elegant. However, the younger people at that time began a counterculture to these standards, mud girls and hippies began to arise and new style, new norms and beliefs have emerged in the society.

Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, women and men across the nation banded together for a string of protests regarding equal rights for women, This was explained in the book written by *Gilbert Lynn* called *Particular Passions: Betty Friedan*, Women of Wisdom Series in which she said:

The shores are strewn with the casualties of the feminine mystique. They did give up their own education to put their husbands through college, and then, maybe against their own wishes, ten or fifteen years later, they were left in the lurch by divorce. The strongest were able to cope more or less well, but it wasn't that easy for a woman of forty-five or fifty to move ahead in a profession and make a new life for herself and her children or herself alone (Lynn, 2001, p.18)

Many second wave feminists tossed aside the idea of having select leaders of the movement, while the various forms of media at the time picked and chose the one they thought to be suitable as a leader.

Gloria Steinem is a feminist in the 1970s that had a significant presence in the media of the time. She is a journalist and she created miss magazine; a solely feminist magazine that empowers women and still stands tall in the newsstands to achieve equal rights for women and make them visible and powerful. Gloria Steinem, in a public seminar says⁷:

⁷ (www.publicseminar.org/2019/01/celebrating-gloria-steinem)

This is no simple reform. It really is a revolution. Sex and race because they are easy and visible differences have been the primary ways of organizing human beings into superior and inferior groups and into the cheap labor on which this system still depends. We are talking about a society in which there will be no roles other than those chosen or those earned. We are really talking about humanism.

In 1961, the president John F Kennedy attempted to address the inequality problems regarding women of the time by creating the Presidential Commission on the Status of Women, and put former First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt as the first head of the operation. The commission addressed the discrimination of the nation's woman in certain fields of the culture at the time. These monumental strides and legislation marked many wins for women but there was still many problems of discrimination and inequality. Women have been marching and agitating for liberation, for everyone; for people in the third world, for workers in factories and for students.

The first women's liberation meetings were held in Australia in 1969 and by 1970, most of the big cities had at least one group where women began to examine their own oppression. They knew that it was legal to pay them 25cents, 25% less than men and that there were many occupations and jobs that simply were not available to them and they were excluded from all sorts of jobs and all the domains just because they were women. Femininity was a straitjacket, imposing and forcing behavior that rendered women seen as lowered and in an inferior position in order to be conventional to the existing standards.

1.4.2.2. Simone De Beauvoir

Early twentieth century literature created a new form of female self-expression and aspiration. Simone de Beauvoir says:

[Woman] is simply what man decrees; thus she is called “the sex,” by which is meant that she appears essentially to the male as a sexual being. For him she is sex — absolute sex, no less. She is defined and differentiated with reference to man and not he with reference to her; she is incidental, the inessential as opposed to the essential. He is the Subject, he is the Absolute — she is the Other. (De Beauvoir, 1949, p.3)

De Beauvoir rethought the gender construct. When she explained the problem of inferiority that was expanded in the society, she argued that women have the same choices as men and they are capable enough to orient their wants. Moreover, she explained that they can choose to raise, lift up and elevate themselves and opt for their freedom. Thus they decide to take the responsibility of themselves and of the world, she wrote in her book the *Second Sex* about the necessity of reevaluating women’s values. She said: “To decline to be the Other, to refuse to be a party to the deal — this would be for women to renounce all the advantages conferred upon them by their alliance with the superior caste”. She, also, claimed that:

Man-the-sovereign will provide woman-the-liege with material protection and will undertake the moral justification of her existence; thus she can evade at once both economic risk and the metaphysical risk of a liberty in which ends and aims must be contrived without assistance. Indeed, along with the ethical urge of each individual to affirm his subjective existence, there is also the temptation to forgo liberty and become a thing. (De Beauvoir, 1949, p.6)

A new thinking paves the way for the second wave of modern western feminism. When the 60’s arrived all of the peace movement, the pill, theoretical feminism and practical feminism have emerged. Betty Friedan claims that women should not envy men, but accept their own female nature. Kate Millett called out male dominance as

a cultural construct. Germaine Greer declared the nuclear family was the source of women's disempowerment.

Activists fought against workplace intolerance, segregated service ads and abortion laws. They fought for equal pay and financial freedom. Long-established good looks were challenged encouraged and supported by the civil rights movement, the peace movement and gay liberation, and for this grow different forms of feminism.

Despite all this activity, full equality for women was not achieved. But today, women are able to participate in sports, advanced to high level jobs in all fields and receive equal opportunities. Therefore, the new generation needs to take up the demand for equality pass the legislation and in women's lives as Betty Friedan wrote in her book *Life so Far: A Memoir* and she said:

What used to be the feminist agenda is now an everyday reality. The way women look at themselves, the way other people look at women, is completely different, completely different than it was thirty years ago... Our daughters grow up with the same possibilities as our sons. (Friedan, 2006, p375)

Thanks to legislation passed during the second wave feminism, women are able to enjoy many rights that they could have never dreamed of a hundred years ago to shift to another new wave of feminism.

1.4.3. The Third Wave Feminism

The third wave feminism started in the mid of 1990s and it is a continuation and a follow-up that pursues the second wave movement. The emergence of this wave tends to be much more multiplied about sexuality and personal announcements plus model preferred choices and much less doctrinaire. The third wave feminism appears as an inclination to be more watchful mostly on the alert than some second wave feminists were as challenging to class and race concerns.

This is why feminists of this era look definitely more self confident to involve in spheres formerly forbidden engaged to dare use power in politics, media and the electoral process. The term is firstly coined by Rebecca Walker in her famous article "Becoming the Third Wave" (1992) claiming her position as not a postfeminism feminist but as the third wave:

The movement in flux is often referred to as the Third Wave of the U.S. women's movement, interchangeably called "Third Wave Feminism." There appears no consensus regarding the coining of the term "Third Wave." Some accounts, like Lorber, point to Rebecca Walker, daughter of legendary feminist writer and activist Alice Walker, who boldly asserted in a 1992 Ms. Magazine: "I am not a postfeminism feminist. I am the Third Wave." (Evans, 2007, p.208)

Her plea is renowned where she says:

So, I write this as a plea to all women, especially women of my generation: Let Thomas' confirmation serve to remind you, as it did me, that the fight is far from over. Let this dismissal of a woman's experience move you to anger. Turn that outrage into political power. (Rebeca, 1992, 41)

She challenges voting for conditions:

Do not vote for them unless they work for us. Do not have sex with them, do not break bread with them, do not nurture them if they don't prioritize our freedom to control our bodies and our lives. I am not a post-feminism feminist. I am the Third Wave. (Rebeca, 1992, 41)

Radical democracy, women's autonomy and full independence were the main calls by the third wave of feminism were other contributors from women supported Rebecca Walker like Garrison (2000), in her writing: *U.S. Feminism-grrrr! Style! Youth (sub)Cultures and the Technologicis of the Third Wave.* and Lynn Chancer

(1998), *Reconcilable Differences: Confronting Beauty, Pornography and the Future of Feminism*.

Around the same time, Chela Sandoval and Barbara Smith argued in an unpublished book that “Third Wave” was supported by women of colour who exposed the Second Wave’s lack of racial-ethnic diversity and inter-sectional analyses that see race, class, and gender as interlocking systems of oppression as thinks Patricia Hill Collins (2000) in her book *Black Feminist Thought*.

The third wave feminism sums up a newer feminist expression basically targeted at realizing a radical democracy which witnessed drastic change attitudes and conceptualization of the concept to focus rather some biased and marginalized groups that Beasley explains in the term LGBTI:

Indeed, while this subfield has become more attentive to diversity, it still primarily attends to white middle-class heterosexual men. By comparison, Sexuality Studies is mostly (like Feminism) concerned with marginalised identities and practices – that is, with LGBTI (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex) and/or ‘Queer’ sexualities. Nevertheless, more recently there has been a growing body of work in Sexuality Studies concerned with heterosexuality, with ‘mainstream’ sexuality. (Beasley, 2005, 17)

Women and feminists of that period defined this wave as what it means for them; for instance, according to some women that means having a job and being a full-time worker and having children. For the others, that means opting out and leaving the workforce after a career to go home and be a full-time mother, or simply not to marry and be free since this is more comfortable for her being.

Amy Richards who is an American activist, organizer, writer, television producer, feminist, and art historian, introduced third wave feminism from a cultural view point as "third wave because it's an expression of having grown up with feminism". (Rowe-Finkbeiner, 2004, p85), so trying to link 2nd to third wave feminism, it is only possible when to link politics to culture. Those feminists grew

up all along striking events like civil rights, women's rights and Kennedy era and the Vietnam War.

Rather third wave feminists meet with more advanced technology like the Internet. In this context, Diane Elam wrote in her essay entitled "*Generations, Academic Feminists in dialogue*":

This problem manifests itself when senior feminists insist that junior feminists be good daughters, defending the same kind of feminism their mothers advocated. Questions and criticisms are allowed, but only if they proceed from the approved brand of feminism. Daughters are not allowed to invent new ways of thinking and doing feminism for themselves; feminists' politics should take the same shape that it has always assumed. (Baumgardner and Richards, 2000, p77)

Feminists in the third wave have come to categorize themselves within a chronological context in history that traces its legacy from the second wave of the feminist movement; on the other hand, while they pay scarce reverence to their foremothers, they claim convincingly that the feminist experience is different this time (Baumgardner and Richards 2000; Dicker and Piepmeier 2003; Henry 2004).

Accordingly, Benita Roth (1999) studies the difference between the waves that emerge from different feminisms descendant of dissimilar racial and cultural groups and shape different feminist movements:

The reemergence of feminism in the 1960s and 1970s needs to be understood as the reemergence of 'feminisms,' plural form of the noun, because feminisms from different racial and ethnic groups formed organizationally distinct feminist movements in the second wave. At the same time, these movements were linked in a crowded, competitive social movement sector, and there were mutual and complicated relationships between feminist activists from different racial/ethnic communities. (p.70)

Thus, the third wave feminism emerged in multiple levels representing women all over the world carrying their histories, concerns and words.

New clothing to the concept starts to be coined opposing former labels about the term and oppose many granted interpretations. What may seem awkward to some is that a group of third feminism wavers contest the feminist as put by Vivien Labaton and Dawn Lundy Martin, in *The Fire This Time: Young Activists and the New Feminism* where they argue:

The feminism of younger activists goes beyond the rhetoric of inclusion. The most significant lesson that we have learned from the second wave's faux pas is that a 17 feminist movement cannot succeed if it does not challenge power structures of wealth and race. If the model within which one works centralizes whiteness and/or wealth, the poorest and most victimized women in the world will be overlooked. (Sheryl, 2004, pxxix)

Unfortunately some traditional recalls impede justice as Vivien Labaton and Dawn Lundy Martin continue to argue:

This concentration on 'traditional' women's rights often obscures the importance of the complex network of gendered injustices that we bring to the foreground in *The Fire This Time*. In other words, we see a new movement evolving from one in which there is a dialogue about feminism and race to a feminist movement whose conversation is race, gender, and globalization. (Sheryl, 2004, pxxix)

The dilemma sets in arguing freedom but be confined to feminism, this could appear odd to any sexist and anti-racist movements that were the main demands of feminism and the expression of "I am a feminist" as simply put and definitely argues starts to change to "I am not a feminist but..." Thus, third wave feminists

tend to be more visible and real as sustained by the media which help to cope third wave feminism with post modernism:

While expressing some truth, the notion that the 1980s can be dismissed as a postfeminist decade is, in great part, a fiction that has helped to propagate conservatives' view of feminism and that now serves to grant a new generation of feminists a way by which to distinguish themselves from their immediate predecessors...and maintenance of this chronology of feminism's history (Henry, 2004, p21)

Some scholars go to even confirm the Death of Feminism, which no longer helps to achieve better career for women like Jennifer Pozner (2003) who thinks that syndrome of feminism death was mythological and a creation of the lobby from media:

In an on-line debate about their 'Is Feminism Dead' attack, feminist author Phyllis Chesler asked Time's Ginia Bellafante why she 'didn't...take on the media' instead of blaming the women's movement for its own misrepresentation in popculture, Bellafante's curt answer spoke volumes: 'My next job won't be at Time Warner, and then I'll rip the media to shreds' (Pozner, 2003,49)

So, third wavers look for urgent need to theorize the movement to defend their camp as not being elitist or restrictively exclusionary; as complained by Kristina Sheryl Wong:

Too bad the rest of the world couldn't understand the kind of feminism I was embracing without taking a women's studies class. Was it also possible that the only people who know about this so-called third wave feminism are the 'learned' feminists who have already struggled with the definition in classes and discussion groups? (Sheryl, 2004, p 296)

Thus, third wave feminists go to look upon theorizing the third wave literature though meeting many challenges in doing so. They assist their arguments by defending this hybridized wave is a legitimate, indisputable, justifiable, and right as any other adaptation of veracity, truthfulness and reality. Indeed theorists in the third wave advocated an improvement account about feminist history, as should be discussed in the following section.

1.5. Feminist Theories

Feminism was viewed by different angles up to the discipline and area of research but when it comes to theorizing the concept, theorists rather view the movements through different eras in a newer perception more scientific and conventional for academicians.

Beasley, in her book Gender and Sexuality, expands the concept of gender difference to power extracting three compounding terms: Fertility, Masculinity and Sexuality as showed in the following figure:

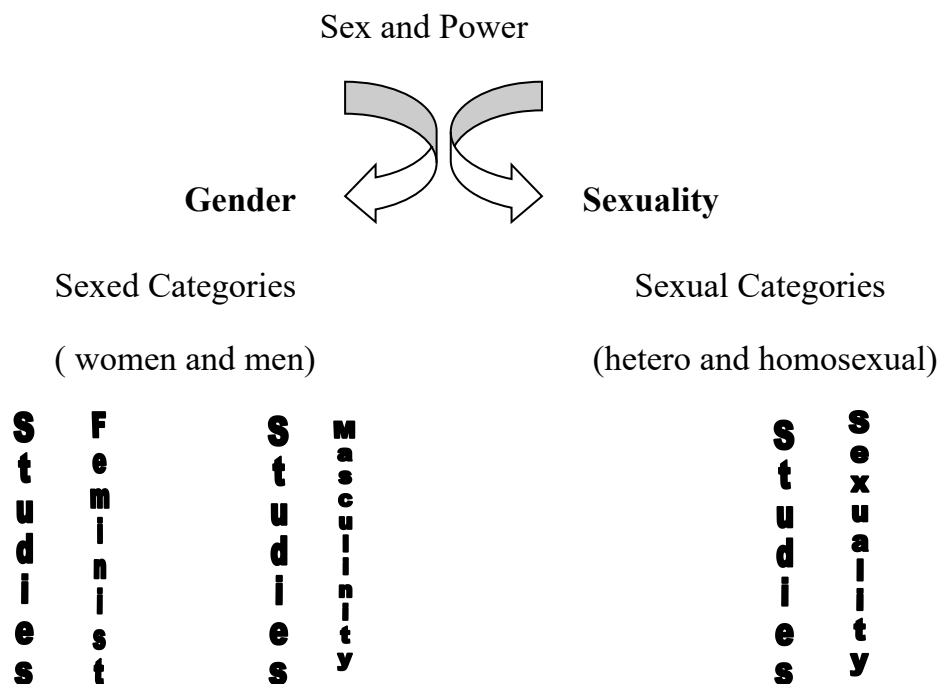


Figure 1.3 The gender/sexuality field and subfields (Source: Beasley 2005, p. 2)

However, Beasley thinks that theorists differ in viewing these relationships since other factors are of great importance to be involved like race, ethnicity, and colonial imperialism.

This falsely universalised MAN, who is supposed to represent us all, cannot acknowledge its gender specificity, its masculine particularity. As some feminists point out, this has meant that the masculine bias of mainstream thought is ironically sometimes dangerous to men (Beasley 2005, p. 16)

This implies that men can in no way be the norm of women representative, actually, to center or decenter the periphery of women:

This means that Feminism is a critical stance that decentres the assumptions of the mainstream in terms of centre (men)–periphery (women). This is also a feature of Sexuality and Masculinity Studies, which similarly decentre notions of the norm in relation to sex and power. (Beasley 2005, p16)

Feminism main directions and orientations were deeply explained by Beasley in her book *Gender and sexuality*, in which she assumed that feminism takes different forms through time engendering factors of powerful/powerless men and women usually fluid and instable. Beasley also outlines the new orientations of gender and sexuality through two different areas: Modernism and postmodernism where powers of weakness and strength alter simultaneously as demonstrated in the following figure:

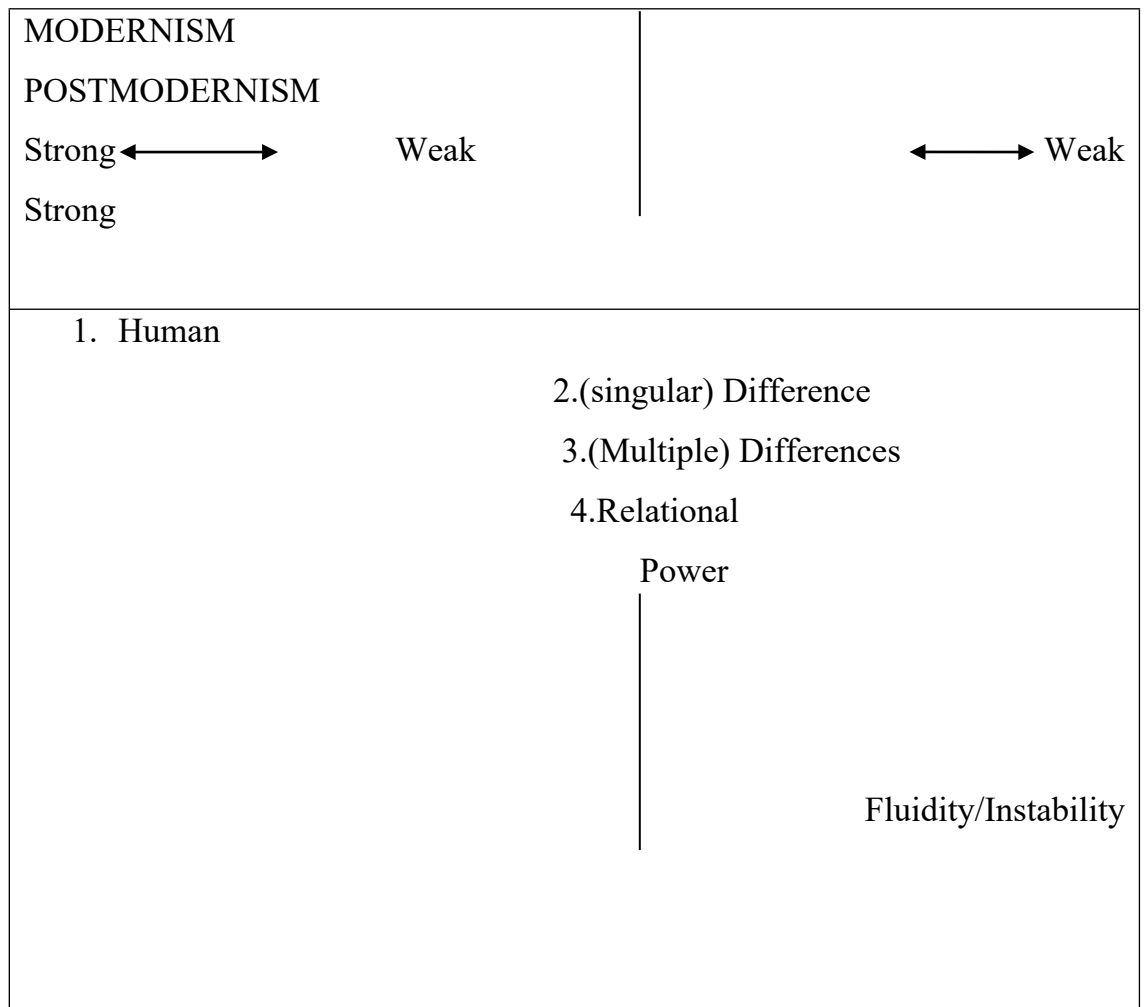


Figure 1.4 Map of the gender/sexuality field: (Beasley 2005, p.18)

Beasley thoroughly explains the theory by moving from a wave to another and by theorizing in the meanwhile different terms like liberalism and power.

First wave feminism, all along the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, was related to liberalism that encouraged freedom for all the individuals and it is included as a form of right to have the opportunity to be free from the interference created by the government, as much as possible, to achieve their own success and their own path and wealth. It is declared by Beasley (2005) that “The social and political rights of supposedly gender-neutral individuals were said to reside in their humanity, in what distinguished them as human, in their ability to reason.” (p.18)

Second wave feminism rather linked to strict criticism more universal changing from Marxist \socialist and liberal feminism to radical feminism. The latter was referenced in a more modernist way which was defined firstly as:

All of them conceive of a universalisable truth or mode of analysis that can reveal the key mechanism(s) of all society/societies. This truth is about power and ‘oppression’. In discovering the key mechanism/truth about power, the aim is to throw off macro (large-scale) structures of power that oppress women and other subordinated groups. (Beasley, 2005, 19)

Then they shift from power and oppression to suppression and dominance:

As ‘power over’ rather than ‘power to’. It acts downwards, in a negative fashion to constrict or restrict. Major analytical terms employed by second-wave feminism – like ‘patriarchy’ and ‘compulsory heterosexuality’ – indicate the negative nature of power, its quality of repression. (Beasley, 2005, 19)

The dominant groups always have power over the weakest owned by them as a property, “Power is owned by the dominant group, as an attribute or property. In short, men have power. Thirdly, the aim of this theory is to overthrow power, to overthrow men’s authority”. (Beasley, 2005, 19). Other focuses of this theory were set upon the ‘self’ especially in modernist era:

The fourth element of this Emancipatory/Modernist form of Feminism involves a particular notion of the self. Instead of accepting the mainstream Liberal universals of the ‘individual’, ‘the human’ and ‘reason’, second-wave feminists expanded and altered them. (Beasley, 2005, 19)

So feminism, be it first or second wave, was rather linked to emancipatory or liberationist movement, usually considered as modernist targeted at the freeing of the self on the basis of these suggestions, “this form of feminism exhibits a faith in ‘metanarratives’ (Lyotard, 1984)– that is, large-scale macro holistic explanatory accounts which offer notions of a singular central universal ‘truth’ about society, power and ‘human nature’/human-ness”(Beasley, 2005, 19)

Beasley (2005) explains more and adds:

It views power as domination downwards and as the property of the dominant, such that power can be thrown off and society can be made free of power. 3. It conceives the self as repressed/oppressed by social power but having an inner core (universal Human essence) beyond power, which can be emancipated or liberated. (p.20)

In spite of scholars’ different endeavour to settle schooling concepts for Feminism, it stands yet not a clear cut matter because when practicing this in the terrain, obstacles evolve to impede the easiness for social change. Still, literary writers resist combating injustice, racism and other dehumanizing acts to break the silence and constitute a free gender identity.

1.6. Interseccionality in Feminist Thought

The term intersectionality was firstly introduced to feminist theory by Kimberle Crenshaw who provides detailed aspects about the term in many of her writings. Crenshaw is a legal black feminist relating theory to race, racism to the law; since she is an expert in the domain of civil rights and a professor of law.

Besides all, she is also the director of the center of interseccionality and social policy at Columbia University which she co-founded in 2011, and also the co-founder of the African American policy forum. Moreover and in 1989, Crenshaw

creates for the first time what she coined “intersectionality theory”. She has a famous paper that she produced for the University of Chicago Legal Forum that she entitled “Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Anti-racist Politics”. (Crenshaw, 1989)

In this article, Crenshaw (1989) endeavours to debate what she herself calls “the single access framework” which focuses the difference that caused problems in gender difference or in other words the neglect of black women from public and private spheres which duplicates the real sense of discrimination. This is why, the cases of racial discrimination are used to discuss discrimination has erased black women. Thoroughly discussed by Crenshaw which used to focus on black men and neglect sex discrimination among white women. She relates such neglect to our own understanding which maybe distorted when it appears to talk about both sexism and racism. In fact, black women indeed experience and suffer from such difference in a very racial and discriminating way. Yet, Crenshaw argued that the black woman has larger perspectives to reach and her portrait was limited to sexism and racism. She immensely focused that the black woman is beyond these two things and her pre-existing structures have to be renewed, rethought, recast and urgently revisited. Thomson Becky (2002) introduced the concept of intersectionality as a term intended to illuminate dynamics that have often been overlooked by feminist movements and theory.

For Crenshaw, interseccionality refers to the way that multiple social identities are intersected and overlapped with different connected systems of racial discrimination, patriarchy and oppression.

Accordingly, the experience of black life often discriminated is in fact beneficial to create a world full of different identities and this in fact makes people human to live together without discrimination.

This idea was basically explained by Crenshaw that she shortens in the term she coins intersectionality. The scholar deeply regards the case of black women who

suffered from neglect and rejection. Fixmer-Oraiz, and Wood, Natalie, and Julia (2015) in their book *Gendered Lives* argued that in the first wave feminism, racial equality was disregarded and totally ignored, however, the main movement's concern and objective was principally about yelling for their right to achieve equality between both genders men and women as the "early women's rights movements are often seen as exclusively pertaining to the membership, concerns, and struggles of white women alone. (Fixmer-Oraiz, and Wood, Natalie, and Julia, 2015, p59)

Mostly, the term intersectionality is a metaphor that refers to that miserable black life where race discrimination and gender discrimination blindly blend together in a way that people cannot understand in the eyes of truth.

In her article entitled *Mapping the margins: intersectionality, identity politics, and violence against women of colour*, Crenshaw attracts public attention towards the large and vast distinction between white and non-white women which refers to race or class.

In order to show that non-white women have a vastly different experience from white women due to their race and/or class and that their experiences are not easily voiced or pinpointed, Crenshaw explores two types of male violence against women: domestic violence and rape. Through her analysis of these two forms of male violence against women, Crenshaw says that the experiences of non-white women consist of a combination (or, intersection) of both racism and sexism. (Crenshaw, 1991)

She justifies the reason by explaining that the group of non white women are always present within conversations and discussions that have been intended to tackle issues as race or sex but "not both at the same time -- non-white women are marginalized within both of these systems of oppression as a result." (Crenshaw, 1991).

Three aspects of intersectionality were identified by Crenshaw and indeed they affect the vision or the visibility of non-white women including structural intersectionality, political intersectionality, and representational intersectionality, according to Crenshaw, Structural intersectionality defines the way the non-white women undergo domestic oppression and rape in “a manner qualitatively different than that of white women.” (Crenshaw, 1991)

However, Political intersectionality deals with laws and policies projected to augment fairness and equality “have paradoxically decreased the visibility of violence against non-white women.” Finally, Crenshaw (1991) explained representational intersectionality as a manner that “delves into how pop culture portrayals of non-white women can obscure their own authentic lived experiences.

Because Crenshaw was herself the daughter of a mother and a father who set up the civil right movement since her mother was herself among the race women who defended with fierce and force racial justice, they combat racism that must black people, women in particular suffered from, especially that systematic violence which impedes them from national attention.

Accordingly, intersectionality as a feminist theory comes to attract attention about the sum of black women refused from employment in industrial spheres and elsewhere. It was unfair to consider jobs for men only or white women, which creates an intersectional discrimination in gendering race and composing a structured intersectional form of discrimination.

1.7. What is Womanism

While black people are exploring feminism, they inevitably ask themselves if they are feminists or womanists. Is Womanism just feminism rebranded or is it a little bit more than that? Black women, in particular, have recognized that feminism did not encompass their experiences and perspectives and only white women who were

concerned, they have always thought about the fact that if feminism does not include all the women and if its activism increases race privilege and leaves some women out, deprived and marginalized, so whom are they fighting for exactly?

This situation pushed black women to be aware of the discrimination around them and as a reaction they thought for another concept that separates itself from feminism and focuses on black women which is womanism. So what is Womanism? Womanism is a term coined by Alice Walker, who famously wrote the novel *The Colour Purple* (1982). The term first appeared in her book *In Search OF Our Mother's Garden: Womanist Prose*, published in 1983. She created Womanism to center back women in a feminist movement that largely benefited middle class white women.

While black women also tried to contribute to the feminist movement, their role was invisible and they were not acknowledged, thus Womanism was created. Because white women are often seen as the standard victims of sexism, feminism tends to be very white and rarely considers how black women, specifically deal with being black and female.

This often means black women participating in larger feminist movements tend to feel as though they have to choose between fighting against racism or sexism. Often because of the erasure of black women within the feminist movement, black women participating in feminism sometimes feel like they have to fight against the racism among feminists, who do not see the need to include critiques of white supremacy in their fight against gendered oppression. These feminists are referred to as "white feminists" not necessary because they are white but because their feminism only really seeks to serve white women while actively overlooking black women. And that has been consistent through the history of feminism where black women were often asked to stand at the back of the line while white women asked for their rights first and considered the goals of black women as antagonistic to their own. Alice Walker defines a Womanist as a black feminist, or feminist of colour. She is committed to the survival and the wholeness of all people, male and female. According to Walker, It is important to know that

while Womanism is about loving and appreciating black women and critiquing the classist and racist aspects of white feminism, it is also about supporting and empowering black men, who are often integral parts of a black woman's life and family.

When it comes to differentiating between Womanism and feminism as Alice Walker says: "Womanism is to feminism as purple to lavender" (1985: xi-xii). Meaning that, there are only slight differences between being a Womanist and being a black feminist. It means that womanism is considered as a darker shade of feminism. Womanist largely do support the larger feminist movement and their ultimate goals, but have carved out their own space to specifically center black women. Whereas black feminists tend to do the same, but seek to work within the existing feminist movement and structure.

1.8. Feminism or Womanism in Afro American Literature?

Introducing Feminism is following a challenge; say even a crisis, especially when inquiring the generic postulation about what women really want which is in short the main tactics of the movement. Chaucer once upon a time questions the same issue in his *The Wife of Bath* when the answer, which should please the queen and release the knight from decapitation who was sinned for raping a virtuous woman was: "women most desire is to control over their husbands" Part X (Section10)⁸. Centuries ago, Chaucer used this assumption for fun but in fact, it appears to be an important question that has radically changed literary tradition about many rights for long kept as a male property. Feminism in black literature has come to reshape, restyle and redesign a long literary canon often considered as elapsed, depressed and censored.

The movement thus has subdued distinct shaping up the culture of a community doomed to the worse treatment of the black female gender in a supposed righteous developed country like America. A host of black women writers struggles

⁸ <https://www.sparknotes.com/lit/the-canterbury-tales/section8/>

with their pens and papers to echo the suffering and the torture of their peers targeting at renewing their generation newly oriented; sometimes in despair and in hope many times again with time. Pointing to remedy the adult male savage sexuality that often caused the loss of young black girls were nucleus themes in most of their novels. In fact, Bell Hooks in her book *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Centre*:

My awareness of feminist struggle was stimulated by social circumstance. Growing up in a Southern, black, father dominated, working class household, I experienced (as did my mother, my sisters, and my brother) varying degrees of patriarchal tyranny and it made me angry- it made dominance and enabled me to resist sexist socialization. Frequently White feminist act as if black women did not know sexist oppression existed until they voiced feminist sentiment. They believe they are providing black woman with “the” analysis and “the” program for liberation. (Hooks, 1984 p10)

She continues

They do not understand, cannot even imagine, that black women, as well as other groups of women who live daily in oppressive situations, often acquire an awareness often patriarchal politics from their lived experience, just as they develop strategies for resistance (even though they may not resist on a sustained or a organized basis (Hooks, 1984 p10)

Womanism was just a continuation to feminism mostly adapted to Afro American literature; but it develops to a more stretched extension with a whole independent theoretical framework constituting a rigid feminist theory.

1.9. Womanism and Black Feminism

Black women writers broke the silence by the 1970's, and their perseverance leads them to move to action by voicing Black Womanhood. No one could imagine before that this category of women would a day overcome challenges and empower the weak to gain authority and the rejected to be settled. However, hot debated concerns currently discuss the concept of Womanism as a black feminism.

In contradiction with some racist feminist movements, Alice Walker seemed to first coined the word Womanism to distinguish black women seek their rights aside and independently define themselves as feminists. The term was rooted in black popular culture from which Walker (1984) borrowed to speak out her famous simile that Womanism to feminism as purple to lavender.

She targets at presenting black life ideals and ordeals to reconstruct safe relationships between men and women without being enemies. She states four introducing patterns to Womanism:

The first

“Womanist. 1. From womanish. (opp of “girlish”, i.e., frivolous, irresponsible, not serious). A black feminist or feminist of colour. From the black folk expression of mothers to female children, “You acting womanish” i.e., like a woman” (Walker, 1984, xi-xii).

The second

A Woman who loves other women, sexually and / or nonsexually. Appreciates and prefers women's culture, women's emotional flexibility (values tears as natural counterbalance of laughter), and women's strength ... committed to survival and wholeness of entire people, male and female... traditionally universalist. (Walker, 1984, xi-xii).

The third “Loves music ... loves the spirit. Loves love ... Loves struggles. Loves the folk. Loves herself. Regardless”, and the fourth “ Womanist is to feminist as purple to lavender” (Walker, 1984, xi-xii).

Therefore, the movement started from a separation of the whites usually boasting and free from coloured women, oppressed and set in the bottom of the social ladder. facing binary conflict between the white and the other; the latter lies in women often different in race, ethnicity, class and origin. Michie (1991) thinks that “white feminists wanted to preserve their position of speaking subject and that they marginalized coloured women because they did not fit into the prescribed norms” (p.60). Formerly racism was part of feminism scholarship, which fostered the denial of whites towards black women and their children. This is why Womanism has come as a reaction to feminism to be stronger and more focusing the coloured women issues to be larger at the level of political activism “placing African American women and other excluded groups in the center of analysis opens up possibilities for a both\and conceptual stance, one in which all groups possess varying amounts of power and privilege in one historically created system” (Bryson, 2003, p.229).

Womanism develops to constitute itself not just as a movement but also as Womanist theology, by the first decade of the 21st century inspiring its content from Walker’s project to engrave it as an operational paradigm. Hence many writers adopting the new movements consider themselves as womanists than feminists like Buchi Emecheta, Mariana Ba, Miriam Tlali to cite only few.

1.10. Afropolitan Feminism

The recognition of Africans in and outside Africa is the overall meaning of afropolitanism which is an analytical concept and a sort of naming Africans through multiple ways of being today. In literature the term Afropolitan is used to describe

African feminist characters who were born in Africa then migrate out; or for those who were born in the Diaspora. For Selasi, Afropolitansim is to be African of ethnic mixes and it is the new way Africans trace for themselves usually bred on African shores but seek knowledge in the West:

Some three decades later this scattered tribe of pharmacists, physicists, physicians (and the odd polygamist) has set up camp around the globe. The caricatures are familiar. The Nigerian physics professor with faux-Coogi sweater; the Kenyan marathonist with long legs and rolled r's; the heavysset Gambian braiding hair in a house that smells of burnt Kanekalon (Selasi, 2005, paragraph 5).

African identity. Adeniyi Ogunyankin terms it in another critical way when he comments:

If Afropolitan and Afropolitanism are to remain in our critical lexicon, I would suggest that we need to move away from classist conceptualizations of them, such as those promulgated by Selasi (2005), and instead come to understand Afropolitans as Africans of any social class who respect, value and embrace their 'Africanness' – which can have various meanings for different people – and are at the same time aware that, at the level of their everyday realities, embodiment and social political thought, they are very much connected to, and influenced by, the global. (Adeniyi, 2016, 39).

Gunyankin finds this detailed definition is less disruptive and besides less reliant “on spatial mobility, thereby providing flexibility in determining how the global and

local intersect in the production of identities and lifestyles.” (Adeniyi, 2016, 39). Afropolitanism is viewed by Mbembe as “an aesthetic, and a particular poetic of the world. He describes it as a way of being in the world and refusing on principle any form of victim identity.” (Mbembe, 2007, pp.26–30)

From the lenses of Mbembe, asserts in his article published in the *Africulture* magazine (2005) that Afropolitanism is seen as:

...an art, a philosophy, an aesthetics that can say something new and of signifier to the world in general. Today, many Africans live outside Africa. Others have freely chosen to live on the Continent, and not necessarily in the countries where they were born. Even more, many of them are fortunate enough to have experienced several worlds and have not ceased, in fact, to come and go, developing, at the turn of these movements, an incalculable wealth of look and feel. These are usually people who can express themselves in more than one language. They are developing, sometimes without their knowledge, a transnational culture that I call "Afropolitan".(Mbembe, 2005)

To be Afropolitan is to admit that there is the existence of Africa in the world and the presence of the world in Africa as well. Their movements across nations make them unique through their capture of different thoughts, cultures and traditions and yet, they can be multilingual and multicultural.

Gikandi from the other hand sees Afropolitans as cultural hybrid through the movements across nations and he refers to Afropolitanism as the fact that how the African represents himself in the world and what he can show from his africanity, he adds that the Afropolitan can be multilingual and multicultural.

Thus, Afropolitan feminism is the blending of common feminist attributes with Afropolitan principles; it is cosmopolitan with African roots which African intellectuals strive to spread to explore the afro-diasporic. Accordingly, the revolt of the African woman to rebel against race and gender segregation is the main feature of Afropolitan feminism.

1.11. Conclusion

This chapter overlooks the evolution of feminism throughout time, from linguistic, historical and literary viewpoints. It sums up feminism as a concept through its three waves, and then it clarifies feminism in black literature, mainly named Womanism or black feminism. Accordingly, Womanism has become recently a philosophy; but it still dictates the same ethics of the movement since its launching. Womanist scholars advocate the defense of women over the world, and demean or pour scorn on any offence towards culture; because of being different or not suitable to any racist convictions. Resultantly, womanism concept has taken wider dimension, to represent other diasporic minorities for which the concept of Afropolitanism has recently been given.

Chapter Two

Exploration of Cultural, Racial and Gender Segregation in *The Bluest Eye and Beloved.*

2.1. Introduction

African-Americans as a splinter group of population of the American society experienced several economic, social and political clashes due to the prevailing discrimination in a community where a systematic bias pervades their lives in favor of the white culture. The consolidation of the white's traditions, norms and prominences as superiors who dominated their square, rendered people of colour unable to join an idiosyncratic type of life that goes in line with their expectancy and the way they imagined and waited their living. In a society which was completely different and particular, they found themselves obliged to settle down, hold on and cope with all the circumstances imposed on them. African American history is a paradigm that displays the struggles and efforts of black people which took different forms and figures to survive and get their rights in a dominant white society. This record of onerousness that thrashed the African Americans, and the hardness they knew and went through, had a real impact on their culture and affected badly their lives, a reason that induced their quest for identification and development as well, in all the political, economic and social fields.

Accordingly, this chapter attempts to introduce the struggles of the African Americans and the difficulties that have been long and tough during their entire life, through making reference to Toni Morrison including the novels of *The Bluest Eye* and *Beloved*. It also shows the way blacks have faced and resisted to the harsh lifestyle they have experienced and gone through. Moreover, it endeavours to demonstrate those epitomes of the black's fights for their rights to improve their situations and impose their own culture, chiefly focusing on black women to draw attention to their tussles and endurance to stand up and arise in a society where racism and sexism prevail.

2.2. Feminism is a French Origin

The term firstly references to French word "féminisme" which goes back to 19th century French discourse, after the political agitation of the 1830s. "Invention of the word "feminism" has long been attributed to Charles Fourier (1772-1837)" (Offen, 1988,p. 45) Other sources like Paul Robert's Dictionnaire alphanbetique et analogique de la langue francaise attribute the etymology of the word feminism to the utopian socialist, as called by Marx, Fourier with the year as exact as 1837. It indicates both women's rights blended with the suffragettes' movements. Also, in (1964) the "Nouveau dictionnaire etymologique et historique" Larousse also confirms same epistemological notions for the term "feminism" as defined in Robert's dictionary.

Feminism was debated to be conceptualized by black novelists who were considered as womanists to build up a separate niche from feminists whose first attempts rejected the black contribution from their sphere. The concept thus connotes the woman emancipation to assimilate individual autonomy and freedom and goes in parallel with Fourier's mottos that "Liberty, unless enjoyed by all, is unreal and illusory. Whenever the free action of the Passions is restricted to a small minority, there is only oppression" (Fourier,1876, p.76). Human nature deserves to settle social order where both the rich and the poor share their rights in the most natural way enjoying all contentment and social satisfaction. Thusly, the meaning of the word in its global sense refers to political activism held by women for women. Being originated in France, the word feminism combines the French word "la femme" for "woman" plus "ism" to attribute political reference. Jaggar confirms that:

Feminism was originally a French word...when the word "feminism" was introduced into the United States in the early 20th century, however, it was used to refer only to one particular group of women's rights advocates... now "feminism" is commonly used to refer to all those who seek, no matter on what grounds, to end women's subordination. (Jaggar,1983, p.05)

Madame Therese Defarge in Dickens's *Tale of Two Cities* is the villain who pursues a legitimized rage for revenge against the Evrémondes. She is the tricoteuse who observes the guillotine at work through her knitting; sitting, witnessing public decapitations during the French Revolution. So, feminism was limited with women as passive spectators for the action of the lever raised by men. However, feminism took a broader sense in the course of the same revolution, like the marching of Parisian women in October 1789. This implies that feminism is a transformation of radical ideas towards reform. Thenceforth "If words and concepts they convey can be said to be dangerous, then "feminism" and "feminist" must be dangerous word, representing dangerous concepts" (Offen, 1988, p.119). Not infrequently, the concept of feminism suggests complex insinuations and stands debated, as for what it duplicates when the topic is about women to relate to anti-men or, exclusively, reinforce women concerns.

2.3. Rhetoric

Rhetoric is synonymously linked to persuasion as the art a novelist maintains to transfer data in a way blending amusement in fiction with earthly factual events doomed to censure or liberate a society in case. When literature can help develop traumatic incidents to be scrutinized, other disciplines like psychology, pathology, human development can intervene to suggest remedial assessment to those unreliable capricious issues. Linguistics, with all the concerns it engenders, delegates a host of contribution to assess and interpret both act and action usually activated to draw response and reaction, sometimes revolt, towards a piece of art resumed in a text deconstructed to build up minds more aware, more considerate to the character already borrowed from real life. Rhetoric resumes the techniques woven dramatically and artistically from the author to prompt the reader to connect with the text emotionally and rationally, in contexts diverged politically, socially, historically and economically.

In this vein, the critic James Phelan thinks that there are five ways of approaching the novel and he views rhetoric as a substantial fifth element assuring that a literary text is analyzed, in addition to the mimetic and historical approach,

“as an autotelic object (the objective), as an expression – and revelation – of its author’s psychology or experience (the expressive or biographical), as a communication to an audience (rhetorical or reader-response)” (Phelan,1988, p.63).

Rhetoric just matches the author’s better perspectives of a situation with the reader’s background and attitudes. Lodge, rather, relates rhetoric to a discourse which refers to “analyzing the surface structure of narrative texts to show how the linguistic mediation of a story determines its meaning and effect” (Lodge,1980, p.08) An accommodation of style and values in the province of art, shaped together to make an argument understandable. As much the latter is strong as much it widens the authors’ prospects to correct a fallacy or set a good sense or settle a law and more importantly, in the case of black community, raise awareness about the abandoned, the stereotyped, the misjudged, and the incriminated, subjected to accusation with no lawyer to defend nor an authority to fairly judge. Aristotle introduces rhetoric as “a counterpart of Dialectic; for both have to do with matters that are in a manner within the cognizance of all men and not confined to any special science. Hence all men in a manner have a share of both; for all, up to a certain point, endeavour to criticize or uphold an argument, to defend themselves or to accuse” (Aristotle, 11, 1877). Former philosophers like, Gorgias, Plato, and Isocrates introduce rhetoric as an art of persuasion while Aristotle goes further to put it as dialectic with elements of syllogism\enthymeme, induction\example, an audience and a purpose asserting the art of inquiry, argument and persuasion. Rhetoric as much it can be difficult to introduce, it hangs over simplicity when it is defined as a theoretical analysis of language.

Thus, concepts, usually considered as keywords in the text, require being deciphered to approach the novelist vision nearer and deeper. Thus, rhetoric is the archaic art of argumentation relevantly assured through movements and literary traditions to transport the author’s message for readership.

2.4. Global View of Feminism and Womanism in African American Criterion

Feminism, after its appearance, advocates gender equality and protection for women. Yet, it sparked some contentiousness and was criticized for many controversies which among them the connotation of militancy and the opposite stance against men who have their role in African American society, and their marginalization to special categories of women demeaned and even dehumanized. Consequently, feminism has come to cover only special groups known as the elite.

The novels, *Beloved* and *The Bluest Eye*, are known by the dominance of men from different social classes. The latter, however, was not only considered by men from the upper class and white community but also by those who belong to the lower class including blacks as well. Although, they had different levels of wealth, status and impact but the perspective that was provided in the society did not make a halt for enslaving women who were black and servants and whose opportunities were very limited and had not the power to rescue themselves, so they must obey and accept enduring the hardships and the maltreatment of men to survive.

The era of slavery is known by the suffering of black women from the system of black patriarchy in which the male dominance is presided, and from the white supremacy that was spread to praise white people and satirize blacks. Consequently, their voice was devalued and remained inaudible without any support and their norms and culture were blurred and derided and were considered as trivial and insignificant civilization. In spite of the emergence of feminism movement, they were not welcomed to fulfill their right to be heard and they were not allowed to yell for their concerns.

2.4.1. Womanism as a Complementary Revolution to Feminism

In Fact, feminism was privileged to white women not coloured ones. It has been founded to treat matters confronting the whites. Therefore, black women sought for a new movement that goes in line with their needs, protects their rights and recognizes the full worth of their existence as all the human beings.

Many black female activists decided to disjoin and disassociate themselves from the feminist movement because they believed that it prepossesses and extremely upholds male oppression of white women, therefore, alternatively, womanism was created by Alice Walker, and it was emerged to defend women including blacks and whites as a reaction to feminism, womanists were also identified as Black feminists or Feminists of colour to criticize all the intersections of sexism and racism in the feminist community. In *Search of Our Mothers' Gardens: Womanist Prose*, **Alice Walker introduces Womanism** as:

A black feminist or feminist of colour. From the black folk expression of mother to female children and also a woman who loves other women, sexually and/or nonsexually. Appreciates and prefers women's culture. Committed to survival and wholeness of entire people, male and female. (Walker, 1983, p.11)

In lights of some revolutions like black feminism, antiracism plus other movements in literature as naturalism and realism, this chapter explores both Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* and *Beloved* as vital sources to examine the interplay between characters living real situations in life and difficult circumstances during which most of them endured hardship and torture.

The research focus is mainly put towards those characters of colour defeated and helpless to defend their case, which was legally bend from the court to follow, that is why the sampled novelist Morrison raised the problem in their novels as vehicles and means of communication for the world to know the degree of

sufferings that had reached a pitiful catastrophe. Morrison represented the position of the black females in a typically sexist and racist American society in their novels. They revealed to a gendered, racial and sexual oppression. Discrimination and class differentiations were depicted by using a descriptive-analytical study to symbolize all the hard conditions, the maltreatments and the ignorance that women of colour went through. Their situations were demonstrated by the themes and the characters included in *The Bluest Eye* and *Beloved* via a filter, which is extremely naturalist and racist to reveal the truth of the status of women of colour.

Different women characters were portrayed in the novels to describe the way they respond to the maltreatment and the inhumanity and each of them faced the discrimination and the injustice they suffered from in their own way.

This torture was demonstrated by different characters in *Beloved* by the enslaved persons such as Sethe, Baby Suggs, Paul D and Halle, and in *The Bluest Eye* mainly by Pauline and her daughter Pecola. Their responses differ, sometimes by absorbing themselves as Pauline who viewed herself as a martyr when she resisted to the torment of her husband Cholly, and other times by passiveness when they accepted what happen to them without any rejection or any response as Pecola's reactions.

This raised the quest for many situations concerning black women, their identity, their beliefs, their way of thinking and how much they have struggled for the pursuit of liberty and equality.

2.5. Feminism in *The Bluest Eye* and *Beloved*

Feminism is well visualized through female and male characters in *Beloved* and *The Bluest Eye* via black and white interrelationships that reflect the interior of the self and the psyche of the person. However, the heroines of both novels Sethe and Pecola Breedlove are the case in point that Morrison ventures to show for the world how much childhood and womanhood are injured from manifold sources.

2.5.1 Dimensions of Oppression Through Pecola and Sethe

Pecola the child, the black and the ugly, hated by her mother, raped by her father, dehumanized by the whole society, and this leads her to wish blue eyes so that her physical problem would be resolved. The childish innocent blue eyes dream keeps Pecola Breedlove appeased and reassured during all humiliating moments till driving her to madness. Sethe is the mother who killed her two year old daughter to protect her from experiencing and bearing the same tortures and brutality that she underwent. Sethe was enslaved, raped and abused by her owner the Schoolmaster and his nephews, she was dehumanized and whipped harshly that a scar was formed on her back and resembled to a chokecherry tree “But that’s what she said it looked like A chokecherry tree. Trunk, branches, and even leaves. Tiny little chokecherry leaves” (Morrison, 1987, p.18)

In spite of all the pain and the soreness she faced during her entire life, it was nothing for Sethe comparing with the violent event of raping that destroyed her physically and mentally especially when milk had been sucked from her breasts:

They used cowhide on you?

And they took my milk.

They beat you and you were pregnant?

And they took my milk! (Morrison, 1987, p.20)

This dehumanization left a deep pain and grief, as portrayed in the novel when Sethe said: “Nobody will ever get my milk no more except my own children. I never had to give it to nobody else—and the one time I did it was took from me—they held me down and took it. Milk that belonged to my baby” (Morrison, 1987, p.236)

Ultimately, the trauma she sustained in her life pushed her to take the decision of killing her baby.

2.5.2. Feminism through the Pictorial Lenses of Pecola and Sethe

Black women are portrayed as deprived, no identity, no autonomy, and victimized because of racism, class oppression and sexism. Feminism in *Beloved* and *The Bluest Eye* is expressed via tormented and violent tyrannical male acts against womanhood. Denied when loving, oppressed when married is the status of black women in the novels which makes of them harsh mothers and obstinate wives who transfer their agony on their children using physical and wording assault. For instance, in *the Bluest Eye*, Pauline- Pecola relationship does not fulfil the mother-daughter norms. Pauline is harsh, indifferent and a beating mother, hating Pecola for not being beautiful as she wished her once in her womb. Pettis justifies this behaviour as an issue of the dominant white culture:

Pauline's aggressiveness would seem to distinguish significantly between her response to violence and Pecola's passivity, but in response to the psychological violence perpetrated on black women by the dominant culture, Pauline, like Pecola, practices passivity rather than resistance and succumbs to a fantasy of reality. (Pettis, 1987, p.28)

Morrison supports the fact that happiness, if attained, is illegal since only performed by the prostitutes in *The Bluest Eye*. The only happy Black women are the fallen ones: China, Poland, and Miss Marie also known as Maginot Line, who live in an apartment upstairs the Breedlove, exercise authority over men through sexuality and seduction. Bayerman thinks that the whores “are also primary folk figures in the novel. Even their names - Poland, China, and Maginot Line - suggest larger than-life characters” (Bayerman,1990, p.60). Morrison meant by the whores’ enjoyment that the woman turns to an object of a man’s prey to fulfill pleasure. Plotting some of her characters as prostitutes was artistically mechanized by the author to describe a phenomenon widespread in the time; Samuels and Hudson-Weems claim, for the description of the prostitutes, that: “in spite of their unconventionality (...) Poland, China, and Miss Marie live lives that appear more fulfilling than those of Geraldine,

Mrs. MacTeer, or certainly Mrs. Breedlove, a surname that could have been given to them ...[The prostitutes remain] unyielding to the point of insubordination and conceit” (Samuels and Hudson-Weems,1988, p.20).

In *Beloved*, feminism was clearly represented by Sethe in the novel, who was victimized by the brutality of men in her society. In spite of all the oppression and the tragedies she went through, these facts did not seize her from the struggling for the quest of her subjectivity at Sweet Home as all the brave black African women. Mayfield (2012) in “*Motherhood in Toni Morrison’s Beloved: A Psychological Reading*”⁹ states that “Sethe, whose behavior demonstrated her will to succeed... continued to define herself as an individual, ... but also as a woman who looked toward a future with her husband and her children”. But, as she was aimed by slavery, she could not succeed in achieving what she sought for as she was abused by white men who treated her as an animal and oppress her because they think that blacks are destined only for enslavement. Grewal in her book *Circles of Sorrow, Lines of Struggle* expresses that *Beloved* portrays woman as the “subjects of rape, enforced childbirth, and natal alienation from their children” (Grewal, 1998, p.100) under an institutionalized slave system.

Although slavery encompassed all the black African Americans, be them men or women, they were all exposed to all kinds of oppression and dehumanization. Yet, it was harsher for women as explained by Horvitz; “enslaved woman, not in possession of their own bodies, survived barbaric beatings, rapes, and being ‘swallowed’...The price they paid was... an enormous one; those that survived often did so with no shred of basic integrity or dignity regarding their bodies” (Horvitz, 1989, p.101). Sethe has joined different incidents from her life and resulted that women are the most injured party of the racial and sexual exploitations in her society since she has experienced a brutal treatment at Sweet Home in which two of Schoolteacher’s nephew molested Sethe and sucked milk from her breast. As a woman and slave, Sethe had to live as an animal and reform

⁹ http://psyencelab.com/uploads/5/4/6/5/54658091/motherhood_in_toni_morrisons_beloved.pdf

herself to accept to be treated as a cargo or a product where she had to allow white men to exploit her sexually without disobedience.

Sethe and Pecola have to transform themselves in order to bear the difficulties and the sufferings of ruthless and fierce of controlling category of men in the African American society. Morrison views those tyrannical subjections in the black community as motifs of denial, which create a deteriorated social class where sex practice is a major theme for the oppression system. Feminism in the novels helps the reader revisit the novels through its main female characters, who are fractured in their interior and defeated in their bodies; this leads to madness and other drastic outcomes.

2.6. The Role of Characters as Feminine and Women

For the purpose of defending and broadening black women concerns and rights, Morrison sought to rehearse the lived experiences of their protagonists as African American women.

The novelist diligently came out of silence and tackled what has long been challenged for ages. For the sake of the reconstruction and the treatment of black women, and women of colour who struggled for their lives and faced difficult circumstances alongside racism, oppression and discrimination; a path that revealed the reality of black women, exhibited and intensified our understanding about women issues in common.

2.6.1. Femininity and Women in *The Bluest Eye*

In its essence, *The Bluest Eye* is a novel written by Toni Morrison published around the period of the civil rights movement. It highlights the tragic lives of the black community in general and black women principally and exposes the several serious aspects that prevailed over the society at that time.

It is 1941, in Ohio, a young black girl named Pecola Breedlove suffered from the social inequalities, oppression, gender and racism that was spread in her town. At its core, Pecola lived very strong conditions from her birth, she had a black selfish and a self-righteous mother, called Pauline, and an abusive and violent father Cholly, who hit her and raped her several times, and a community that mocked at her and neglected her repeatedly.

All the members of Breedlove family believed that whiteness is beauty and they are all ugly because they are not considered as a model of what the white community represents as appropriate. And this is what was claimed in the novel showing the Breedlove family extremely broken not only regarding to their financial situation but also psychologically as well.

The Breedloves did not live in a storefront because they were having temporary difficulty. [...] They lived there because they were poor and black and stayed there because they believed they were ugly. [...] No one could have convinced them that they were not relentlessly and aggressively ugly. [...] It was as though some mysterious all knowing master had given each one a cloak of ugliness to wear, and they had each accepted it without question. (Morrison,1970, p.38-39,)

Roberta Rubenstein in her book entitled *Pariahs and community* claimed that: “The Breedlove family’s sense of utter hopelessness and helplessness is externalized in their appearance: both literal and spiritual poverty manifest themselves as ugliness in a world in which beauty is equated with success” (Rubenstein, 1993, p.127)

The sense of poverty is spurted out of the Breedlove’s figures in both hopelessness and despair that darken their view to the world and adverse them from the tremendous scenes of beauty around them.

As one of the aspects shaded in the novel, Morrison could visualize the profile of the characters that reflects a profound sense of atrocity and ugliness. Pecola, the

protagonist, for instance, was frequently called “ugly”. She blamed herself for having a dark skin and she was totally convinced that the cause of all the problems that happened to her were related to her blackness, and for the same reason, she was persuaded that she is ugly and she does not belong to the beauty circle and does not deserve to be happy or to live a normal life, so, she started to hate herself and pray for change. For Pecola, the most important value of being worthy of attention is to have blue eyes, the power of its sanctification was reflected in her overnight prayer “each night, without fail, she prayed for blue eyes. Fervently, for a year she had prayed” (Morrison, 1970, p.40) she believed that having blue eyes will change the negative people’s view towards her, which displayed Pecola’s lack of self esteem and self confidence, her insistence each night for hole one year on her dream proves that she was totally determined that the key of happiness and people’s love was by waking up with blue eyes which was demonstrated in these sentences from the novel:

Pretty eyes. pretty blue eyes. big blue pretty eyes. run, Jip, run. Jip runs, Alice runs. Alice has blue eyes. Jerry has blue eyes. Jerry runs. Alice runs. They run with their blue eyes. Four blue eyes. Four pretty blue eyes. Blue-sky eyes. Blue-like Mrs. Forrest's blue blouse eyes. Morning-glory-blue-eyes. Alice-and-Jerry-blue-storybook-eyes. (Morrison, 1970, p. 34-35)

Alice and Jerry run and play with their friends as they belong to the white community but Pecola always stays secluded and isolated because she understood that whiteness and blue eyes are standards of beauty, things that she does not have, so she was determined by her ugliness especially when her classmates ignored and rejected her and did not want to associate with her “Thrown, in this way, into the binding conviction that only a miracle could relieve her, she would never know her beauty. She would only see what there was to see: the eyes of other people.” (Morrison, 1970, p.46-47) As she believes in the fact of being a black girl which rendered her extremely outcast and forsaken, consequently, she struggled to achieve her dream to become a girl with blue eyes because she thought that people

will love her and will treat her as a human being whereas being black is to be enslaved, oppressed and discriminated. But at the end, her pursuit to perfection drove her into madness.

2.6.1.1. Hardship in *The Bluest Eye*

The North was the refuge of slaves from the South to establish a better life. This setting is represented in the novel through Lorain, Ohio, by the end of the Great Depression, where Pecola Breedlove, after her house was burnt unconsciously by her heavy drunkard father, goes to live with the Macteer family composed of parents and their lovely daughters nine-year-old Claudia, who will narrate parts of the novel, and her 10-year-old sister Frieda. Pecola is the heroine portrayed as bad looking, hard-featured and uninviting to look at which causes the society denial to her. Pecola's father Cholly and mother Pauline always keep fighting physically and verbally. Her mother goes to work for the white family called the Fisher, from whom she vainly compares her life to feel again that she is a miserable wife in love. Mostly monstrous and aggressive way of living repulses into ill behaviours tragically resumed in Cholly rape of his daughter Pecola left pregnant with a dead baby. Accordingly, Dickerson asserts that:

With its worship of whiteness, maleness and power and its high validation of the land, wealth and acquisitions, with its hatred and exclusion of blackness and its fierce disdain of femaleness, frailty and want. Western Society has warped black fatherhood [and motherhood] and consequently sacrificed the children. (Dickerson,1983, p.123)

Finally, Pecola's dream of blue eyes, which supports her so much, leads her to schizophrenia. The white standards of beauty like golden curls, rosy cheeks, and blue eyes were criteria for identity that were out of contact for black people. These standards were out of reach for blacks and this stirs Morrison to visualize the dream of blue eyes for an ugly black child that drives her to mental illness; to teach her

community that they are different and they have to stick to their black identity. Weever explains such clash between the two groups as follows:

The racism inherent in both ideals destroys those who strive to achieve them, and the inner destruction expresses itself in the form of striving for the ideal. The standard of beauty that exalts the blond woman is everywhere in American society. The black woman is thus, by definition, excluded from the beautiful (Weever, 1991, p. 97)

There were many narratives in the time of Morrison who tackled the post hard living of the Great Depression, but she was unique to report the incidents in an exceptional true expression that has marked the agenda of American history and African American fiction. She criticizes the political by focusing on American stream ideology, the woman by presenting different types among them, the children by varying between the happiest to the less among them, the family from harsh to affectionate, plus other hotly debated issues. This thematic amalgamation makes of *The Bluest Eye* a repulsive reaction mostly ethnically, politically and socially to the white xenophobic, entrepreneurial and chauvinist subjection. According to Davis, it is the reason that Morrison's characters "exist in a world defined by its blackness and by the surrounding white society that both violates and denies it" Davis adds that "The destructive effect of the white society can take the form of outright physical violence, but oppression in Morrison's world is more often psychic violence. She rarely depicts white characters, for the brutality here isles a single act than the systematic denial of the reality of black lives." (Davis,1990, p.07)

Morrison strives for reflecting the real position of blacks usually hidden by the white media and often dismissed from less courageous writers of the time. Morrison, indeed, describes racist attitudes in her novel to echo the whole world that a human being would never remain slave because of his colour.

2.6.1.2 Racial Oppression in *The Bluest Eye*

Pecola's parents lived a very difficult childhood which affected them so badly when it came to them to raise a family. Their dysfunction and disruption due to their tragic lives create of them only appalling behaviors towards their children Pecola and Samuel. At its core, Morrison represents a realistic view about the oppression of black women in *The Bluest Eye*. The novel's depiction of the realities of racial oppression that has permeated in the black society was resulted of a consequent descent of a plethora of horrors that handled particularly the women's characters. In a common parlance, this cruelty that most of black women suffered from was brought up not only by the eloquent issues of racism and sexism but also the tyranny treatment of men towards women and the fierceness brought upon them in their lives.

The woman's evolution into womanhood was demonstrated in the novel in several phases. The youngest characters in the novel such as Pecola, Claudia and Frieda, hold a restricted and idealistic vision to the real meaning of being a woman. Unlike white women, the black females had a specific treatment by their men, they injured the violence of their husbands that was exemplified in the novel by the sequence of events of Mrs Breedlove and Geraldine who portrayed this naive view being traumatized as they engaged into the trepidation truth of marriage and the coercion of obeying and supporting the cruelty they experienced by their husbands.

Even though the oppression of women by their men was propagated in *The Bluest Eye's novel*, but they were not entirely defenseless. They dominated their children and treated them abusively by using physical attacks and oral assaults, and similarly, through rumor and insult over other women. Likewise, all the female characters are exploited and browbeaten and horrified by men, women twisted toward those who are helpless and powerless, expressing their own outward appearance of obvious abuse. There was another method to gain power and supremacy from prostitution presented in the novel by China, miss Mari and

Poland, they relied on their sexual behavior to defeat and vanquish men's oppression throughout taking advantage of their sexuality and femininity.

Following this way and by exploiting themselves in this manner, their performance in the society led to cheapen their worth and that of all the other women around them and devalue their self respect and reverence through the bad practices these prostitutes used to perform which affected negatively the black women society and gathered all women in the same pan.

The Bluest Eye is a strong exemplification of various themes such as women and femininity besides the occurrence of male abuse and violence over women. The emergence of these different topics accommodates the most character's roles, inasmuch as the appearance of various horrifying cases demonstrated by women in *The Bluest Eye* that reached its atrocious climax mostly when Cholly raped his own daughter, Pecola. This savage and violent scene of rape showed the silencing result of male tyranny over women. Accordingly, in the rape sight, Pecola's perspective was almost vanished and the scene was totally demonstrated and entirely described only by Cholly who itemized the cruelest and the most brutal type of aggression and assaults against women.

Women in *The Bluest Eye* had two options either to be prostitutes or to work for the whites or to get married and injure the abusive and offensive treatment not only of their husbands but of all men in general. This occurrence was known historically as a realistic phenomenon in the black African societies relayed by generations.

2.6.2. Femininity and Women in *Beloved*

Beloved is another novel written by Toni Morrison which portrays the life inside any African American abode. The novel tells the true story of a black slave woman named Margaret Garner who was a slave woman fled with her husband and children to Ohio from her owner from Kentucky plantation. She killed her young daughter when the officers caught them up, to protect her and prevent her from reliving her mother's same events and same endurances of slavery.

The same story was presented by Sethe in the novel because both characters shared the same experiences of the ravaged facts of slavery. Sethe lived in Cincinnati, Ohio in 1873 with her family under the rules of her offensive owner called “schoolteacher”, for the sake of sanctity of love and compassion towards her children, before their recapture, she, too, thought of killing her children to reserve them of bondage, and effectively, her two-year old girl died. Consequently, this sad incident rescued Sethe from her master because he thought that she is crazy so he gave up on her and kept her from taking her back to enslave and enchain her. Although she was rescued from her abusive owner and became a free woman but the dangers still existed around her and went back another time when she wished to engrave two words on her daughter’s tomb, and as she did not have money to pay the engraver back, so she swapped sex with him for these two words and it cost her ten minutes for each word to redeem her bill.

The sequent of events appeared in flashbacks that showed the trauma of Sethe’s life. Although she gained her freedom and receded from slavery but she lived with her past and all her tricky past life was always recollected and recalled by her to narrate her previous experiences as an enslaved woman in the period of the pre-civil war.

2.6.2.1. Slavery in *Beloved*

The work mainly speaks about the devastation legacy of bondage that black women suffered from by the 1873 and turns around the lives of Sethe and her daughter Denver. Their house, situated in 124 Bluestone was cursed and was known by the possession of the furious ghost arriving from the crime of Sethe’s daughter murdered. Sethe decided to kill all her children because of the hardships she encountered during her life, she wanted to prevent them from living the same traumatic experiences of enslavement and brutality like when:

Anybody white could take your whole self for anything that came to mind. Not just work, kill, or maim you, but dirty you. Dirty you so bad you couldn't like yourself anymore. Dirty you so bad you forgot who you were and couldn't think it up. And though she and others lived through and got over it, she could never let it happen to her own. The best she was, was her children. (Morrison, 1987, p.251)

Sethe wanted to explain to Beloved that she was obliged to kill her and all her children for their interest, as she has long been enslaved and perceived the degradation and the cruelty of bondage, so she did not want to see her children facing the same injuries and tormenting by violence and enslavement.

The haunting was highly improved especially after the coming of Paul D who is a man so devastated and destroyed by his dark past due to slavery. He worked in the same field of plantation like Sethe, and he felt comfortable with her as both of them shared the same experiences of slavery so a big relationship started between them. Things went so perfectly until the arrival of Beloved. She is a young woman who claimed that she is the reincarnation of Sethe's killed daughter. Sethe became obsessed with moderating her guilt and tried to cope with the devious Beloved who became hegemonic in Sethe's house so she could seduce Paul D and succeed to separate him from Sethe and especially when he knew that she was the killer of her daughter, he left her. Beloved tried to drive Sethe to madness; she quitted her job and became totally obsessed by Beloved who raised her power and dominated Sethe's body and thoughts that weakened by time. Thanks to an exorcism applied in Sethe's house, she could withdraw from Beloved's control and succeeded to escape from her and consequently Beloved vanished. Paul D later went back to Sethe, showed her how to value her self-worth and he promised to stay with her.

2.6.2.2. Representation of Women's Sacrifice in *Beloved*

In Morrison's novels, sexuality represents the recompense and the load trouble of women's gender. Ma'am, however, she had a better life as she was expelled from this life group of giving birth to children, virginity and loss of it, majority, menopause and dying. The torment of production for women is increased through viewing children imposed into the slave environment and by being acquainted with the reality that children are obliged to go on outputting more of them and sticking to their enslavement to strengthen the plantation production.

The love that Sethe cared to her murdered little girl for better and worse created a kind of crux, already encumbered with its figurative chokecherry tree, the load that overburdened the frightened back. Sethe, could face and persist to all the hard conditions, and the prospect that all female could endure sexual oppression, pouring, starvation, longing, hunger, child-delivery, likewise go on to produce milk in her beasts, challenges all the scientific proofs.

In the view of the above, Sethe could deal with all these facts; thus, it is considered as Morrison's accolade to her willpower and strength of mind. Sethe's scar on her back resembled to a chokecherry tree as Amy Denver designated it:

It's a tree, Lu. A chokecherry tree. See, here's the trunk – it's red and split wide open, full of sap, and this here's the parting for the branches. You got a mighty lot of branches. Leaves, too, look like, and dern if these ain't blossoms. Tiny little cherry blossoms, just as white. Your back got a whole tree on it. In bloom. (Morrison, 1987, p.93)

This emblem due to the abuse of Schoolteacher pushed Sethe to reject any proposal to leave the house where she was enchained to the frightening of her little girl murdered. She struggled the personification of her fault and blame to a very sturdy peace, hence, the Schoolteacher was frustrated of a second craziness in the square inspired the picture of lethal spite occurred 18 years earlier.

It is appropriate for a strong and brave woman to move slowly all the way through woods and subsequently consequently, she succeeded to deliver her baby in a boat in spite of all the dangers and the defies, this would breed a firm, ingenious and creative girl such as Denver. Even though Denver was more mystic and more scheming than her mother, she realized the instant when Sethe was no more the lady and the leader of the house and ultimately, it was obligatory to the next generation to rely on themselves and overcome all the difficult obstacles that blocked them to chase their sustenance, comfort, home and a stabilized and constant work.

Beloved, on the other hand, was devilishly firmed and planned more than Denver, the storm that overlapped and overstressed all the family circle for 18 years, banished two powerful brothers and guided the straightforward mother to the edge of insanity.

The matriarch was used to define the ability of constructing a black family without depending or relying on black men presence and Baby Suggs, the matriarch and representative of memory, was honored by the neighborhood, where love and affection, strength and tendency tend to gather deeply with warmth and kindness, she succeeded to redefine her community to be known as a new world and new life in which males are rejected and excluded from the black family.

2.7. *Beloved* a Neo Slave Narrative

Black literature in the United States is known by the classic slave narratives that are considered as an important constituent of their history. However, by their creative writings, they just refer to a part of the black reality and override the other significant features and dimensions, notwithstanding; they played an integral role to present an essential datum of the African American literature. Accordingly, they became a vital part of their trendy prose and refer to slavery just as a historic event.

Beloved, for instance, can be regarded as a modern fictional narrative in which Morrison took the real life events set in slavery era to present the effects of

bondage in America which is known as the New world. Morrison was inspired by the true story of the famous slave Margaret Garner who has experienced the most brutal and dehumanizing aspects of slavery. By depicting the physical and psychological character's experiences, Morrison tried in her novel to focus on the scars marked by bondage to remind her readers about the tortures and the tragedies that stained the African American women's lives.

This novel can be considered as a neo-slave narrative as it presents the realities of the enslaved black women who suffered from the abuse and the oppression and whose stories were totally away from central literature. In this way, Morrison focused on the idea that slavery should not be forgotten, a reason that pushed her to display it to her readers and all the community not solely as a fact but also as a remembrance that blemished the African history as stated Spargo in his work *Trauma and the Specters of Enslavement in Morrison's Beloved* and he said:

We live in a land where the past is always erased and America is the innocent future in which immigrants can come and start over, where the slate is clean. The past is absent or it's romanticized. This culture doesn't encourage dwelling on, let alone coming to terms with, the truth about the past. (Spargo, 2002, p.113-119)

Morrison tried to recover the vanished tales of aggression and soreness and portrayed the black women's trauma and their brave fighting to sustain the hardships and violence caused by the several issues of slavery.

2.8. Rhetorical Representation of Slavery in *Beloved*

In *Beloved*, Morrison aimed at representing the stereotype of black women in literature by spotlighting on the representation of female characters as centers of interest. Accordingly, the novel symbolizes the tragedies of the myriad victims whose stories were neglected and absent in the dark African history and literature,

Morrison emphasizes on the struggles of black women who examine new lines of attack to develop a liberated identity and presents their fighting against the painful and traumatic aspects of slavery that ruin their life.

With a view to extremely grasp the state and inspiration of Morrison's central characters in *Beloved*, it is essential to track their private life path and include it into a fully historical perspective and regard the commencements of the corporal cruelty besides sexual profiteering that would helm in their retreating and regression.

In this vein, Jacobs agrees with the idea of the tortures of slavery shared by Morrison as defined in *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* that "Slavery is terrible for men; but it is far more terrible for women. Superadded to the burden common to all, they have wrongs, and sufferings, and mortifications peculiarly their own" (Jacobs, 1861, p. 191)

Slavery was awfully painful and hurting due to the maltreatment and oppression of white leading culture that formed subhuman beings degraded and degenerated. *Beloved* studies the same chronological background represented by Bell Hooks as well in *Ain't I a Woman* in which she gave a detailed description of black women's sufferings and fighting for fairness and equality, discussed the main crucial realities and experiences that black women faced and explains why they are dehumanized and disrespected and therefore enslaved.

Northerners know nothing at all about slavery. They think it is perpetual bondage only. They have no conception of the depth of degradation involved in that world, slavery; if they had, they would never cease their efforts until so horrible a system was overthrown. (Grimké, 1886, p.28)

First and foremost, it is necessary to mention that the system that would switch the lives of humans from a free situation to an enslaved one through ruining their self-respect and self-esteem did not just appear after the degeneration of black African

slaves in America but It existed in Africa before and prevailed all the continent. Men and women were enslaved but the state of females was worst of all; they were bought by their husbands and families to be slaves, they were kidnapped, hunted down and exploited sexually by white masters. Toni Morrison's attempts to abolish slavery were divided into a historical trilogy including *Beloved* and two other related novels such as *Jazz* and *Paradise*; *Beloved* was published in 1987 and covers the ordeals and the horrific experiences of slavery. In 1992, Morrison also wrote *Jazz* novel in which she recalls the events of the American South that took place in the mid of 19th century extending to *Paradise* that completes the trilogy in 1997 and examines the historical background till the 1970s.

2.8.1. Colour: A History of Dehumanisation in *Beloved*

Morrison was considered as one of the pillars of the Black literature through her different contributions to the historical path. Henderson claims that Morrison endeavoured to demonstrate the realities and the facts that African American encountered in the past by focusing on what has been forgotten or rather disregarded and neglected:

Yet, in many respects, these writers were limited in their efforts to fully depict the physical and psychological suffering of African American people...Toni Morrison seeks to signify on those silences imposed by publishers and editors of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In particular, Williams and Morrison extend the efforts of their predecessors by developing creative responses to those calls centered on the wounds of the African American body. (Henderson, 2002, p.12)

Morrison was inspired by the black African past to examine what the immoral black women faced, it is crucial to note that one of the most appalling circumstances for slaves were in the Middle Passage, and was known by having a strong impact on the group of Africans that push along throughout generations. A thing that smashed their wills and dishonored their value what juxtaposed their torture designed to

display the lifestyle they used to have as cargos and not human beings. Consequently, most of the Africans died there and the rest who wanted to enter the New world were harshly dehumanized and traumatized, as Eric Williams in *Capitalism and Slavery* states that “The enslavement of the Africans had everything to do with the cheapness of labour,” and he adds “the oppression was for economic reasons and race differences exacerbated the oppression.” (Williams, 2015, p.18).

According to Williams, the physical appearance differences like the skin colour and racism rendered slavery rationalized and warranted for the Negro. Consequently, the blacks were treated as animals and abused by the whites, what was showed in *Beloved* in which Morrison tried to depict the real life of the slave workers who followed an institutionalized slave system and worked in sweet homes where they are maltreated and experienced all the kinds of degradation and violence. These facts were represented in the novel by the character of Sethe who was not only marginalized but also abused and tortured, raped and oppressed. Consequently, she has decided to run away from the sweet home and kill her daughter in the aim of protecting her from experiencing the same tragedies and preventing the possibility of following the same dark path of slavery.

In *Beloved*, Morrison spotlights her writings on the black history by referring to the horrible and aching past due to slavery to remind the entire world that these painful facts and events that head the African American history must stay engraved in their memories and could never ever be forgotten “Morrison’s critically acclaimed novel *Beloved* probes the most painful part of the African American heritage, slavery, by way of what she has called “rememory” -- deliberately reconstructing what has been forgotten.” (Kubitschek, Missy Dehn, 1998, p.115)

In order to handle a lifelong encumbrance of black women specifically in *Beloved*, Morrison exemplified their pitiful ramification and the nuisance due to their gender by shedding light on the history of African Americans:

Beloved represents a working out of subjectivity through the representation of history, a history so brutal and dehumanizing that it is unrepresentable, a depiction of community, which is often torn apart by the circumstances of slavery, and a construction of identity. (Jeanna, 2002, p.461-473)

African American women in particular, were opened to the fiercest most brutal treatment unlike their counterparts, they were not measured to be a prospective menace that could rebel and threaten them. According to history, while Africans sailed to travel to the New World, on board, Whites chained black men up because they felt afraid of mutinies whilst black women were free to walk around because they presented an effortless goal for oppression and abuse and they were frequently subjugated and tortured, exploited and raped using all methods of torment what was represented in *Beloved* by Sethe's Mother who went through all this violence in her journey. Slaves were also engraved by hot irons and whipped as was demonstrated by Sethe's scar on her back which symbolized a chokecherry tree. A lot of African women were come to the New World impregnated, others were aborted and furthermore died on the trip because of the cruel processing and undernourishment they experimented throughout their pregnancy and some were even ordered kill their children and throw them into water.

2.8.2. Women Slaves in *Beloved*

Beloved was one of the first attempts of the African writer Toni Morrison to harshly represent slavery, the main characters of the novel worked on sweet home as Halle, Sethe, Baby Suggs, Paul D and others, these slaves represent a good propaganda of the insensitive experiences, in which the novelist exposed the situation of a first generation slave presented by Sethe's Mother in the novel, who was transported on a ship from Africa to the New World and was frequently exploited sexually and assaulted by white slavers and experienced the tortures and insults which many female thralls had to follow throughout their journey. Sethe, on

the other hand, was the most abused slave in *Beloved*, she worked for Schoolteacher; an educated person who represent the white supremacy but he is very brutal, he used all the methods of the classical slavery: “In *Beloved*, Schoolteacher is clearly the primary representative and agent of the system of white-supremacist, capitalist patriarchy in the era of slavery. His interpellations of Sethe, Paul D, Sixo, and Halle lead to rebellion, madness, and death” (Keizer & Arlene R,1999, p. 105-123)

Morrison explained the tragic realities of the black community in America, she argued that black female slaves worked in the fields of plantation and their masters were not permissive with them they received the same treatment as males; as showed in *Beloved* by Sethe and Paul D, they had to labor and do all what their work demanded of force and power to perform it perfectly, they even farm by turning up the land and using the plow, cultivate and place the plant in the ground and then reap.

Nevertheless, this equality which was between the slaves be them male or female, women did not transcend the district of work, they could not control or supervise or drive, they were everlastingly vassals to men. Furthermore, by carrying out the work that was not regarded as reputable or suitable for females by the overriding civilisation, therewith, even white slaves gave such a work only as punishment, thus, black women repeatedly felt the humiliation and degradation towards themselves and to their gender.

2.8.2.1. Incarcerated Black Women in *Beloved*

Morrison attempts to explain by her writings all was concerns the effect of the institutionalized system of slavery on black men and women, she explains that mainly on agriculture, slavery was an equally overwhelming and grueling labor for both genders. Women, in particular, were not excluded from the devastating experiences of plantations, they had equal jobs with men notwithstanding of their fragility, their low physical abilities and weak susceptibility to work, white masters did not consider them as women but as animals and replacers of men and they

obliged them to fulfill all the masculine functions. Thence, a lot of African-American women did not feel the value of themselves inasmuch as they suffered from this depreciation and insult to their womanhood, the reason that developed on them a strong desire of craving and longing for self reliance and the positive conception of the self and the femininity along their way. Additionally, a substantial proportion of female slaves labored closely in the limits of the white families' homes as a replacement for working in the lands, generally, they were employees for managing the household, cooking and caring for their children.

Notwithstanding, black women spend less efforts with such a work rather than working on plantation, their white owners scared of their reactions due to the outcome of revenge, so they have an urge to curb and restrain their slaves in order to fully control them and put pressure on them to undergo to their masters. Consequently, all the slaves had to bear regular monitoring by their owners and were often sternly chastised for small abuses, struck down and beaten cruelly even if they were pregnant.

What is more is the fact that they were exhibited to all the sexual exploitations by raping and assaulting them, as was demonstrated in *Beloved*, flogging, rape and all kinds of torture and abuse were included and employed by the Schoolteacher who dehumanized all the slaves especially who worked on plantation and Sethe was one of his victims who sustained the most cruel and violent treatment in Sweet Home.

All the slaves decided to run away and Sethe escaped too but as she was pregnant, so she sent her baby and her sons with the group who fled first, and she concurred with her husband Halle to meet in a specific place, but he was late and did not arrived in time, so she remained alone and ultimately was raped by the Schoolteacher nephews who caught her and sucked milk from her breasts while she was waiting for Halle. Eventually, this drove her to madness, what pushed her to kill her two year old baby to prevent her from going through the same hard conditions and dark past that Sethe has faced throughout her entire life.

2.9. The Coloured Victims of Racial and Sexual Exploitations in *Beloved* and *The Bluest Eye*

On the heels of the process that covers the ideology of discrimination in which black race was demeaned and subdivided into groups because of their skin colour, black people were exposed to the most traumatizing life where racism prevailed and slavery reigned. Owing to the fact of their ethnicity, they were seen as inferiors and subsequently, discriminated and abused. African Americans were undervalued, they were controlled by the superiority of white people and thus, they have been stained by the hints of racism that impinged their society.

Toni Morrison succeeded internationally to address mightily these troubled and apocalyptic phenomena with the publication of her works *The Bluest Eye* and *Beloved*. These novels reflected the bitter reality of blacks indulged in the white culture that rejected them in every way. Although slavery was revoked by the dint of many abolitionists who struggled by their writings to spread the freedom and realize the equality and fairness but African Americans still endure segregation and difference with the whites.

The black people headed to the quest for recognition of their self and identity by comparing themselves with the white's behaviors and culture therefore, Toni Morrison tried to remind her community to think about their own culture and encouraged them to be proud of their colour and civilization and not to feel ashamed by their own traditions and self-identity, she pushed them to stick to their uniqueness because this distinctiveness is what make them different and special, as exposed Thomas Jefferson in his book *Notes on the State of Virginia* when he declares that:

Many other circumstances, will divide us into parties, and produce convulsions, which will probably never end but in the extermination of the one or the other race. To these objections which are political, maybe added others which are physical and moral. The first difference which strikes us is that of colour. (Jefferson, 1853, p.149)

The people of colour fought for their race and survival, so they tend to end slavery and enter in multicultural white society, therefore, the failure to pierce into equal life and eliminate bondage would lead to a convulsive world that would threaten all the Americans.

Morrison relies on the historical background of her race to defend it and writes to make the change; women were more affected by the damages of slavery unlike men as said the abolitionist H. Ann Jacobs: “Slavery is terrible for men; but it is far more terrible for women. Superadded to the burden common to all, they have wrongs, and sufferings, and mortifications peculiarly their own” (Jacobs, 1861, p85). He presented black women struggles for obtaining their liberty and achieving the right of self-determination and escaping from sexual exploitations including rape, abuse, assaults and oppression during the period of slavery. Despite the fact that being enslaved was extremely painful and horrible but according to Jacobs, it was worst and more difficult particularly for women. They were exposed to the most traumatizing ravishment resulting on their weakness, their sexual exposure turned them pushovers to the mistreatment and cruelty, they became defenseless and easy to exploit and rape not only by their white owners but by all male slaves as well.

In an ethnically expressed and articulated world, the African American author, Toni Morrison was one of the first writers who pointed out the marginalization of African-American women in particular, Morrison addressed black female’s situation in the period of slavery and explained its instant aftereffects and consequences by her writings for instance, in her essay *Playing in the Dark* in which she asserts:

My work requires me to think about how free I can be as an African American woman writer in my genderized, sexualized, wholly racialized world, to think about the full implications of my situation leads me to consider what happens when other writers work in a highly and historically racialized society (Morrison, 1992, p.04)

Morrison dealt with the effects of racism and sexism as well on African American women. She handled the most important issues that are pertinent and closely connected to black women's sufferings and fights to achieve their freedom and equality.

2.10. Blackness as a Pictorial Trope of Racial Discrimination in *The Bluest Eye* and *Beloved*

Blackness is totally considered by Toni Morrison as a subject that has often been related and connected with slavery, that inflicted pain and torture to the African Americans broadly and also to characters demonstrated in her novels in common, both appalling issues of racism and sexism are deemed to be the main reasons that contribute in the painful lives of the African American people:

You looked at them and wondered why they were so ugly; you looked closely and could not find the source. Then you realized that it came from conviction, their conviction. It was as though some mysterious all-knowing master had given each one a cloak of ugliness to wear, and they had each accepted it without question. (Morrison, 1970, p.39)

The master adds:

The master had said, "You are ugly people. They had looked about themselves and saw nothing to contradict the statement; saw, in fact, support for it learning at them from every billboard, every movie, every glance. "Yes," they had said. "You are right." And they took the ugliness in their hands, threw it was a mantle over them, and went about the world with it. (Morrison, 1970, p.39)

In the light of the above, Morrison's novels *The Bluest Eye* and *Beloved* explained the tragedy of the protagonists because of their blackness. Racism, ethnicity and

colour have demolished the black society from childhood to adulthood; their escape from the unpleasant reality of ill-conceived and uncontrolled community they lived in was not simple and achievable for them. The only ray of chance and hope that allowed them to hit the hay and release eternally was the way to death. Sethe, for instance, felt the needlessness of living the moments because she felt herself disappointed and tired of experiencing the same insupportable events she passed through all along her life, she told Paul D at the beginning of the novel that “she will never run from another thing on this earth.... No more running-from nothing” (Morrison, 1987, p.18).

In the past, the bequest and the inheritance of bondage were constantly considered as a kernel of all the blacks. Terror and hopelessness prevailed over their lives due to the racism and repression of the white system at that time, consequently, black men and women were obliged to live in the past when they were established in a racist and a sexist system in which there was no way out of keeping and protecting their life without being enslaved, tortured and dehumanized, what seemed interestingly about their dwelling in the past.

In the same vein, Morrison tried to examine the sexual repression and exploitation of African American women, she mirrored the results of abuse and oppression and its bad impact on black women’s psyche and life through her novels *The Bluest Eye* and *Beloved* represented by the characters, Pecola, Claudia, Frieda, Ella and Sethe and their unique pain, sufferings and traumas, by depicting their distinctive situation and the further misery they had to endure all kinds of distortion, ill treatments, assaults and bear the sexual abuse they received from their husbands, fathers and men in general throughout their entire life. Sievers for instance declared that marginalization touched all black women who suffered from its aftermaths:

As long as issues of race and gender are approached within a conceptual framework that automatically defines white men as central and black women as marginal, a black and female person cannot be unambiguously occupy the position of subject, she will always already be reduced to an objectified ‘other’ (Sievers, 2012, p.129).

This sexual suppression influenced the analytic, spiritual and psychological feelings and thoughts of women of colour, and therefore, being affected by the consequences of these issues of sexism, racism and discrimination, due to the abuse of white men, shaped their association and interaction in their society.

Inasmuch as blackness is associated with every denotation of monstrosity and wickedness, and since it is completely strange to the white leading globe, Individual unshared experience, unuttered and unexpressed controls the family circle's sights.

The most representative victims of domestic violence and overt and covert aggressive behaviors were experienced by children and women in the scope of the physical and mental enslavement, including rough treatment and cruelty in sexual occurrences, persecution and harassment of children and performing violence of all kinds as portrayed in black American Women's Writings where Era explained that: "For a people whose negative socialization has associated with blackness with every connotation of evil and ugliness, self-love is difficult to foster. Reconstruction can only be achieved with a complete rejection of all that had fractured black identity in slavery." (Birtch, 2016, p.182).

The black women had to face two stumbling blocks, not only they had to bear the abuse and the brutality of the white masters but also of men who belong to their own race and community. In *Beloved*, for instance, Ella as a character in the novel was raped by two whites, Sethe, on the other hand was traumatized by her owner Schoolmaster. However, both of them were also threatened by black men including their husbands and even their fathers as displayed the little girl Pecola in *The Bluest Eye*, she was assaulted and sexually exploited by her own father Cholly.

Black women represented in both novels were obliged to fight and endure in the interior of their homes and scrimmaged outside too, things that triggered outrage and fear as the same time, distorted their life, destroyed their will and dreams and affected badly their psychological mechanism. Consequently, their self esteem and

appreciation was a thorny task to consolidate, hate ruled, grudged and aggression breached their identity and self love as blacks.

2.11. Intersectional Issues in Morrison's *Beloved* and *The Bluest Eye*

Sexism and racism are primarily examined in Morrison's *Beloved* and *The Bluest Eye*, by which she gave voice to all the dire consequences caused by slavery. African American women portrayed in these novels have found themselves engaged in bondage since their birth; they were extremely marginalized because of the abuse and the oppression they received due to these facts.

In a time when African American women were totally downgraded to the margins that denigrated their life and whole history, Morrison was very worthy of meriting or it may be conceivable that she is creditably clear than any novelist earlier than her, in transferring the situation of the black's way of living in America. Morrison worked on conveying all the events and the hurdles they faced throughout their entire life. She tackled the problems of the black community in general and African American women in particular. She expressed all what they underwent from slavery with its aftermaths to the discrimination and the inequality that lasted more than a century in her respective novels *The Bluest Eye* and *Beloved*.

2.11.1. Unspoken Trauma of Slavery and Racism in *Beloved*

Although, the period of slavery was over as it was abolished, but notwithstanding, other kinds of bondage have appeared to ruin the black's life, those of racism, sexism and discrimination. *Beloved* for instance, is written to represent the repression of black women slaves and express the untold oppressions confined in a disgraceful state of agony and burden which is best featured by the real story of a fugitive slave called Margaret Garner, who was obliged to subject to slavery allocated with her children as well with being subordinates of her former white master. Therefore, Garner decided to kill one of her daughters to prevent her from encountering and facing the same circumstances of bondage that could happen beyond her control, but she was caught and stopped after being judged by returning humiliated as a property to her master. *Beloved* expressed a threat to Sethe by

haunting her house; she mainly discovered the shocking conditions that led to the protagonist's hurting procedure of mental recovery, which is long estopped by the ghost of Sethe's murdered daughter, *Beloved*.

The novel is based on Garner's story, it is first and foremost told from the viewpoint of Sethe with her daughter Denver. The impact of slavery in the African American black women's history and the abolishment of slavery were extremely expressed in the novel, this was exemplified by Ella and Baby Suggs who were treated as commodities, being marginalized and oppressed, discriminated and even exploited sexually which deprived their psychological mechanism and destroyed them not only physically but mentally as well. Sethe also portrayed the dramatic and traumatized life of the black slave women, whose life was congested by mines that exploded repeatedly. Being doubly compressed, not only for their status as women, but over and above, for being slaves between the hands of the white dominant community weakened their power and strength, and demeaned their value and worth in the society. Toni Morrison, the novelist, was "an African American woman giving voice to essentially silent stories"¹⁰ (Beaulieu, para 11)

Morrison wrote about the mother who killed her daughter to protect her from bondage, and she is the one who thought about writing another time to raise awareness for the black African women and push them to understand that blackness is not a shame and whiteness is not a pride or an ideal, she tried to promote openness to their own identity and own culture and be proud of it to gain their self-confidence and assert strongly their position in the world.

2.11.2. Racism and Sexism Sequels in *The Bluest Eye*

Morrison declared in a speech that she relied on writings to influence her community and change their minds and thoughts, and it was her key and secret of success, she once put "Oppressive language does more than represent violence; it is violence; does more than represent the limits of knowledge; it limits knowledge," and she added "It is the language that drinks blood, laps vulnerabilities, tucks its

¹⁰ https://digitaledition.baltimoresun.com/tribune/article_popover.aspx?guid=7b9544dd-5dcd-4ffb-aad2-4d1e05734eec

fascist boots under crinolines of respectability and patriotism as it moves relentlessly toward the bottom line and the bottomed-out mind.”¹¹ (Morrison, 1993, para 04) Morrison dares to speak the unspeakable buried in the agenda of the white supremacy.

2.11.2.1. Upshots of Racial Discrimination on Women and Children in *The Bluest Eye*

Due to the high level of violence and trauma that all the blacks suffer from, women and children were typical victims of aggressive behaviors of both whites and black men including domestic abuse, rough treatment, cruelty in sexual interactions and brutality that affected children as well.

This trauma is best exemplified and featured by Morrison in her novel *The Bluest Eye*. In this book, the author tried to examine the nature of the sufferings, oppression and the marginalization that destroyed their lives and which has been revealed that it was not due to their poverty or adversity that they were abused and treated in this way but it returned to their historical background of slavery and bondage destined to them, which was applied on all the black community who were under the rules of the whites as they were dominated and affected by the white culture who triumphed at that time by promoting their own authority and supremacy.

Morrison could challenge her readers through the focus on their emotional fields to show compassion and sympathize with black people’s feelings of sorrow, self-hatred and harassment that surrounded them, which was caused by the fact of judging the others basing only on their appearances.

The example that was demonstrated in *The Bluest Eye* was by Pecola’s character who believed that blackness is her initial problem that is interrelated with lack of luck, torture and ugliness. These thoughts pushed her to try to beautify her race by dreaming of having blue eyes because she was convinced by the idea that whiteness is beautiful and it is the key of success. Consequently, as she was

¹¹ <https://denisegraveline.org/2016/08/famous-speech-friday-toni-morrisons.html>

persuaded that the colour of her skin and eyes were the source of her torment she dreamed of having a light skin and blue eyes that would be the key of the openness to comfortable life and the end of her problems, a portrait that described a white girl called Shirley Temple who was, for Pecola, lucky and happy by dint of her physical appearance. Smith stated that “*The Bluest Eye* examines the complex economic, historical, cultural and geographic factors that problematize relations within the black community and the world beyond” (Smith, 1985, p.721) *The Bluest Eye* addressed three main problems of racism, alienation and sexism that black women were beset with.

The odious acts were visualized by the character of Cholly Breedlove who was extremely repulsive in the novel through epitomizing all kinds of sexist oppression. In order to deal with and overcome the sensation of fear, self-rout and aggravation under circumstances of the white leader and controlling community, Cholly reimbursed his feelings of underestimation, disregard and neglect by actions performed in response of his degradation and vented his anger on his wife and daughter by beating and abusing them, in a state of alcoholism and insobriety, he frequently raped his eleven year old daughter Pecola who became upset and complex throughout her entire life. He also abused his wife Pauline and dumped all his garbage upon her in order to compensate his feelings of frustration and insult that encompassed all the blacks controlled by a white society in which discrimination prevailed and mistreatment dominated. Pauline suffered as well from a sexist abuse and oppression received by her husband Cholly who used a brutal and violent treatment over her as represented in the novel:

He sat up, choking and spitting. Naked and ashen, he leaped from the bed, and with a flying tackle, grabbed his wife around the waist, and they hit the floor. Cholly picked her up and knocked her down with the back of his hand. She fell in a sitting position, her back supported by Sammy’s bed frame. (Morrison, 1970, p.44)

Morrison explains in details the brutality of Cholly and she adds that:

She had not let go of the dishpan, and began to hit at Cholly's thighs and groin with it. He put his foot in her chest, and she dropped the pan. Dropping to his knee, he struck her several times in the face, and she might have succumbed early had he not hit his hand against the metal bed frame when his wife ducked... Mrs. Breedlove took advantage of this momentary suspension of blows and slipped out of his reach (Morrison, 1970, p.44)

Moreover, Pecola's mother was terribly exploited and very low waged because of being not only a black but also a woman two weak points that precise a very low economic situation like all the black women who underwent the same conditions of economic slaves in a leading white society.

2.11.2.2. Carby's Outlook of Male Suppression in *The Bluest Eye*

In the same vein, Hazel V Carby spotlighted in her article entitled "White Woman Listen! Black Feminism and the Boundaries of Sisterhood" the situation of the black women as drudgery workers, Carby argued in her book "Cultures in Babylon: Black Britain and African America" published in 1999 that "The historically specific forms of racism force us to modify or alter the application of the term "patriarchy" to black men. Black women have been dominated "patriarchally" in different ways by men of different 'colours'." (Carby, 1999, p.73) Inasmuch, she also thought about the reproduction and she wondered about "What does the concept of reproduction mean in a situation where black women have done domestic labor outside of their own homes in the servicing of white families?" And immediately explained this example and she said: "In this example they lie outside

of the industrial wage relation but in a situation where they are providing for the reproduction of black labor in their domestic sphere.” (Carby,1999, p.74)

Accordingly, Carby’s ideas represent the economic conditions of Pauline which are strongly affected by the issues of racism and sexism that shaped her lives and resulted on the economic unfairness and tightness, she was for instance compelled to take a decision about choosing her work or her husband as said in the novel: “She said she would let me stay if I left him. I thought about that. But later on it didn’t seem none too bright for a black woman to leave a black man for a white woman. She didn’t never give me the eleven dollars she owed me, neither. That hurt bad” (Morrison,1970, p.120) what pushed Carby to merge racism with sexism, she viewed that: “Racism and sexism are similar. Ideologically for example, they both construct common sense through reference to ‘natural’ and ‘biological’ differences.” (Carby,1999, p.68) The most affected layer of society as the novel incessantly portrays are women as injured bodies and fractured mind left unspoken and forgotten.

2.11.2.3. Landscapes of Women’s Agony in *The Bluest Eye*

Sexism and racism are two issues which are interconnected. Internal struggles in the midst of the black society took place while men use biological power to abuse and oppress their wives and girls. Meanwhile, other dehumanizing acts were cruelly exercised by the whites, who favored themselves over blacks because of their dark skin. Pecola Breedlove, comparable to her mother, is deficient in self-regard and esteem and she is wronged and persecuted by her oppressive father, Cholly, who assaulted her to the point of exasperation which drove her to madness at the end. Pecola’s calamity was always affected by her skin-colour which was for her the root of all her problems, this abhorrence and hatred towards herself and her obsession to improve her physical appearance to be beautiful formed a tragedy that ended with insanity.

Her dream of transforming herself to a girl with blue eyes was, for her, the key for life progress in her family and school and the right solution to gain people’s respect,

esteem and love which strongly reflected the consequences and the sturdy impact of racism that reined the African American society.

Racism forced her to be obsessed by titivating her appearance and changing her strain which was, as she thinks, the root reason of her ugliness, weakness and inferiority as explained by Henry A. Giroux, Patrick Shannon, the editors of the book entitled: *Education and Cultural Studies: Toward a Performative Practice* where they clarified that:

Internalizing the values and the ideals of another culture prove most disastrous for Pecola Breedlove. The longing for a school primer family and a Shirley Temple kind of pretty fuels Pecola's desire for blue eyes in front of which people wouldn't "do bad things." Convinced of her own ugliness, an insight powerfully reinforced by her teacher and classmates, Pecola prays for pretty blue eyes that promise love. (Giroux & Shannon, 2013, p.166)

Pecola finds herself compelled to modify her look as she was convinced that she is ugly and inferior. Things went worst with her especially when she began to compare herself with Shirley Temple that symbolized the white ideals, and as the principle of beauty was so important for Pecola, she was trying to beautify her strain, blot out her ugliness and find up the why that turned in her mind and transformed her to an obsessed girl as represented in the novel:

Long hours she set looking in the mirror, trying to discover the secret of ugliness, the ugliness that made her ignored or despised at school by teachers and classmates alike. She was the only member of her class who sat alone at a double desk... her teacher had always treated her this way. (Morrison,1970, p. 39-40)

Morrison scrutinizes Pecola's situation accurately when she adds:

They tried never to glance at her, and, called on her only when everyone was required to respond. She also knew that when one of the girls at school wanted to be particularly insulting to a boy...she would say, "Bobby loves Pecola Breedlove! Bobby loves Pecola Breedlove!" and never fail to get peals of laughter from those in earshot, and mock anger from the accused. (Morrison, 1970, p.40)

At the end, Pecola concluded that the main physical problem was the colour of her eyes, and she arrived to this way of thinking and dogmatism by reasoning that "if her eyes, those eyes that held the pictures, and knew the sights- if those eyes of hers were different, that is to say beautiful, she herself would be different" (Morrison, 1970, p.40).

Morrison's literature and invented stories portray the hole between the position of civilization, possessions and humanity, which entailed everyone for recalling all the facts that traced the American history. She depicted the ugly past of that left its scars in their memories; nonetheless, they were under the system of slavery but after they were disposed of it another phenomena had started, a problem that attached all the blacks and quivered the status of humanity, it was racism and sexism.

Since their means and abilities were limited as people of colour, African American women in particular, found themselves suffering from marginalization and rape as they were deprived from all their human rights and doubly dehumanized not only for being slaves since slavery knew its end and was abolished by all their means but also for being blacks and women, the Black Reconstruction was between 1867-1877 in which ancient slaves prepared themselves to receive their new obtained rules of freedom in all the domains and basically in choosing their partners

and freely express their feeling but it was not the case for black women who were still abused, dehumanized and segregated so they struggled to change their traumatic past and alter the negative views of black womanhood memorialized and widespread through ages by the white culture and community.

2.12. Musical Rhetoric via the Blues in *The Bluest Eye*

The Blues is an Afro American song to incite the characters' remembrance, nostalgia, and other cultural values, "fiction written under the influence of music naturally aspires to imitate musical structures and tends to emphasize the sound and the rhythmic patterns of language. [...] pushing the conventional semantic and syntactic patterns to express the unsayable of the emotional and spiritual experiences." (Simawe, 2000, p.23). Every black character sounds a blues song echoing a typical experience, and this is aesthetically interwoven in the novel through Claudia's mother singing the Blues to her daughter. The black self-expression was performed through the blues lyrics but not just in music since the black themselves were labeled the blues people, and this singularizes the rhetorical groundwork of *The Bluest Eye* where Morrison calls for theorizing the black experience.

Musical rhetoric is a strategy used by Morrison to mirror a micro Afro American society in a transparent way to reflect those sublime literary sounds inspired from African American pop culture transmitted orally from mouth to ear to decode enigma of a target culture for the white world usually attacked and scorned, "rhetorical stances are informed by and express certain ideological stances. Bakhtin is one scholar who has argued convincingly that the historical, ideological, and sociological context that one associates with literacy and language use influences meaning" (Jackson, 2007, p.167). Indeed music in the novel fosters its educational perspectives for reading and oral comprehension. All the aesthetics and the poetics are there in well-balanced words and themes within the music that an oral performer can decode; interpreting the beauty that echoes an oral pep culture, typically black,

overlapped with American to give birth to a new aspect of Afro American heritage. Also, couching original African dialects with English helps the appearance of Black English which developed to have its grammar, wording, and vocabulary. This is why, reading *The Bluest Eye* fosters this language, mastered by Morrison, to be coined as African American pidgin.

Morrison's language is typically musical expressed through the mother, the singer, in MacTeer family, black but happy, whose daughters Claudia and Frieda reflect black female aspects. She uses the device of typical rhetoric so enchanting and rhythmic to instruct and teach. She deals with words to denote a message exactly like the musician does with the notes. Music in the novel helps best comprehend the characters to the extreme, their moments of pleasure, their senses, minds and emotions converse through the song. Frieda and Claudia's mother usually sings 'St. Louis Blues' and teaches them music fantastically performed by her where "sound meets sound, shimmies and retires" (Morrison, 1970, p.15). This mother often chants in circles of friends repeating blissfully musical words that the two sisters happily imitate and learn from these songs and themes stories about life experience; they joyfully listen to laughter and entertainment that these moments offer. Music, as it grants pleasurable time, is a way for the singing characters to endure hardships and surmount the challenging problem a black person tiresomely passes through. Every society problem is reflected back on them like racism, sexism, identity, autonomy, low self-esteem and loss of self-confidence. Music comes to back up intense cultural knowledge possessed by the black and a means of expression of the unspeakable in action. Claudia the narrator expresses it in the novel when citing her mother's singing occasion when she says: "if my mother was in a singing mood, it wasn't so bad. She would sing about hard times, bad times, and somebody-done-gone- and- left- me- times" (Morrison, 1970, p.25). Claudia thus is charged to compose "the narrative's emotional content" by telling Pecola's story, "with empowerment by situating Claudia's narrative voice within African American oral traditions and blues aesthetics. I posit Claudia as the narrative's blues subject, its Bluest "I" and representative blues figure" (Cat, 1999, p.623) The song is a tool of comfort to feel better; it is remedial of malaise, ameliorative of low

instances, curative of injuries and agonies; music in *The Bluest Eye* is, thus, therapeutic.

Toni Morrison shapes *The Bluest Eye* in a community afflicted by the plague of terrifying viruses biting the characters morally and bodily. The woman is either a seducer or a victim of sexual assault and in all cases, she is oppressed by a hegemonic white society. At the same time, Morrison endeavours to represent the black, in spite of fatal persecution, as a rich owner of strong folkloric heritage that reflects their own identity, recurrently, music that is an icon of power and comfort. On that account, the researchers in this study joined music to rhetoric and feminism to approach the novel differently so as to revisit it as a model of a new wave, and as a recall to Afro American popular culture stemming from Africa.

Ergo, musical rhetoric is mainly inspired by ethical oral traditions used in the novel to reflect ways that render comfort even in their living horrific circumstances, to confirm the first hypothesis. Thus, African American values, though squeezed by the dominant group, were called to respond retrospectively to life with all its ups and downs. It is worth discussing that feminism discloses motivating facts revealed by the behavior of all characters as concerned with their contact with each other, for both gender male and female. It also focuses on the ideals of true womanhood that are not sourced from the white beauty and Pecola Breedlove dream to have blue eyes deluded her to lose her self-esteem, self-consciousness and ends by schizophrenia.

Accordingly, the novel is certified confirming the bodily and mental oppression endured by female and male characters ending in abhorrent culmination.

2.13. Call and Response Pattern in *The Bluest Eye* and *Beloved*

Morrison's childhood nurtured on a strong black culture rich in a host of folkloric elements like storytelling, riddles, music, and the blues; this enables her to flourish her rhetoric with aesthetical power. Morrison endeavours to decenter

Eurocentrism by filtering African American folklore anew through reversion, inversion and subversion which help to blur folklore in literature representing local memories richly shaping Morrison's ambitiousness. This fosters Morrison to communicate in a popular way to cover that part of black knowledge often marginalized and alienated. Morrison is a bearer of African tradition and a supporter of her grandparent's heritage so rich and nice evolving in a difficult community where the superior is the white oppressor.

The chapters in the novels are arranged in a musical way calling and responding to manifold references; to memories, acts of past revived in the present, places so antique but wished to be removed, people loving and hating each other. In a conversation, by Thomas LeClair, "The Language Must Not Sweat" with Morrison: *The Bluest Eye* and *Beloved* become more visible at the outset of her venture "to do what the music did for the blacks, what we used to be able to do with each other in private in that civilization that existed underneath the white civilization" (Morrison, 1981, p.26).

The reader is invited to be strongly connected to call and response patterns to fill blank spaces intentionally left by Morrison who states in an interview to Claudia Tate that "The reader supplies the emotions. The reader supplies even some of the colour, some of the sound. my language has to have holes and spaces so that the reader can come into it" (Tate, 1983, p.164). Morrison uses a specific rhetoric as an indispensable element represented through the pattern of call and response which stems from the West African ethnic communities, to join the reader with the characters and contemplate together African memories declared linguistically in speeches; and figuratively through textual narrative structure no matter for her to agree or disagree, but her goal was to gain a feedback and an appeal mostly aesthetical.

Both feminism and rhetoric are, after being sought theoretically, viewed practically from Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* and *Beloved*. The rhetoric in the novels cover moody characters enslaved, enraged, but also, docile and calm, differed from early creation as an embryo to a child, teenager, adult and old. Segregated and split

into social clashes but also twisted in interior struggles with the selves. The rhetoric in the novels resume a language of distinct pitches so magnetic to attract careless eyewitness about the black; voiced enough to reverberate Pecola's tears for her delivery of a mortal baby and Sethe's pain for killing her baby, the product of an interbreeding relation.

The rhetoric of music shapes the sounds in *The Bluest Eye* through call and response pattern and the blues often repeated by black female characters in the novel. The use of music in *The Bluest Eye* and *Beloved* renders the novel polyrhythmic and this is what constitutes the overall structure of the narrative in the novel. The rhythms are inspired from Black American music which expresses cultural knowledge. However, in both novels, it is acknowledged that there are substantial arguments among researchers as to analyse the use of a special rhetoric by Morrison in both linguistic and symbolic manner, the uses of call and response pattern to view ideological, political and cultural aspects in the novels, plus, psychologically interpreted analysis of female subjectivity and sexual violence which all together were the limitations in Morrison's writings.

2.14. Conclusion

This chapter has exposed the concept of feminism and the rhetoric of racism in *The Bluest Eye* and *Beloved*. It has also displayed the role of women as feminine characters usually considered as passive; which denotes racial oppression, women's sacrifice, women slaves plus other sexual exploitations. Both novels focus the idea of the coloured as victims of unspoken trauma. Meanwhile, the identity and the cultural heritage in the two novels are not neglected and widely exposed through musical rhetoric besides call and response pattern.

Having said that, the research enlarges its scope through inserting another novelist as black, rebellious and raged against segregation and racism; she is Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie who produced a novel worth studying for its thematic

issues recently portraying the position of the black women. Adichie's novel revisited feminism and womanism as will be explored in the next chapter.

Chapter Three

The Intersectionality of Gender, Race and the Quest for Identity in Morrison's The Bluest Eye and Beloved and Adichie's Americanah.

3.1. Introduction

Under the umbrella of a phallogocentric society in which male gender is thought superior; and under the scrutiny of the prevailing portrayal of their dominance from which women have to be independent, the call for equality remains the stamp and the target of the black African writers such as Morrison, Adichie and other black authors who share their voices to fight for both gender and racial equivalence.

From the vantage point of Morrison, as she demonstrated in her novels; *The Bluest Eye* and *Beloved*, these intersectional issues are considered as hallmarks of a sector which is outside of literary convention that parasitizes conventional Western dogmatic scopes and alters patriarchal epigraphs.

The concern of this chapter is to show how Morrison and Adichie could chart out that sector and describe it precisely and radically through their voices, their usage of rhetoric, by referring to history and rebuilding the black identity and through expressing and defending what most black female desire, a result that calls for ranking *The Bluest Eye*, *Beloved* and *Americanah* within a black feminist frame of reference. Morrison, unlike Adichie, did not identify herself neither her works as feminist. They did not belong to the same generation, but they shared common ideas about same problems and seeking for same goals. Morrison, however, refused to recognize herself as a feminist because when feminism has started in the United States, black women have been marginalized and were not considered as members of that circle of defense. They were not concerned with women's rights, and still discriminated as only white women who had the right to yell for their rights. Another reason for which Morrison rejected the fact of considering her works as feminist works, was because she thinks that what black women faced in their life comparing with white women struggles was beyond feminist simple and sometimes even illogical thoughts regarding gender equality.

The waves of this movement delineate feminism by biasing and inclining for white women and excluding the gash and the traumatic experiences of women of colour. Although, both writers differentiate in the concept and the way they think

about what is meant to be a feminist but both of them see black women's traumas and hard situation. Both writers did not belong to the same period of time and they are joined in many facts and thoughts but Adichie's slang was "we should all be a Feminist" whereas Morrison refused to recognize herself as a feminist. Adichie employed it in a time where feminism transcends many boundaries that benefit white women from blacks and knew many changes about the real understanding of this concept, however, Morrison was living in a moment where discrimination prevailed and segregation overwhelmed.

Although, both writers differentiate in the portrayal of Feminism but actually both of them sought to share and reach the same target, and employ their works to call all the white feminists to be intersectional and dilate their thoughts about the understanding of this women's movement beyond the realm of gender to involve other directions such as class, religion, race and sexual trends, as a result for Feminism to effectively and efficiently attain its objectives to override all the socio-cultural restrictions on women.

3.2. *Americanah*, an Overview

American Literature has been viewed since its beginning with its very distinguished publications and has been periodical in its fields. Adichie narrates the story of Ifemelu in her novel called *Americanah*. Ifemelu is a young Nigerian woman, who quitted her country Nigeria and moved to the United States to go to university. The novel draws Ifemelu's living in both countries, and explains her love story with Obinze who was a rich man in Lagos and was her classmate in high school at the same time.

Ifemelu and Obinze fall in love in secondary school, as, at that time, Nigeria was ruled and controlled by a military dictatorship. People living there became very interested to quit the state. And among them is Ifemelu who leaves her country and travels to the United States for her studies at university, but she encountered other unexpected situations that extended over the country where she

interacted for the first time with racism and discrimination. When she moved, she tried to fight and face the many assortments of racial distinctions, and yet, she found herself obliged to deal with the situation. As all these changes she encounters chocked Ifemelu, she discovered for the first time that she looked strange and realized what it signified to be a "Black Person". Obinze Could not join his lover so he immigrated to London and when he decided to marry and paid a green card marriage, the day of the wedding he was arrested and ultimately he returned to Nigeria.

After he was sent back to his country, he became a wealthy man as he worked as an estate developer and has got a beautiful woman named Kozi with whom he had a daughter, Ifemelo became famous and gained success through her blog called "Raceteenth or Various Observations About American Blacks (Those Formerly Known as Negroes) by a Non-American Black" which talks about race and discrimination of the whites over the blacks in the United States. Finally, she returned to Nigeria where she met Obinze again in spite of their bifurcate circumstances and experiences lived in many years apart.

3.3. The “Other” in the African American Society

The ubiquity of Feminism and racism in the African American environment and precisely in black literature mystifies the black community. Feminism for the Afro Americans is a movement that promotes a fake sense of equality in an allegedly righteous society.

In the same vein, racism refers to the unique ism of the American discrimination that stimulates the segregation over whites and blacks as clarified by Michael Omi and Howard Winant in their book entitled *Racial Formation in the United States: From the 1960s to the 1990s* when they explained that “Race is understood as a variable 'concept which signifies and symbolizes social conflicts and interests by referring to different types of human bodies.” (Omi & Winant,

1994, p.55) Thus, feminism and racism are interrelated and they have always topped the events and the facts of the black literature.

Therefore, African American writers were inspired by the hideous realities happened around them in the world, and when push came to shove, they could not skim the horrible oppression and discrimination of the black community which were exposed to them and ruined their moments.

Hence, they decided to yell for their rights stolen mostly by the white slave owners, who sought for seizing their heritage and expunging their history in a supposedly a colour-blind society as stated by Barbara and mentioned in Sumana's *The Novels of Toni Morrison: A Study in Race, Gender, and Class (1998)* when she explained that "They had to work; and according to the aesthetics of this country, they were not beautiful. But neither were they men. Any aggressiveness or intelligence on their part, qualities necessary for participation in the work world, were constructed as unwomanly and tasteless" (p.21).

Consequently, these writers endeavoured to integrate all the facts of brutality, cruelty, violence, racism, sexism and discrimination that all the blacks suffered from into their lives and demonstrated them into their novels.

The black novelists worked to trace the function of racial subgroup of the black population within a cultural feminist mainstream, and lessen fanaticism and preconceived ideas of partiality, and try to find ways to strengthen the worth that the beauty of black womanhood, their occupations and their cultural values are beside the point of their connection and interaction with racism and sexism.

It is a new age of rebellion against bias, unfairness and inequality for the blacks drawn by women writers, renowned by enlargement and augmentation of female education as they have intensified women's literary corner to result a total steady term of feminism in a systematic capitalized worldwide economy.

3.3.1. The Viewpoint of the Black Women Writers

Under the shadow of acclimatizing with the American culture, the African Americans suffered from racism and sexism as the feminist movement covered only the whites, and has long been censured for its paucity of intersectionality and its lack of fairness over women of colour, who were deprived from its benefits and faced discrimination not only of gender but of race as well, this was sited in *Routledge International Encyclopedia of Women: Global Women's Issues and Knowledge* by Chervis Kramarae and Dale Spender who explained that black women “argued that the most *important* problem for *them* was not patriarchy but racism.” (Kramarae, 2004, p.75)

Eventually, African American women writers including Toni Morrison, Chimamanda Ngozie Adichie, Alice Walker, Gloria Naylor and many others called for proclaiming that women’s rights, be them blacks or whites, are all bunched up to be part of the natural human rights and explained the importance of the joining of the intersectional issues that go hand in hand including gender, class and racial identity to shape and sway the life of women of colour in the American society.

In *The Newly Born Women*, Catherine Clement and Helene Cixous declared that:

It is impossible to define a feminist practice of writing, and this is an impossibility that will remain, for this practice can never be theorized, enclosed, coded—which doesn't mean that it doesn't exist.... It will be conceived of only by subjects who are breakers of automatisms, by peripheral figures that no authority can ever subjugate (Clement & Cixous, 1986, p. 313).

Catherine Clement and Helene Cixous showed that there is a difficulty in pinpointing the feminist writings and acquainting the readers of its corollaries that are changeable vis-à-vis the viewpoint and the personality of the reader who can be

a scholar, an activist or a simple reader and share his thoughts in a simple and informal conversation or in books and press.

The diversity of thoughts extracted from different backgrounds as asserted Morrison in an interview mentioned in the book of Toni Morrison's *Song of Solomon: A Casebook*, where she assumed that:

I write without gender focus... It happens that what provokes my imagination as a writer has to do with the culture of black people. I regard the whole world as my canvas and I write out of that sensibility of what I find provocative and the sensibility of being a woman. (Morrison, 2003, p.67)

And this brings several benefits and bewildered confusions as well; every answer stems from several personalities and thinkers infused with specific dose of political, social and emotional rate, for this reason, Catherine and Helene declared that 'this practice can never be theorized, enclosed or coded' that can be only visualized by 'peripheral figures' who belong to this environment and are not restricted or controlled by any authority, such as Toni Morrison and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie who wrote about facts, culture and thoughts depicted from their personal surroundings to describe this peripheral society which is affected by many climate changes, regarding the edge of wealth, gender and racial differentiations.

3.4. Background of Blacks by Morrison and Adichie

Morrison, when writing about the culture of black people in *Song of Solomon*, she adds that she describes herself as valuable as an African writer and as precious as a woman and she said:

Valuable as a writer because I am a woman, because women, it seems to me, have some special knowledge about certain things. [It comes from] the ways in which they view the world and from women's imagination. Once it is unruly and let loose it can bring things to the surface that

men—trained to be men in a certain way—have difficulty getting access to. (Morrison, 2003, p.67)

Morrison and Adichie convey the common characteristics and circumstances of the black society in their writings, to be “other”, “black”, and “female” means to have a special insight and characteristics hailed from their own knowledge being that “other” themselves.

Accordingly, the novelists Morrison and Adichie, could write and portray frequently the African American life, and depict their main problems which were illustrated in their novels; *The Bluest Eye*, *Beloved* and *Americanah* respectively, to cancel the idea that describes the Africans as exotic, marginal, insular and parochial people, furthermore, to elucidate the reality that reinforces and effectuates the notion which explains that differences must be comprehensible and otherness connotes the ability of being different and having dissimilar identity and culture.

However, the writers work for illuminating and enlightening the state of being the ‘other’ and seek for triumphing over that humiliating position as included in *A Turbulent Voyage: Readings in African American Studies* and declared by Morrison: “We are not, in fact, 'other.' We are choices. And to read imaginative literature by and about us is to choose to examine centers of the self and to have the opportunity to compare these centers with the 'raceless' one with which we are, all of us, most familiar” (Hayes, 2000, p.251)

Morrison tried to explain that Africans are “humans” and “other” at the same time. She clarified and confirmed the possibility of having different colour, attitudes and culture but it does not debase their dignity or their importance or demean their position as any human being all over the world as confirmed Morrison: "has something to do with life and being human in the world" (Taylor, 1994, p. 160).

The different ambiguous areas of the human mind including both conscious and unconscious zones that are presented to highlight its cultural otherness rather than reduce it, this psychic part is included and emphasized by Morrison as a

reflection of race and gender status that develops into ethical, more rational, wiser and righteous humans.

Consequently, she directs her reader to different ideas and thoughts that should not be forgotten in the African culture and history, through depictions of black living and circumstances, including a representation of a jungle world in a figurative sense as for the violation of children, the incest relationship and the dehumanisation of the whites towards the blacks, cases that are engraved and carved in their minds and appear unconsciously in the African American racial memory which could never be misplaced or forgotten.

3.5. Black in America Via *Americanah*

American Literature has been viewed since its beginning with its very distinguished publications and which is periodical in its field, *Americanah* is mostly related in flashbacks of Ifemelu in the hair salon where she meets some Africans who tried to braid their hair like the whites and mainly addresses issues of race, cultural clashes and dislocation.

The story is settled in a period when Nigeria was under a military dictatorship, for that, people quit the state whenever they find the opportunity to flee, to look for the American dream; a life full of opportunities that did not exist in their homeland, Ifemelu who presents a self assured character departs for America where she discovered ups and downs, finds and loses relationships and she encountered almost the hardest encumbrance in America where it was supposed to be a country of welfare, comfort and security. Obinze, her lover, could not join her, he changed his path to a dangerous and an unproved life in London as he was not recorded in residence records, but in the end, he came back to the newly democratic Nigeria where he succeeded and gained power and wealth after thirteen years.

Ifemelu and Obinze, both of them, could discover their colour, their race and their distinctive hair, only when they have changed their country, things that looked

normal and were not regarded as a boundary “Race doesn't really exist for you because it has never been a barrier. Black folks don't have that choice.” (Adichie, 2013, p.346) Race formed an obstacle that stopped their chances for advancement and progress and limited their opportunities in Nigeria:

The only reason you say that race was not an issue is because you wish it was not. We all wish it was not. But it's a lie. I came from a country where race was not an issue; I did not think of myself as black and I only became black when I came to America... it is true, I speak from experience. (Adichie, 2013, p. 290)

When Ifemelu and Obinze immigrated, they knew the feeling of something which was a heavy weight on their shoulder. They discovered that America is not the heaven that has always been drawn in their minds, "it is wonderful but it is not heaven" (Adichie, 2013, p.434) it was not a good omen for them, they remained almost jobless, they have been trapped oodles of times and at many stances in their lives and these strains were only because of their dark skin, something they never had to deal with in Nigeria, notoriously, while reading between the lines, they found out that something goes wrong and things are beyond normal, they had no clue about what happened exactly but they felt something they never knew, thought of or felt about in their hometown: they are made aware of race as it was clarified in the novel when Ifemelu said:

When you are black in America and you fall in love with a white person, race doesn't matter when you're alone together because it's just you and your love. But the minute you step outside, race matters. But we don't talk about it. We don't even tell our white partners the small things that piss us off and the things we wish they understood better, because we're worried they will say we're overreacting, or we're being too sensitive. (Adichie, 2013, p. 290).

And she bursts out and adds “We let it pile up inside our heads and when we come to nice dinners like this, we say that race doesn’t matter because that’s what we’re supposed to say, to keep our nice liberal friends comfortable. It’s true. I speak from experience. (Adichie, 2013, p.290)

Ifemelu achieved her goals through her enthusiastic blog in which she wrote about her experiences in the USA and in time it became highly successful and famous blog. Ifemelu had always the impression that all the American white women satirized from the blacks when they praised them, the whites were almost clueless about the way they could deal with them, for example when Laura, Kimberley’s sister was misconstrued once she wanted to explain the point that she prefers Nigerians because they are the most knowledgeable immigrants and she said:

I read on the internet that Nigerians are the most educated immigrant groups in this country. Of course, it says nothing about the millions who live on less than a dollar a day back in your country, but when I met the doctor I thought of that article and of you and other privileged Africans who are here in this country” (Adichie, 2013, p.167, 168)

She adds that this doctor reminds her of her classmate from Uganda in graduate school who was different and did not have the African American issues, but Ifemelu did not fathom what she wanted to say and interpreted her ideas wrongly and then replied that when the African Americans did not have the right to vote because they were black, the Ugandan’s father runs for parliament and could be present at Oxford. Laura feels insulted, and then Ifemelu apologizes but she was sorry only because of her friend Kimberly.

As Adichie eloquently worked to input different events that demonstrated the reality of the American society which pushed the protagonist to build a strong personality that helped her to be more attentive and increased her awareness.

Everything that happened around Ifemelu gave her the ability and the courage to turn her consciousness into power and pride towards herself and towards all the black skinned men and women. Notwithstanding, the subtle input of facts helped Ifemelu to gain a racial awakening and to be more conscious in her life, things that made from her the proudest protagonist that represents the story.

3.6. Gender Discrimination in *Americanah*

Gender has always been considered as a major factor for women who were exposed to discrimination pressures and prominent inequality and who reluctantly fought for their rights in order to mark their presence in a patriarchal environment, whereas in an American society, gender forms an ambiguity that includes all men and women in a diaspora that deals with both types regarding all Afro Americans living not only in a racist but a sexist community as well.

In 1863, the president and the politician Abraham Lincoln once put: "Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent, a new nation, conceived in Liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal" (Hanson-Harding, 1997, p.36)

Lincoln aims that the new world is based on freedom, liberty and equality and all the humans are supposed to treat each other equivalently and similarly. Consequently, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie demonstrates in her novel *Americanah*, different experiences linked to sustainable issues that dominate the world. The novel intrinsically speaks about living gender inequality and class privileges and discrimination within the background of cultural clashes and identity struggles, i.e., racial discernment, skin colour difference and politicised distinct hair.

Gender distinction and class privileges are explicitly exhibited in the novel; many characters faced severe problems regarding their femininity or masculinity. Adichie has critically asserted that many issues of class and gender discrimination drove the American society.

Ifemelu, for instance, lived many hardships in her daily life not only for having a dark skin and being an African but also for her status as a black and woman. She encountered many facts and unfair events that formed strict obstructions; Ifemelu suffered for having her hair braided in order to be professional and acceptable to get a job in a racist society in which she was subjected to all kinds of injustice: “I need to look professional for this interview, and professional means straight is best but if it is going to be curly then it has to be the white kind of curly... But never kinky” (Adichie, 2013, p.209)

Moreover, what demonstrates that gender inequality overwhelmed the American society is the braider Aicha and her conviction that a woman cannot succeed and move on in such a society; she always shows her disagreement with Ifemelu’s life and situation and gets even more shocked when Ifemelu talked about her accomplishments and achievements in America and her plan for coming back to Nigeria. Aicha gets surprised because she thinks that a woman could not reach such triumph alone, and it is almost impossible for black females to reach their goals.

Gender dissimilarity is a widespread in the novel; another example is confirmed when Obinze’s mother was assaulted and attacked by the male coworker, she is a professor, intelligent and educated, but she was victimized for the only reason that she works competently as Obinze explained to Ifemelu the situation and said:

She was on a committee and they discovered that this professor had misused funds and my mother accused him publicly and he got angry and slapped her and said he could not take a women talking to him like that. So my mother got up and locked the door of the conference room and put the key in her bra. (Adichie, 2013, p.71)

Restraining thoughts of gender spread over the novel of Americanah and correspondingly appear in both countries Nigeria and America as well. Obinze’s mother who was victimized by the coworker is an elementary illustration of how it

was tolerable in the Nigerian society that men underestimate women and get control on their responses and even exploit them by taking advantage of their fragility, work and their decisions.

3.7. Racial Inequality towards Black Women in Americanah

Americanah profoundly pictures the state of how African American or Non-American Black women in the United States struggled to fit in a foreign society, and how they could challenge different social norms and face various issues of race and gender discrimination and at the same time defy themselves to get adapted and involved in their new surroundings.

Americanah is stated from the angle of a Nigerian young girl, Ifemelu; the protagonist, who tried to set herself in a spot associated with a distinctive atmosphere of contemporaneous social occurrences.

Adichie used black women's migration as a window from which all the racial and social happenings located in America that the majority of black females suffered from are exposed. Ifemelu was that eye that observed and that human that experienced living in a typical racist and sexist society especially towards the blacks, she once explained in her blog that: "race is not biology; race is sociology. Race is not genotype; race is phenotype. Race matters because of racism. And racism is absurd because it's about how you look. Not about the blood you have".(Adichie, 2013, p.337)

Americanah was seen from the eyes of the Nigerian emigrant Ifemelu who encountered all kinds of racial discrimination and witnessed all those issues of segregation, unfairness and gender inequality, an aura that shaped the experiences of the black female African immigrants:

In describing black women you admire always use the word 'STRONG' because that is what black women are supposed to be in America. If you are a woman, please do not speak your mind as you are used to doing in

your country. Because in America, strong-minded black women are SCARY. (Adichie, 2013, p.220)

Ifemelu once put that she became black and felt that she was different and belonged to the underprivileged group in America once she migrates in the United State; she declared that in her country Nigeria, she never felt herself strange contrary to the feeling she bumped into when she resides in America. As she posted on her blog:

Dear Non-American Black, when you make the choice to come to America, you become black. Stop arguing. Stop saying I'm Jamaican or I'm Ghanaian. America doesn't care. So what if you weren't "black" in your country? You're in America now. We all have our moments of initiation into the society of Former Negroes. (Adichie, 2013, p.220)

When the dilemma of racism is tackled in *Americanah*, we mainly point out the experiences displayed by female and male characters as well, Ifemelu and Obinze respectively. The characters migrated to discover the prosperity of the new land as it has long been portrayed, though, divergently to what was expected, they have collided with many barriers that refrain their successfulness headed by the awkwardness of racism. This latter became a problem that threatened all the African Americans, be theme men or women, a complication that was not known or experienced in the African countries contrary to America where all immigrants got shocked by this tremendous weird issue which they have never been aware of.

Ifemelu as all the black African women faced different clashes; she worked hard to get habituated with the new surrounding while this adaptation pushed her to challenge many things to live in such society with such circumstances. She barely encountered lack of stability, equality and fairness that affected her badly as all the African American women because they were obliged to challenge a new culture and new social norms and they found themselves in a milieu very different and very complicated from their own.

For the past 100 years, racism immersed in the United States, whilst, the end of the civil war was supposed to be the end of racial discrimination as well but

humans, especially the blacks, still suffer from it and strive to illuminate their lives by fighting racism with all its forms. It is obvious that racial equality could not be achieved till now in spite of all the simmering tensions of the abolitionists, writers and politicians who struggled for the rights of people of colour and this is what was mainly disclosed by the recent novelist Adichie in *Americanah*.

Adichie in *Americanah* wanted to demonstrate the reality seen and experienced by immigrants, who traveled to America thinking that it is the land of dreams, and has much to offer for them as it has been always announced. They have always heard that it is the only door and key of all the opportunities for everyone, but characters who migrated to develop what has always been declared about the United States, shed light on the implicit and ambiguous shadow of racism and discrimination they faced between the blacks and the whites which became a complex, a hindrance and a kind of oppression for them.

Racism is controlling and overwhelming in the American society even in the citizens' way of speaking and accents used; Africans felt obliged to change their way of living, of dressing and of speaking to avoid not looking strange or debased, Halima in the novel once explained her situation and talked about her experience in America and she said: "when I come here with my son they beat him in school because of African accent. In Newark, if you see my son face? Purple like onion. They beat, beat, beat him. Black boys beat him like this. No accent go and no problems." (Adichie, 2013, p.187)

Accordingly, all the African immigrants found themselves obliged to hide themselves in the guise of another personality which is not theirs to avoid misunderstanding, as it was narrated by Ifemelu when she told Dike about the story of the Nigerian pastor who "while giving a sermon in a church in America, said something about a beach but because of his accent, his parishioners thought he had said 'bitch' and they wrote to his bishop to complain" (Adichie, 2013, p.349)

The presence of the African accent divulges their identity and therefore, it reveals the most incomprehensible and shocking reactions from their surrounding,

inasmuch as the incidence of various obstacles in front of those immigrants which form barriers that impede their life. However, their blackness which is observable and understandable also threatens and discloses their strangeness and oddity, Aunt Uju abundantly uncovered this appalling situation of being exposed to racism several times, and she narrates her dissatisfaction to Ifemelu where she experienced this kind of discrimination in her work. Although, Aunt Uju was very clever and very good doctor, but one of her patients did not accept to be treated by a black and flees when she discovered that she is the consultant she was waiting for “and a patient asked is the doctor coming? And when she said she is the doctor the patient’s face changed to fired clay” Aunt Uju continues: “do you know, that afternoon she called to transfer her file to another doctor’s office! Can you imagine?” (Adichie, 2013, p.182) Subsequently, to feel themselves members of the society equally with the whites and could fit in, blacks and especially the African Americans felt obliged for faking an American accent to sound like every American, to dress like them and to behave similarly, all these changes to feel that they are suitable for living in such a society and principally welcomed between them.

3.8. The Quest of Self and Identity

It is undeniable that the quest of the self and identity became a major theme and it is considered as the most important phase and concept in contemporary literature. Each society is defined by its own stereotype that distinguishes it from other communities, this latter is drawn by a specific identity and personality that create distinct thoughts and beliefs and give a meaning to their existence, Adichie as all the African American women writers tried to fix a proper identity for the Africans in particular by her writings. She examines the quest of self and identity by pushing them to feel proud about who they are, about their origins and their culture.

3.8.1. Ifemelu’s Black Personality Construction

Americanah essentially describes how race prevails in today's modern and globalised world and how it is perceived, it also shows the way it affects badly its victims. Ifemelu and Obinze tried to find their load to deal with things that happened around them in immigration, they realized that they are facing the reality which was further away from the suspected thinking and ideas about the land of opportunities, as was shown in the Cosby Show that called all the public's attention for knowing and being attracted by America.

Adichie effectively described the life of African American women who tried to find another identity for themselves, and endeavoured to imitate the majority that dominated the society, in order to earn a good livelihood and provide all the necessities of life for themselves. Uju, Ifemelu's aunt, for instance, experienced all the steps that her niece begins to uncover, she was persuaded that there is no clue to live in America unless if these facts and realities could be accepted and admitted. But Ifemelu's pride controlled her, she finds the situation in the new land too complicated and difficult to handle and put up with it, she firstly appeared dynamic, enthusiastic and full of practicality to end up with feelings of disappointment and displeasure, especially when she unveiled the horrifying realities of her aunt.

Ifemelu uncovered things that she extremely contradicted as Uju attempted to blend in being an American, resulting a huge disagreement which raised between Ifemelu and her teacher and mentor, she even distanced herself from her because she did not give her the right to blend in, for the only reason that she felt too desperate in the American society to the point that, she decided to surrender and give up into the possession of the American identity, culture and norms.

3.8.2. Stages of Ifemelu's Maturity and Identity Development

Ifemelu build her Identity throughout a long path full of several conditions that she experienced during her life, she realized that her personality differs depending on the milieu she enters or the persons with whom she interacts, she was persuaded that she must assume her choices and deal with her circumstances as a

black and finally she could manage her life and attain her maturity only when she accepted herself as she is and felt proud of her black identity.

3.8.2.1. Through Experience with Obinze

Ifemelu was very attracted by Obinze for having a special relationship with him founded by respect and love, union and harmony, acceptance and accordance therefore, Ifemelu's decision to quit the own country Nigeria and move to the United state to maintain further advanced learning and confer an honorable degree in the American university was her main target and the bottom decision to seek for prosperity and success but at the same time it led to a mutual decision for separation. Obinze is was presented by Adichie as a young strong man pleasant, friendly, and easy to like and full of kindness, he was very immersed in their relationship and it seemed perfect until Ifemelu's thoughts had changed and it could not resist in this kind of romantic connections because she aimed to realize various dreams and she drawn for herself a sudden and striking path in which she pointed other ambitions. From a part and to a certain extent, Obinze freighted his beloved with maturity through the experiences he encountered in his life, he was the only one who fathom everything about her: "he calmed her. With him, she could feel whatever she felt, and she did not have to force some cheer into her voice, as she did with her parents telling them ... She missed him." (Adichie,2013, p. 132)

Obinze previously blazed the same trail as he has already been in a same situation and has experienced the same circumstances related to his assimilation to a dissimilar dominant culture that impacted his mental, emotional and social wellbeing.

Moreover, Obinze has already gone through several difficulties and obstacles formed against him for the only reason that he is black. Although, Obinze still resided in Nigeria, but Ifemelu absorbed support and strength from him, she feels that he is always besides his caring, affection and his understanding.

3.8.2.1.1. Learning of Being Responsible

Their relationship is the mirror image of responsibility, collusion and reciprocal accepting of their thoughtful existence inside the African society. The author Frantz Fanon confessedly pointed out in his book *Black Skin, White Masks* that “the black man possesses two dimensions: one with his fellow Blacks, the other with the Whites. A black man behaves differently with a white man than he does with another black man.” (Fanon, 2008, 01) when we read between the lines we understand that Fanon wanted to explain that portraying or describing one’s professed opponent passively has all through history been a precondition for disaster or offense of worldwide nature. Inasmuch as the way blacks give themselves the right and the permission to call themselves ‘negro’ as most blacks Americans used to describe each others, whereas, if they hear this word from a non black person, it becomes an issue and a racist term which they do not accept or tolerate. They behave differently and react diversely especially with the whites and it basically depends on how and with whom they are transacting. But their unbalanced actions and reactions revert to a straight penalty and serious consequences due to colonialism and white dominance and supremacy that became a knot that tarnished and affected badly the black population.

The complicity and harmony of Ifemelu with Obinze mightily shaped her path and was clearly demonstrated in the whole novel, he was the only one who could commiserate with her, bandage her wounds, admittedly greet her fights. Adichie wanted to show in the beginning of her novel the most famous politician and special subjects of race and gender that could be absolutely intertwined. She intentionally refers to these issues by averting to Ifemelu’s braided hair.

The novelist purposely begins her story by referring to the setting of a braiding salon in Trenton, New Jersey where Ifemelu prepared herself and twisted her hair to go back to her country Nigeria. What would come into view of the reader while noticing that all the workers in that hair salon are not Americans that they all might think and feel to some extent themselves linked and associated with Ifemelu.

Yet, later on, it is clearly intelligible that their characters are totally different who cannot be related with her in any case:

Ifemelu looked at Aisha, a small, ordinary-faced Senegalese woman with patchwork skin who had two Igbo boyfriends, implausible as it seemed, and who was now insistent that Ifemelu should meet them and urge them to marry her. It would have made for a good blog post: “A Peculiar Case of a NonAmerican Black, or How the Pressures of Immigrant Life Can Make You Act Crazy.” (Adichie, 2013, p.18)

Therefore, it is that even if both women, Aicha and Ifemelu respectively belong to the same motherland and the same surroundings and share an identical history and experiences but, apparently, it is not reasonable to assume that there is contended atmosphere or relaxed environment. Ifemelu is a self-governing woman who has a strong personality, she believes in herself and has no doubts about what she accomplishes, and she is totally confident and does not care about others views or judgments about her thoughts or choices. Furthermore, the disagreement and complexity in transnational interactions was demonstrated by Ifemelu’s communication with Aisha and between: “Nigerians in America, among Africans in America and, indeed among immigrants in America” (Adichie, 2013, p.16) This necessity to feel proportionate, superior and familiar with the American milieu and culture drove Ifemelu to avoid telling the truth to Aisha about her experience in America even lied about the period she lived there:

Ifemelu took her time putting her phone back into her bag. Years ago, she had been asked a similar question, at a wedding of one of Aunt Uju’s friends, and she had said two years, which was the truth, but the jeer on the Nigerian’s face had taught her that, to earn the prize of being taken seriously [...] Eight years, she said when it was five. Now that it was thirteen years, lying seemed unnecessary but she lied anyway. “Fifteen years,” she said. (Adichie, 2013, p.16)

On the other hand, when Ifemelu came to the United States and she started to stabilize, she went to the college where she met some Africans who belong to an association of African students, with them, she had the sensation of belonging to her environment, she felt herself very released because she was around her surroundings.

3.8.2.1.2. Ifemelu's Africanness in her Surroundings

Ifemelu demonstrates her consciousness and feelings towards these Africans from different countries including “Nigerians, Ugandans, Kenyans, Ghanaians, South Africans, Tanzanians, Zimbabweans, one Congolese and one Guinean” (Adichie, 2013, p.139) they spoke about their survivals in the American society which is totally different from their own. The meeting makes Ifemelu feels herself at home right away and she was very comfortable, she observed everything and describes them as follows: “They mimicked what Americans told them: You speak such good English. How bad is AIDS in your country? It's so sad that people live on less than a dollar a day in Africa.”(Adichie, 2013, p.139) and she adds:

And they themselves mocked Africa, trading stories of absurdity, of stupidity, and they felt safe to mock, because it was mockery born of longing, and of the heartbroken desire to see a place made whole again. Ifemelu felt a gentle, swaying sense of renewal. Here she did not have to explain herself. (Adichie, 2013, p.139)

Consequently, the reminiscent of the African behaviors was settled down once they assembled together and began to deride and mock between each other, these actions demonstrate that at the depth of their inner self and personality, they reveal to common behaviors and similar deeds as all African Americans, they mock attitudes of their predisposition to their subculture in the American society alongside the

characteristics of their African culture when living in a superior country as American.

In the meeting, one of the students gave pieces of advice to the new coming Africans as a kind of orientation and guidance, and in a humorous way, that they will randomly acquire an American accent as a plan to sustain themselves and manage their life, as explained in *A Companion to Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie* by Ernest Emenyonu who described these behaviors as reactions that “denote their commonality of alienation and hybridity among African émigrés, and suggest the pervasive nature of acquired speech patterns as a coping mechanism” (Emenyonu, 2017, p.217) .

Adichie reveals many viewpoints and outlooks regarding race in America through the publications in Ifemelu’s blog where she shared her experiences as an African immigrant. The ethnic and racial of the American society and other western nations foisted “blackness as an all consuming identity” (Emenyonu, 2017, p.224) without admission of cultural tradition, civilization or dissimilarity. This was clearly quoted by Marilyn Halter and Violet Showers Johnson in their book *African and American* when the Nigerian novelist Olufemi Taiwo expressed herself:

All my life in Nigearia, I lived in Yoruba, a Nigerian, an African, and human being... As soon as I arrived in the United States of America (1990), I underwent a singular transformation, the consequences of which have circumscribed my life ever since: I BECAME BLACK! (Taiwo, 2014, p.9-10)

The novelist articulates this dilemma experienced by herself as an immigrant and she continues:

The difference is that as soon as I entered the US, my otherwise complex multidimensional, and rich human identity became completely reduced to a simple, one dimensional, and impoverished nonhuman identity. I am saying, in other words, that to become ‘black’ in the US is to enter a sphere where there is no differentiation,

no distinction, and no variation. It is one under which you are meant to live and one way only, regardless of what choices you wish to make. (Taiwo, 2014, p.9-10)

Ifemelu was in the same case, and shared the same sentiments as African immigrants must wrestle with a special consciousness of the racial background and ethnical context regarding their identity frequently in inconvenient and uncomfortable ways. This dilemma made the African immigrants sight themselves through the eyes of other foreign races that portray blackness as wicked and threatening.

In America, the most worrying situation could settle down when it comes to wealth and funds. Therefore Ifemelu's anxiousness about money started to appear consequently, finding a job and stabilize, was the most essential and the most urgent issue of all her concerns; otherwise, she perfectly knows that without gains she will absolutely be in troubles.

When she failed to find an appropriate work, a physical and mental restlessness, frustration, inquietude and disappointment controlled her life. At the end, she decided to work for a white man, a tennis coach, who exploited her sexually: "She took off her shoes and climbed into his bed. She did not want to be there [...] He had not forced her. She had come here on her own". (Adichie, 2013, p. 154)

After several rejections and many failed interviews, she always wonders about this unfair prejudice that has turned the scales and obstructed her life especially when she lived a fearful apprehension and a severe depression permeated her spirit. She was embarrassed and also broken particularly, when she decided to transcend the limits as a virtuous black woman after many attempts to get a job and all was in vain as explained by Emenyonu when she described her horrible situation as "she sinks into a depression from which she cannot escape. She stops going to class, and becomes 'lost in a viscous haze' of hopeless inertia." (Emenyonu,2017, p.

218) in the same context Emenyonu adds that Ifemelu “stopped writing to her boyfriend Obinze in Nigeria and they experience a period of estrangement that lasts for years” (Emenyonu,2017, p. 218)

This destruction was the breaking point that reached to the climax concerning her relationship with Obinze, all what she has gone through and what she has experienced was a reason that affected badly her life, her building of self and identity that she was seeking for in America.

After this decline that has a strong impact in her life, Ifemelu suddenly gets a job, hence, she decided to alter everything she used to do in order to feel acceptable in the American society, she developed her way of thinking and finally, these ups and downs that obstructed her path disappeared once she started to become more mature and decided to be herself, by believing in her abilities and showing her real personality. She was finally persuaded that the key of success is not by faking other accents or imitating other ways of living strange from their inner being but it starts from being proud of whom you are, of your origins and race.

Ifemelu could finally manage herself and this time her decisions were a turning point in her life, a state that fragmented her consciousness again as she fixed on switching and reclaiming her real identity as a Nigerian.

Ifemelu continues her life without Obinze who was the nearest to her heart, her confident and beloved. After committing very harmful wrongs, she decided to reject his calls and any contact with him for the only reason that she felt guilty and she wanted to prevent him from living a big disappointment towards her, and to keep him away from tasting the bitterness of paying for the sentimental damages she could cause. She preferred leaving him in silence, and without any explanation, to maintain good memories of their relationship.

After many years in the United States, Ifemelu ends with going back to her motherland Nigeria where she regains another time her lover Obinze, she is now the most vigorous and the powerful woman that can take up any challenge because she feels herself strong enough and confident besides her beloved. It is the closing of

her attempts to get adapted within a strange society and the ending of her efforts to seek for an identity.

3.8.2.2 Through White Privilege with Curt

Ifemelu's relationship with Curt, the white American privileged man was different, and particular: "She was lighter and leaner; she was Curt's Girlfriend, a role she slipped into as into a favorite, flattering dress, she laughed more because he laughed so much. His optimism blinded her" (Adichie, 2013, p.196) but it was not seen likewise when it comes to his family and surroundings. She has always a feeling of discrimination and inferiority once she meets the white women in particular because she is persuaded that they look to her in the same manner of denigration and disparagement as well as. She always believes in her intuition as she thinks that it is always right.

Bell Hooks has extremely depicted the explanation that summarizes the vision of society especially from the feminine racist side. It was supposed that Feminism resolves all the issues related to female gender, its main objective was to call for equality between men and women and fight the injustice and unfairness of males, it was supposed that change and amendment pertain all women, be them blacks or whites, but unfortunately this revolution was not fair as the blacks did not get profit and have been marginalized and cancelled accordingly. Not only they suffered from the oppression of the patriarchal society but also they had to struggle for their rights against the discriminatory attitudes of white women who debased and maltreated them.

Seemingly, it was weird to see Ifemelu dating Curt as they believe that they are always superiors and it is impossible for them to share same concerns and interests as a hole group and the possibility that gathers two persons from different races especially a black and a white is almost unattainable and shocking to them: "Historically, many black women experienced white women as the white supremacist group who mostly exercised power over them, often in a manner more brutal than that of racist white men" (hooks, 1981, 48).

Ifemelu decided to breakup with Curt, she has always thought that he was perfect and their relationship works very well but inside her, she had always a sentiment of discomfort and disorder as well, she feels herself imbalanced when they are together, she felt that race has always been an issue for them and was one of the reasons behind her hesitation and vacillation and anxiety, his white privilege would always produce uncertainty and stimulate feelings that lack comfort and spiritual stability as it could, for all time, remind her of the dissimilarity between them: “It was not that they avoided race, she and Curt. They talked about it in the slippery way that admitted nothing and engaged nothing and ended with the word “crazy”, like a curious nugget to be examined and then put aside or as jokes that left her with a small and numb discomfort that she never admitted to him.” (Adichie, 2013, p.291)

Their relationship mirrors the true world of racism and discrimination and mainly privileges in America: “it was not that Curt pretended that being black and being white were the same in America, he knew they were not” (Adichie, 2013, p.291)

There are myriad occurrences of hidden racism in the novel, when different characters reveal behaviors of preeminence and supremacy. Additionally, the paucity of familiarity about African nations is an important point that should be highly regarded as a lot of people generate and rely on conventional images and believe in stereotypes that are completely incorrect and unfair.

3.8.2.2.1. Uncovered Discrimination with Curt

Ifemelu was always backed by Curt: “The handsome Curt, with his ability to twist life into the shapes he wanted” (Adichie, 2013, p.287) she suffered from discrimination repeatedly, as an event that occurs in the story, while Ifemelu asked the carpet cleaner to help her, he showed his astonishing and surprise when he thought that this black woman owns a ‘grand stone house with white pillars’, an image and a representation of an external wealth that was an unexpected and almost impossible to him, in fact Ifemelu was not in her home, she was rather at

Kimberly's house where she worked as a babysitter for her son Taylor, Ifemelu read denigration and grudge in the cleaner's eyes, she would never forget him as she described him as "bits of dried skin stuck to his chapped, peeling lips" she ultimately posted in her blog that "Sometimes in America, Race is Class" and she ends with:

It didn't matter to him how much money I had. As far as he was concerned I did not fit as the owner of that stately house because of the way I looked. In America's public discourse, "Blacks" as a whole are often lumped with "Poor Whites". Not 13 Poor Blacks and Poor Whites. But Blacks and Poor Whites. A curious thing indeed. (Adichie, 2013, p.205)

Curt and Ifemelu's relationship was seen through many lenses as a projection light on racial ideas and biased overview. As their way of thinking prevails on the fact that the only reason that could assemble black women with white men is just for the black's thirst of wealth and privilege, seemingly to the whites, they passively interfere with black women only because of their curiosity that push them to think about how it will be like when they get engaged with a black woman, their strong desire to feel the change and to know the difference, which principally clarifies that kind of alluring and attraction towards foreign cultures. Therefore, they are exhibited to various stereotypes presented under the dominance of many thoughts of discrimination and bias especially about ethnical connections: "When you are black in America and you fall in love with a white person, race doesn't matter when you're alone together because it's just you and your love. But the minute you step outside, race matters. But we do not talk about it." (Adichie, 2013, p.290)

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie was also victimized by results caused by the ignorance of history mainly because of lack of knowledge, and the superiority of the overwhelming American culture in which the white supremacy is almost transcending all the boundaries of equality, reasoning and beyond all these criteria, the lack of humanity. She has fully defined this unfairness in *The Danger of a*

Single Story presented in one of her interferences in TED speeches where she clarified her own experience:

My American roommate was shocked by me. She asked where I had learned to speak English so well, and was confused when I said that Nigeria happened to have English as its official language. She asked if she could listen to what she called my "tribal music," and was consequently very disappointed when I produced my tape of Mariah Carey. She assumed that I did not know how to use a stove. (Adichie, 2013, p.2009)

Ifemelu represented most of what Adichie experienced, she used her blog as a way to express herself and to share the critical opinions comfortably about all what she encountered in America. She has the freedom to attack all the behaviors and the racist manners that she faced in her daily life under a chauvinistic community that allowed the whites to practice the most oppressive attitudes towards the blacks as if they ruin their country. The blog pervades the entire novel with its different streaming posts that reflect the social realities. It has generated big and essential contributions to excoriate all the inappropriate behaviors the marginalization and the debase that biased the Africans in general and black females in particular because in America "you are supposed to pretend that you don't notice certain things" (Adichie, 2013, p.127). So the blog was considered as a link between what black women encountered and what was supposed to be in order to defend themselves.

3.8.2.2.2. Renewal of Ifemelu's Thoughts

Ifemelu wrote several posts with a critical thinking in which she tried to criticize and attack all what denigrate or humiliate their existence with a big release because she felt herself free to say or participate in whatever she wants without any prejudice or judgment that hurts her dignity. It is almost impossible to hear blacks recommend or criticize racism in America for this reason Ifemelu was honest via

her blogs and disclosed all what she felt as one of the immigrants in the United States in which “racism exists but racists are all gone... here is the thing; the manifestation of racism has changed but the language has not. So if you have not lynched somebody then you can’t be called a racist” (Adichie, 2013, p.315)

Ifemelu decides to express herself and uncovers the realities of the American society. Therefore, she created this blog to write on it about all what affects her as a woman and a black. Ifemelu noticed that he Americans do not confess that black women suffer from racism and they deny the indistinct subjugation and marginalization over them, she explained: “To My Fellow Non-American Blacks: in America, You Are Black, Baby Dear Non-American Black, when you make the choice to come to America, you become black. Stop arguing. Stop saying I’m Jamaican or I’m Ghanaian. America doesn’t care. So what if you weren’t “black” in your country? You’re in America now” (Adichie, 2013, p.220)

Adichie recounts the incidents of her own parts of life, which makes Americanah an autobiography novel. Her most effective ends emerge with the dealings of the protagonist with her loved ones; in America, the most influential power is about race, therefore all the details encountered by inner acquaintances with facts and realities that are reported with scrutiny besides the touch of the novelist imagination which enables her own experiences to contribute to the fictional world.

3.8.2.3 Through Education with Blaine

Blaine was a serious and fair-mindedness black American a rescuer for Ifemelu, he teaches at Yale and he is a professor in political sciences, their relation goes perfectly at first, as both of them are concerned by talking about race and its function in America. , however, obviously, Ifemelu does not suit Blaine, his surroundings and their intellectual conversations. Their constant criticism about everything does not interest her anymore. They wanted to change her from a passive observer to a person who fights for black people and campaigns to bring about their

political and social changes, “her relationship with him was like being content in a house but always sitting by the window and looking out” (Adichie, 07)

Blaine was a thinker and he used to criticize things that face blacks, as he pretends that he is surrounded by all what concerns the third world, from that perspective, his relationship with Ifemelu was unsuccessful and ends by separation due to his high level of education he started to react with proud and with a manner that uncovers an implicit way of racism. She becomes unconcerned to associate with Blaine and his friends as she started to see them as boring and closed minded people.

Blaine was the kind of men who always criticizes Ifemelu for all what she does, he used to complain about the fact that she does not fight about the injustice she lived in America and she just contends with her posting on the blog she has created on race and black identity.

Ifemelu, ultimately, comprehends that his anger was because he is a black American and he does not share the same circumstances and the same encounters as hers or as any African immigrant which has no relationship of roots with America. Blaine, reflected the image of how an African American considers an African immigrant and how they reveal an indirect racism and hypocrisy over them.

Ifemelu met Africans and African American at university with whom she tried to associate but in general they fail to create a strong relation, they do not agree on many things for instance they rebuke their origin, their culture and civilization as described in the novel:

Try and make friends with our African-American brothers and sisters in a spirit of true pan-Africanism. But make sure you remain friends with fellow Africans, as this will help you keep your perspective. [...] The African Americans who come to our meetings are the ones who write poems about Mother Africa and think every African is a Nubian queen. (Adichie, 2013, p.140)

Ifemelu adds:

The African Americans who come to our meetings are the ones who write poems about Mother Africa and think every African is a Nubian queen. If an African American calls you a Mandingo or a booty scratcher, he is insulting you for being African. Some will ask you annoying questions about Africa, but others will connect with you. (Adichie, 2013, p.140)

Adichie referred to the relationship between African Americans and Africans as a complex and intricate connection that forms a big issue that lasted from a historical background in the American society.

3.8.2.3.1. Ifemelu's Consciousness with Blaine

Ifemelu's personalities gets shaped by Blaine's impact on her. She discovered that he changes her way of thinking and her beliefs, especially when she started to get aware of this change that traces even her posts on her blog just to satisfy him. Although they share the same political visions and issues, she does not identify America from the same angle as Blaine does. He perceived the country from the viewpoint of an African American whereas she has different opinions on racial and political issues and she explains that:

When you are black in America and you fall in love with a white person, race doesn't matter when you're alone together because it's just you and your love. But minute you step outside, race matters.... We say race doesn't matter because that's what we're supposed to say to keep our nice liberal friends comfortable (Adichie, 2013, p.290)

This disagreement and controversy usually causes strifes and struggles that separate them and here Blaine understood the gulf between their way of thinking, she was

attacked in front of people by Blaine's sister who wanted to humiliate her when she declared:

You know why Ifemelu can write that blog, by the way? Because she's African. She's writing from the outside. She doesn't really feel the stuff she's writing about. It's all quaint and curious to her. So she can write it and get all these accolades and get invited to give talks. If she were African American, she'd be labeled angry and shunned (Adichie, 2013, p.336)

This was repeated another time by Blaine, and at this point Ifemelu realizes that the problem was not only her lack of common political persuasions 'but also about her Africanness; she was not sufficiently furious because she was African, not African American' (Adichie, 2013, p.345) and this what made their relationship impossible despite all the common things they share together, they end by breaking up.

When Ifemelu returned back to Negeria, she recognized that both relationships with Curt and Blaine ended with convincing closures and both of them were a way to reconcile with herself and admit that she likes America "it's really the only place else where I could live apart from here" (Adichie, 2013, p.458) and explains that her blog on race and her feelings of America's imperfections and blemishes do not remove the appreciation and affection of this country that remains beside her critique.

3.9 Afropolitan Feminism in *Americanah*

African feminism is a complex concept that cannot be precisely delineated or identified. Okome described the state of African women and he mentioned that they were defined as "confused, powerless and unable to determine for themselves both the changes in their lives and the means to construct these changes." (Okome, 1999, p.3), as the black community is concerned, Afropolitanism is an ideology that is part

of African Feminism and it is a term coined by Taiye Selasi (2005) and Achille Mbembe (2007),

Salami argues that “Afropolitans are a group of people who are either of African origin or influenced by African culture, who are emerging internationally using African cultures in creative ways to change perceptions about Africa”.¹²

Afropolitanism then, refers to a cosmopolitan belief based on transcending cultural differences, and exceeding racial and national dissimilarities. It visualizes Africa as a theoretical topography of developing relationships, formed by immigration, multiculturalism and several racial backgrounds.

When the world became globalized, interconnected and interdependent, many changes have been brought to peoples and countries. Immigration has encompassed the minds of many. This was applied to groups of Africans who quitted their countries for a better life and for seeking for good opportunities, they used to adopt a cosmopolitan way of living like people of the first world, but later these new immigrants become interested in other styles and ignored nationalism by which they were concerned at first.

Afropolitan feminism is presented in this novel by proposing primer hypothetical construction for differentiating an Afropolitan feminist literature, which is indisputably, a descriptive belief to a developing regulation connected with considering Black women in a specified way, and these black females divert attention to systemic collections which were altered throughout history to eliminate them and exclude their presence. Afropolitanism links between Feminism as a theory and the contemporary African stereotype with its analytic reflections and critical thoughts widely fixed according to the African recent and modern culture and perspective

Taiye Selasi in her essay “Bye Bye Babar” (2005) referred to these new African Cosmopolitans as Afropolitans¹³ by which she portrayed the African new

¹² <https://www.msafropolitan.com/2017/12/what-is-african-feminism-actually.html>

¹³ <http://thelip.robertsharp.co.uk/?p=76>

generation, who are instructed, developed, multicultural and aware socially and politically without ignoring their origins that are definitely in Africa.

The African Nigerian writer and feminist theorist Mina Selami talked about the difference between western Feminism and African Feminism. As a lecturer and keynote speaker, she describes African feminism as follows:

Like all feminisms is about challenging male dominance, but that it also resists oppression based on ethnicity, class, tradition, globalisation and other specifics to Africa, and, that it is difficult to define — a similar response that can be heard elsewhere, is certainly true but has started to feel stagnant.¹⁴

Afropolitanism is an African Feminist theory like Motherism, womanism and other ideologies that came as different tools to support the black community and defend the black women's rights in particular.

In the essay “Bye Bye Babar”, Selasi (2005) mentioned that Afropolitanism is about all the Africans of the world who “must form an identity along at least three dimensions: national, racial, cultural— with subtle tensions in between.”¹⁵

Consequently, *Americanah* is an epitome of African life and Afropolitans, Afropolitan feminism in the novel highlights a special and significant defense from the African female immigrants who presumes transparent and silent, consequently, they decided to skip the politics of silence and started to yell for their rights by writing, communicating and echoing their voice under a significant dominant

¹⁴ <https://www.msafropolitan.com/2017/12/what-is-african-feminism-actually.html>

¹⁵ <http://thelip.robertsharp.co.uk/?p=76>

organization which was represented in the novel by Ifemelu's posts in her blog. Selasi (2005) portrays Afropolitans in her essay as follows:

You'll know us by our funny blend of London fashion, New York jargon, African ethics, and academic successes. Some of us are ethnic mixes, [...] others merely cultural mutts: American accent, European affect, African ethos." They are "not citizens, but Africans, of the world. (Selasi, 2005, para 3)

Americanah expertly features the internal and central fight inside the Afropolitans who hide inner conflicts raised from their struggle to balance between their African roots and land, their otherness, their identity and personality from a side, and work for confronting all the difficulties they face in the strange western society from another side, in which they remained obliged to discover different cultures and to deal with different challenges, that distinguish a new way of living dissimilar from their own.

Americanah displays a posture of an Afropolitan feminist situation that stems from a significant perception and awareness capable to dissect and analyze chances for society, to possess position and influence in America. The feminist stance of Ifemelu and the opposite policies she defuses implemented and supported Africans, she collected her thoughts and extracted from her critical consciousness access Afropolitan stages and background authorized for questioning and judging America's race strategies.

Depicting examples from the novel, adequately, when Selasi's thoughts and reactions towards Afropolitan's strategy are cited, by Wambui and the ASA group leaders in *Americanah* are good examples who support their fellows and acknowledge social and political situations and conditions in Africa so they apprise and communicate information of the map of African immigrants for agency.

The novel sheds light on the African students who migrated to America, the intellectual Afropolitans in particular are represented as direct and truthful mediators unconcerned in promoting presumptions about the American culture or

about people involved in resurgence of racism and xenophobia, these immigrants formed associations and agencies, like ASA members who became connoisseurs of the Afropolitans presented by Adichie in the novel, these leaders are rather interested in avoiding the politics of silence and encouraging legitimate manners to diffuse their voice, spreading consciousness by interacting and affecting each other, and focusing in solving complex socio-political issues that face the African migrants in America.

They also persist on a serious and conscious Afropolitanism that assesses pan-African associations when they face racial confrontations and uphold connections with non-Americans when “many of the internationals understand the trauma of trying to get an American visa.” (Adichie, 2013, p.145) they promote an Afropolitanism sense that rejects feelings of abandoning the African feeling and impression of self and identity especially when it transforms to be American, in the ASA meetings, Ifemelu could feel herself among people she knows and understands and she did not have to explain herself or clarify her attitudes, she “Felt a gentle, swaying sense of renewal” (Adichie, 2013, p.144) in these gatherings.

This renewal that she felt helped her to defeat her trauma caused by her rejected visa and the consequences she encountered to survive in America because of this huge problem she faced during her residence, she was obliged to have sexual relationships to gain money as she could not find any legitimate opportunity to work what was the case of all the foreign African students.

The Afropolitan feminism was presented by Ifemelu by supporting equality and defending black African immigrants, all the reactions and writings she deploys to fight denigration and discrimination with all its forms be them, racial or gendered or even in class and xenophobia, were the most things she mirrors and voices in American surroundings. Her background of knowledge and consciousness came from her awareness and responsiveness as an African thinker and rational in America and was extracted from her status as an intellectual Afropolitan and a participant of the African group ASA, where she was qualified for the politics and

strategies of setting and maintaining African identity and protecting African self personality in other countries especially in America.

Afropolitan feminism, from another part, is also demonstrated in the novel throughout Ifemelu's relationships and her search for identity with their beloved. Through her detailed explorations with Obinze, Curt and Blaine she could finally reinstruct herself and blaze the trail to discover and develop her personality at the same time.

Americanah is a good example in which Afropolitan construction of black women's identity in particular, which was precisely portrayed by Ifemelu's relationships in America that ended with her persuasion that Obinze is the best one with whom she felt comfortable and totally confident as he mirrors all what she wants, envisages and seeks in life.

To be an Afropolitan for Ifemelu, intentionally means facing mistreatment and cruelty, smashing the situation of silence and functioning through her previous knowledge, experiencing and occurrences, she sought for expressing her ideas about race, gender and class through her critical posts on her blog in which several observations about postcolonialism, race and class she faced during her residence in America were done.

Ifemelu shows her awareness about “ the postcolonial outcomes in Nigeria and how they affect its citizens” (Pinero,2016, p.87) once she returned to Lagos which was considered as a “critical Afropolitan”(Pinero,2016, p.87) Her quest of belonging was finally concluded after confronting trauma and depressions and even experiencing sexual abuse she encountered with the Tennis coach, she could finally understand that she can be herself and find her Afropolitan identity only when her reconsideration of her life was done and yet she decided to return back to her motherland Nigeria, interact with race, class of people from her surrounding and meets her boyfriend Obinze when she realized that he is the best choice that she could ever do and dates him again .

Afropolitan identity is considered as an independent individual process based on the background of the already presented cultural and racial sorts linked to psychological orientations, ethos, cultural and religious beliefs and gender. Therefore, Afropolitan feminism affords chances for expressing differently and reconstructing intersectional concepts of race, gender and class related to feminism in a manner the previous versions for viewpoints and various experiences of African women classified under the rule of white community and American intermediated discourses of gender discrimination, class differentiation and racial bias.

Morrison's novels highlight the actual contextual life of black men and women in a white society indifferent to them; and Adichie's *Americanah* represents the Afropolitan, the Afrodiasporic side of contemporary blacks who are different in challenging racism, alienation and marginalization.

Morrison shapes the portrait of the woman at that time but stands in her locale; while Adichie transports the portrait outside its African native place and migrates towards America. Morrison focuses more the woman inside home and outside in the streets around the surrounding; Adichie goes beyond the borders and steps the evolution of the woman in and out native home.

3.10. The Anatomy of African American Progress Through Time

From incredible attentiveness in Southern agriculture, the African Americans switched their thoughts and interests to another point of concern related to a large variety and assortment in residence, profession and employment.

Covering the duration where Black profits could be measured, in relative and absolute terms, black earnings and incomes had not knew a huge increase comparing the past with their current conditions. Referring to both the preliminary and ending state of the African Americans throughout time, many complex and multifaceted situations and realities ruined the black society; racial discrimination and differentiations in schooling and several fields of life curtailed their

opportunities as the pre-eminence and the priority was always fixed for the whites who were broadly the most ones supported, powerful and privileged by virtue of supremacy and distinctiveness.

Though, till the 1980s, this pertinent side of African-American history had been broadly abandoned by all the abolitionists and writers, Bell Hooks explained on her work *Ain't I a Woman: Black Women and Feminism*, the state of African American females in their struggling to fight against sexism and racism by comparing black women of the nineteenth's century with those of the twenties century and she argues that:

Contemporary black women could not join together to fight for women's rights because we did not see 'womanhood' as an important aspect of our identity. Racist, sexist socialization had conditioned us to devalue our femaleness and to regard race as the only label of identification. Consequently, when the women's movement raised the issue of sexist oppression, we argued that sexism was insignificant in light of the harsher, more brutal reality of racism. (Hooks, 2014, p.1)

Hooks discussed two deep clashes between sexism and racism, and for Hooks, sexism entailed the union of all the black women, however, they failed on their amalgamation to battle for their rights and consequently, racism beat since they discarded the most significant feature of 'womanhood' that was a vital step to achieve their self-determination and identity. She argued that black women ignored the harshness of the issue of sexism that prevailed upon their society because of the lack of consciousness and strictness of the problem, which continued to threaten all the generations.

In the same way, Morrison disclosed the hardships lived by African Americans, she demonstrated racism and oppression with all its forms in the *Bluest*

Eye. Pauline for instance was debased by her white doctor when delivering her baby and he said “these here women you don’t have any trouble with. They deliver right away and with no pain. Just like horses” (Morrison, 1970, p.125).

Moreover, Miss Alice and Mrs. Gaines recognize the steady gender unfairness and favoritism that exist in the black society “Everybody in the world was in a position to give them orders. White women said, “Do this.” White children said, “Give me that”. White men said, “Lay down. The only people they need not take orders from were black children and each other” (Morrison,1970, p. 138).

Up till now, an accurate consciousness has been emerged for the distinctive destiny of black women thanks to the efforts and exertion of the pillars and abolitionists such as Maya Angelou, Toni Morrison and Alice Walker.

3.11. Conclusion

The progress that the black community knew was due to several and marvelous social upheavals and conflicts between the blacks and whites which is clearly mentioned and presented through the African American history for a long time, until it ended with substantial gaps that still remain between the two races regarding their wealth, incomes and expectations in life.

Americanah discussed the state of black women who immigrate to search for better opportunities outside their homelands. America was knew as the new land in which it was supposed that all the humans dreams could come true and could be realized only in that country. Therefore, Africans decided to seek for their happiness and for good and high chances of success. They chose to work hard to fulfill all their dreams of prosperity and wealth as they were convinced that their hopes could be only realized in America.

However, they faced things that have never been expected by all Africans especially women, they become black in America, they understood that they have different skin colour only in America and they encountered all kinds of racism, marginalization and bias things that existed before and that was supposed be

changed and vanished throughout time, but in fact, these issues preside the American thoughts and have never disappeared but rather they occur as yet in the ecological American society . Consequently, for African Americans, racism is still considered as a source of constant pressure and mental sufferings and pain.

Chapter Four

The Continuation of the Conflict in Morrison's and Adichie's Politicized Accounts.

4.1. Introduction

This chapter noted the different attempts which raised issues of feminism, race, identity, and ethnicity, including *The Bluest Eye* (1970), *Beloved* (1987), and *Americanah* (2013). The white standards dictate that the status of blacks must remain in the bottom echelon of the society, by means that, the image of black and wealthy constructs an extreme weirdness that the whites heavily reject. Morrison and Adichie perfectly tinged their novels with several situations of that kind, in which people of colour are owners of households. This reality caused disturbance for the whites since the gap in wealth between the black community and the white society has been notoriously highlighted in wages, lifestyle, and households. This chapter summarized the different changes that the black community knew throughout the years, postcolonial writers like Toni Morrison and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie took the initiative to voice the segregated black individuals whose identity has been whipped out by the white oppressive rules. In this vain, there is an notorious attempts to rebel against the past that the ancestors injured and revolt now in the present for a better black society.

4.2. Systematic Data about Race, Ethnicity and Wealth Discrimination in the American Society

It is undeniable that during the twentieth century and after the civil war, several circumstances concerning the African Americans have slightly changed regarding economic fortunes, living conditions, occupations and other features of life.

In the *Bluest Eye*, the wealthiest families were exemplified in the novel by the whites. Morrison reinstated facts through flashbacks and portrayed the struggles of a black family, Pecola's parents, Cholly and Pauline as African Americans interacting to a great extent with the white Anglo-Saxon Protestant community. Pecola's mother Pauline was presented in the novel as a servant who worked for a

wealthier white family. All the richer, the powerful, the most beautiful and handsome families are always exemplified by the whites in the novel whereas, the black community is further demonstrated as the most biased and marginalized, the poorest and the most oppressed by the social pressures of racism and discrimination.

However; things did not change after nearly half a century when Adichie, in *Americanah*, also referred to the possibility of a substantial fortune as a property for the black families is something which is almost impossible and shocking especially in the American society. Because it is very rare, infrequent and abnormal for the whites to realise or expect that a black could be wealthier as anyone, something which is possible and meritable only for whites as the Americans believed that they belong to a superior race but surely not for an African and a black.

This was portrayed in the novel especially when Ifemelu opened the door for a carpet cleaner who “stiffened when he saw her” (Adichie, 2013, p. 166) because “he thought that she was a homeowner, and she was not what he had expected to see in this grand stone house with the white pillars” (Adichie, 2013, p. 166) it means that it is something weird and strange for him to see a black owning that house. Ifemelu gets shocked of his behavior and she mentioned that she would never forget him. Then she immediately posted in her blog that “ Sometimes in America, Race is Class” and she ended with “it did not matter to him how much money I had. As far as he was concerned I did not fit as the owner of that stately house because of the way I looked” (Adichie, 2013, p.166)

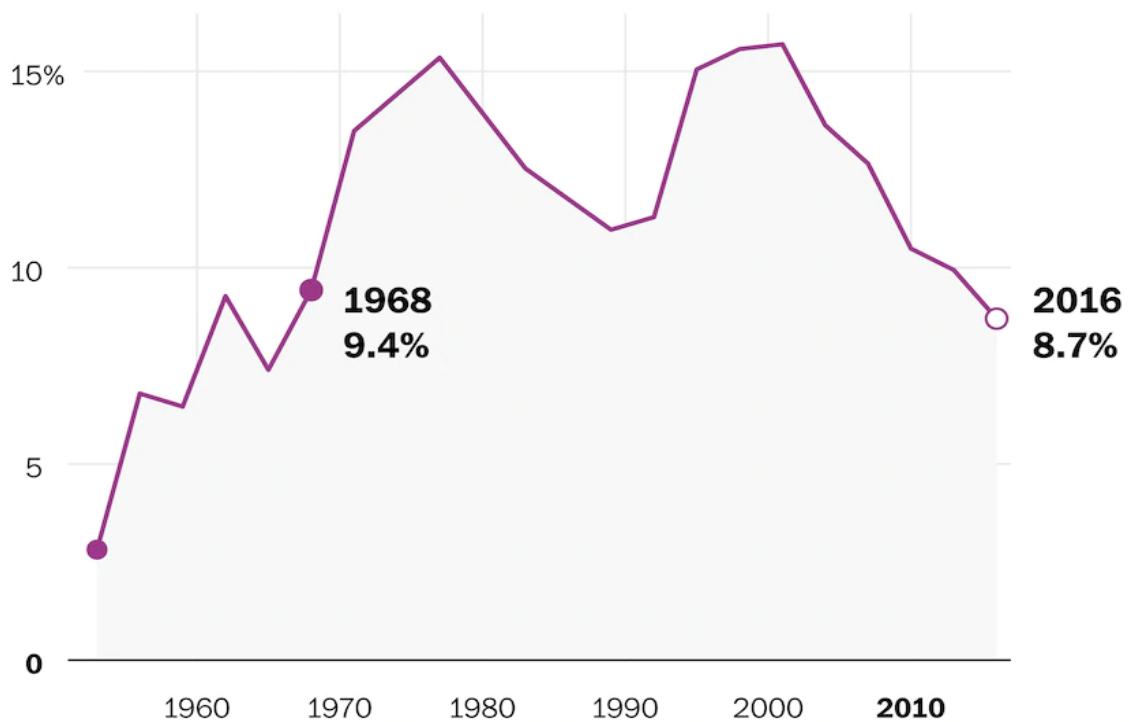
Adichie sent several messages through this dramatical change for Ifemelu as it was mentioned in the novel. She displays racism and discrimination that the blacks encounter in their daily life. And also, she reveals and uncovers the realities that the wealthiest and the most powerful families in America are the white families, however, it is very rare to find a rich black family as showed in the following diagram, especially when we compare the net worth of the black households with the white families. The economists Moritz Kuhn, Moritz

Schularick and Ulrike I. Steins approved in their analysis of U.S. incomes and wealth since World War II and stated that:

The historical data also reveals that no progress has been made in reducing income and wealth inequalities between black and white households over the past 70 years, and that close to half of all American households have less wealth today in real terms than the median household had in 1970". (Kuhn, Schularick & Steins, 2020, p. 3469-3519)

The black-white wealth gap is as wide as in the 1960s

Median black household wealth as a percentage of median white household wealth



Source: Historical Survey of Consumer Finances via Minneapolis Fed and University of Bonn economists Moritz Kuhn, Moritz Schularick and Ulrike I. Steins
THE WASHINGTON POST

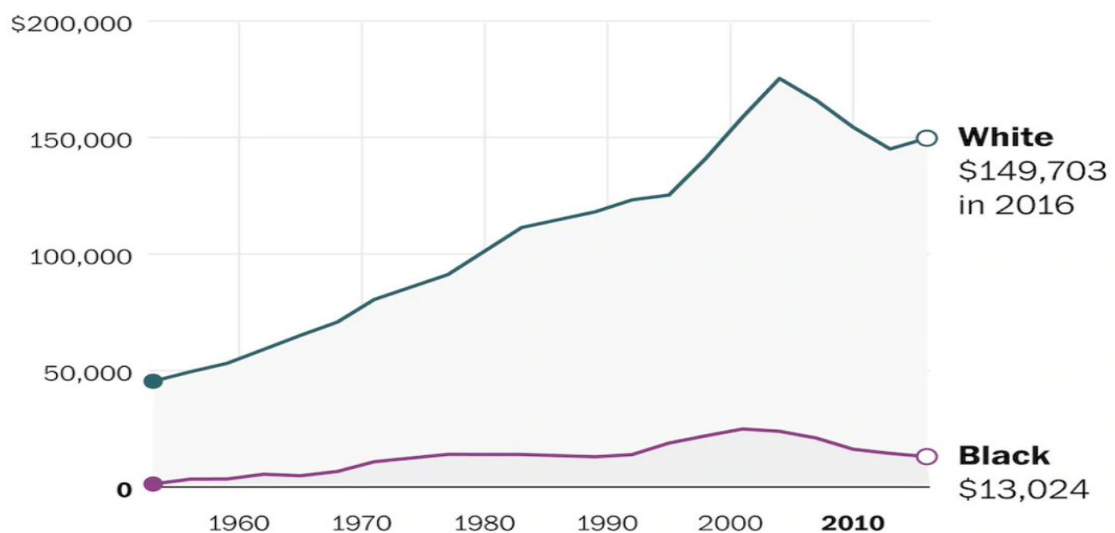
Figure 4.1. Median Black Household Wealth as a Percentage of Median White Household Wealth

Karen Petrou (2020), a managing partner of Federal Financial Analytics declared that: “Everybody knows that people of colour are at an incredible economic disadvantage, but few realize it as bad or worse than it was before Civil Rights,”¹⁶ (para7)

When we evaluate the net worth of the black and white families, we notice that there is a remarkable discrimination between both of them, and this what was exposed in literature as well, when women writers started to reveal the struggles of racism and discrimination that blacks suffered from; according to the above survey stated by the economists Moritz Kuhn, Moritz Schularick and Ulrike I.Steins who shows perspicuously the median black household wealth as percentage of median white household wealth in which a significant distinction is set between both races; in the 2016, research found that the fortune of 11.5 black households is worth of only one typical white prosperity by means that in order to reach the wealth of only one white family black community has to gather a dectet or more households.

White wealth surges; black wealth stagnates

Median household wealth, adjusted for inflation



Source: Historical Survey of Consumer Finances via Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis and University of Bonn economists Moritz Kuhn, Moritz Schularick and Ulrike I. Steins
THE WASHINGTON POST

Figure 4.2. Median Household Wealth, Adjusted for Inflation

¹⁶ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2020/06/04/economic-divide-black-households/>

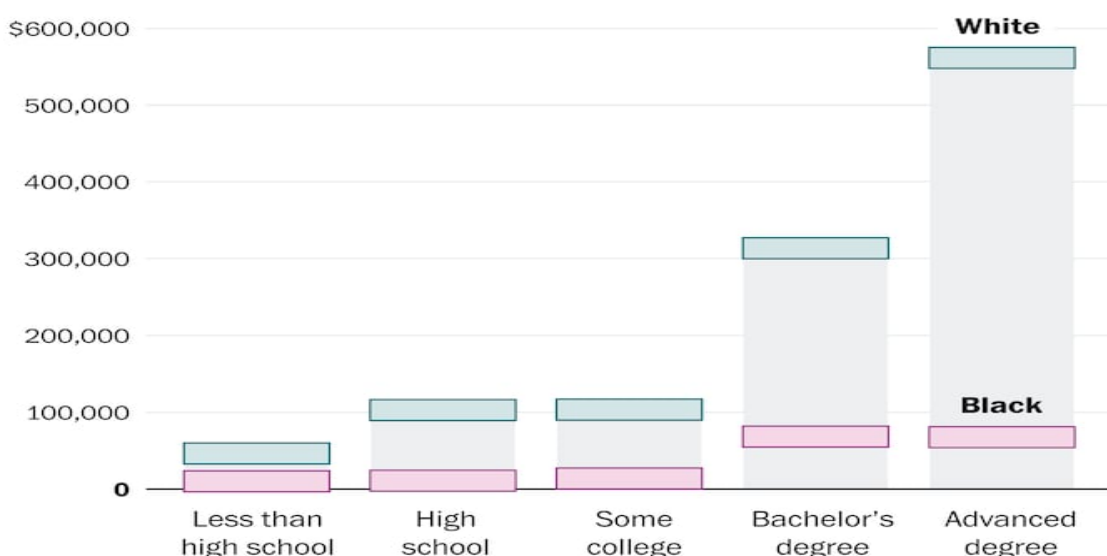
As stated in the data reported from the historical Survey of Consumer Finances that has been set according to the inflation rates, the median household of the whites is highly increased throughout time from 1960 to 2016 perversely to the middle class black household. According to the survey; in 1968, we observe that blacks had always earned lower wages estimated at approximately \$6.674 in wealth compared with that of the whites roughly calculated with \$70.786 for their median household.

However, in the most recent year in which data was stated that was in 2016, the black household marked an estimated cost of \$13,024 in wealth compared with the baseline data of the median white household adjusted for \$149,703; which explains that a conspicuous gap in the inflation of wealth and wages has long existed between people of colour and the white community.

Similarly, in education, black people suffer from discrimination, injustice and lack of equality. When we touch the next survey that shows median household wealth by race and education level in 2016; obviously, it falls behind and retreats only when it deals with the blacks as shows the following survey:

At every education level, black wealth lags

Median household wealth by race and education level, 2016



Source: Federal Reserve
THE WASHINGTON POST

Figure 4.3. Median Household Wealth by Race and Education level

The diagram demonstrates how black wealth lags in spite of their advanced educational degree comparing with that of the whites. An astonishing gap is clearly seen in the next data between both races even when they have the same educational level they could not gain the same wages. This delineation is adjusted for the only reason that they belong to two different races. Though graduated and educated equally, black people could not gain the same wages as the whites, simply, because of race. This matter has been tackled by Morrison in the *Bluest Eye* through the “Dick and Jane” disordered primer. As a result, Morrison aimed at showing the fact that only white people have the right to be successful and powerful while the life of the blacks remains chaotic and miserable. Several years after, the theme of education holds the same traits from previous experiences of hardship and unfairness. Until the twenty first century, black people seem to live their ancestors’ anecdotes as portrayed by Adichie in *Americana*. In fact, Adichie’s protagonist encounters a lot of bias and stereotypes because of the race she belongs to.

The survey was made to explain the unbalanced proportions which are pronounced even among the less advanced in education as showed in the *Bluest Eye*, Morrison has clearly included educational discrimination when she took the excerpt from the American textbook reader and write it in a disordered way to refer to the black inferiority even in schooling comparing with the whites; she began the novel with a passage from children’s reader to express the psychological setting that explains the ultimate group of whites who delineate the black’s lives.

Morrison pushed the reader to the feeling that confirms the rules which pervade the American society and subjugate the black community, oblige them to live in a society in which racism is internalized and naturalized. She explains that only the whites have the right to be successful and powerful, pleased and satisfied. The excerpt was also used as a tool to demonstrate that as the fact that the writer has deleted some words, no punctuation was occurred and spaces were all omitted, reveals to the case of the chaotic life of the blacks and serves as a reminder that uncovers the dissimilarity between both races and communities.

However, things almost did not change after many years, as *Americanah* reveals the realities of education in America, especially for the blacks, even after five decades comparing with the period in which Morrison wrote about them by 1970 in the *Bluest Eye*.

Education remains an important subject and one of the essential themes that Adichie included in her novel *Americanah*. It displays where and when characters shift and form their prospect in unpredicted manners. Ifemelu for instance, decided to leave Nigeria and continue her studies in America, where she could not pay her loans for her education so she was obliged to work for the tennis coach who exploits her sexually for money. Ifemelu found the educational system of America very complex and complicated especially when she held the fellowship at Princeton because she shoulders all kinds of racism that she encounters as a black student besides wrong prejudices and bias, she underwent discrimination and suppression that enabled her to develop her skills as a writer and blogger.

In the end, a good level of education is not always something granted for the blacks as it was confirmed by Obinze who failed to get a visa. The novel demonstrates that sometimes education needs chance and luck to function for the blacks in America.

As showed in the survey above, the archetypal black family superintended by somebody with a highly developed grade has less affluence than a white household with no more than a high school certificate and which has approximately 10 times the prosperity of a black household with the equivalent degree of instruction.

All those diagrams stated before uncovered many realities which confirm the difficulty and complexity that hindered the black families to seize wealth, prosperity and triumph in all the domains as they launch with so much smaller sum comparing with that of the whites.

4.3. Ecological Feminism from Morrison to Adichie

A tremendous influence is linked when relating feminism and ecology together which are in fact associated to fuse environmentalism with women's positions and circumstances.

Ecofeminism which is also called Ecological Feminism is a branch established in 1974 and coined by the French thinker and feminist Françoise D'Eaubonne, it studies the connection between the state of women and their environment which actually goes hand in hand with their nature.

Ecofeminist theorists aim to examine this philosophy and scrutinize it to end with the illation that emphasizes on the concept of gender to evaluate the influence that rises from the connections between women and the earth to be treated, on such grounds, by the patriarchal society.

4.3.1. Women and Nature in the *Bluest Eye* and *Beloved*

Ecofeminism associates women with nature and puts forth the idea that all forms of domination in life are removed when it comes to the interdependence of humans and their relation with the earth they live in. This latter is demonstrated in both novels, *The Bluest Eye* and *Beloved* to give more interest about the human nature and express a special care and concern for black women in particular. In facts, Ecofeminism studies the connection between women and the environment in which they live. Morrison was the first black writer to link the nature of her characters in their surroundings. The four seasons took another shape in Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* where spring did not know any rainbows or butterflies for Pecola and Claudia. The female character suffered violence and sexual assaults in the most blossoming part of the year. Nature was also a refuge for many. In her *Beloved*, Morrison set the woods as Sethe's liberty that ended up by fleeing through the forest. From the other hand, Denver made the trees her area of relaxation and rest. Indeed, Ecofeminism showed the strong solidarity between female characters and how they struggle to survive in a such environment.

4.3.1.1 In *The Bluest Eye*

When reading *The Bluest Eye* and *Beloved*, we understand that Toni Morrison as the first black woman writer expressed her thinking and her ideas through referring to the elevated connection of black women with their nature.

Morrison embodies an exact portrayal of black nature with more concern about their living in the novels which fully symbolize her ecological feminist thoughts in several parts.

The Bluest Eye is full of ambivalences that are pointedly demonstrated through several examples, as the writer works in an aesthetic manner that touches all her thoughts circuitously by interpreting her own conception of the different events sited in the novel which is composed of different sections likened with the four seasons. These periods divide the year with its different changes of natural lights, ecology and weather. However, the novelist aimed to epitomize various occurrences and experiences that function contradictorily with seasons, as it was clear that they were mentioned but the probabilities about their significance did not occur accurately in the novel.

Spring, for instance, usually brings happiness and renaissance as it is supposed to be the right time of revival and rejuvenation of new lights and hopes, yet, it was not the case of *The Bluest Eye* characters as they experienced their most horrible and traumatic oppressions and brutalities in this period; it was the time when Pecola underwent the sexual assault by her father and in the same way, Claudia encountered another type of violence and cruelty when she was scourged with new switches. The season of harvesting, as well, was not a good and cheerful threshold, at that time, in autumn, Pecola knew another pain and soreness when her baby died.

Morrison employed natural facts to underscore the strangeness and the depression of her characters mainly female's anguishes as when she relates the white colour with the ideals and perfectness that the blacks did not possess, things

that created a psychological feeling of meanness and inferiority especially when they compare themselves with the whites, for this reason Pecola used to drink milk to become white and get rid of her darkness, because she was persuaded that milk could lighten her colour skin and transform it from a dark to a white appearance like Shirley, who has the white beauty that everyone admired “We knew she was fond of the Shirley Temple cup and took every opportunity to drink milk out of it just to handle and see sweet Shirley's face” (Morrison, 1970, p.23) Morrison is highly symbolic in this novel and she always relates circumstances, facts and solutions with things from nature, for instance, in this example, she associated white skin colour with milk.

Marigold seeds are also a good example that show how the characters are interrelated with parts of nature, the seeds represent assurance, optimism and wellbeing of nature's conditions but here they signify infertility and despair, “if we planted the seeds, and said the right words over them, they would blossom, and everything would be all right”(Morrison, 1970, p.5). When marigolds did not blossom, this revealed immediately to the deflowering of Pecola and the death of her baby.

The author tried to associate and merge things from nature with the character's incidents, the uterus, for instance, functions by analogy with the land, the fecundity with the seeds as well and finally, the baby's situation with marigold seeds.

4-2-1-2 In *Beloved*

In *Beloved*, Morrison confirms the persecuted status of both women and nature. Trees as elements of nature are demonstrated differently and repeatedly to convey several meanings. From one side, they serve primarily as sources of rest, calm and healing for example, Denver used boxwood bushes as an area of isolation and relaxation for her, referring to it as “emerald closet”. Also, the trees of the Sweet Home cover the horrible plantation memories, they are seen as models of protection

and safeguard from the horrors of Sethe's remembrances about this area "Sweet Home had more pretty trees than any farm around" (Morrison, 1987, p. 25)

Paul D and Sethe escaped and found their freedom through the miracle of nature, Paul D got his way by pursuing flowering trees to the North and Sethe's liberty was by fleeing through the forest. Yet, from the other side, trees are symbols of pain and traumatic memories as well, for instance, the writer exemplified the burden of slavery by a symbolic tree resembles to a chokecherry tree which was engraved on Sethe's back and that refers to as a revolting clump of scars: "in fact a revolting clump of scars. Not a tree as she said. Maybe shaped like one, but nothing like any tree he knew because trees were inviting" (Morrison, 1987, p.25)

The author demonstrated thoughts of empathy and compassion in favor of women and nature to support and uphold the social attention and attach importance to women. Overall, it may be said that women have entirely become the incarnation of nature representing tenderness, patience and harmony, however, men are not included or associated with matters and personifications of nature, but they are in the opposite side that is filled with roughness and represents forces of coercion, devastation and domination.

4.3.2. General Examination of the Relation between Ecofeminism and the Environmental Changes

Throughout history, many things have been settled in certain moments, applied or changed and then, resulted on an explicit focus to convey a meaning or give rise to an appropriate situation, Ecofeminism as one of these changes that occurred in a certain period of time, states that grasping and accepting women and nature connections is necessary to whichever convenient feminism or environmental ethic.

For a long time, the Blacks and especially the Americans and some other races were deprived from their human rights. African American black women in particular confront bias and inequality on the basis of both gender and race,

consequently the female of the novel developed a sense of love, friendship and tolerance between them; for instance, in the *Bluest Eye*, Morrison coordinated different stories of the female characters to contradict the binary relationship between both genders; men and women. However, this latter functioned differently concerning their ecological system, which rather, deals with the clashing connections between the different human races including mainly their general situation that prevailed in the American society. And from the other hand, the contradictory system that affected mainly the black and white community in particular, and other races which are assembled by the dilemma of discrimination, unfairness and racism.

Indeed, ecological feminism, also, promotes the equivalent and agreeable relationship, in *The Bluest Eye*, Claudia hated the baby doll she was given in Christmas as a present and she dismembered it because it was blond and it pushed her to destroy the blue eyed doll and she explained that her aversion turned into whites girls too as all the blacks had that complex towards the whites because they were the only ones that are protected, respected and appreciated unlike the coloured persons because of their dark skin, they were consistently regarded as ugly and suffered from discrimination and racism what developed a complex of inferiority and it was a reason that drove all the blacks to have such a hatred towards white people.

In the novel, Morrison portrays the warm side of the black community that enhances their opportunity for survival and completion and demonstrates their qualities and reality by referring to their social structure. Although they were depreciated and diminished their value but they insisted on helping and cooperating with each other.

Ecological feminism is shown in the *Bluest Eye* and *Beloved* when the black community especially women express a kind of cordiality, worry and unity between them and focuses on the growth of multiple values; they help each other, support each other and care for each other; in *The Bluest Eye*, Jimmy for instance, when she

was ill, all the black neighbours prepared soup for her, treated her with compassion and helped her to be cured. In the same vein, *Beloved* shows correspondingly how *black women formed union and solidarity to stay alive; they empower each other to endure the extremely wicked, brutal and cruel facts and traumatic acts of bondage.*

Consequently, both novels describe love, solidarity, harmony and familiarity that the black women developed, they shoulder all the hard conditions and the circumstances of bias and favouritism and unfairness they faced, and bore things that should be carried by the entire community.

4.3.2.1. Ecological Feminism in *Americanah*

Besides the *Bluest Eye* and *Beloved*, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie in her novel *Americanah* also opposes patriarchal and colonial society where both women and men are liberated from the restricted mode of patriarchal functions; she also attacks racism and discrimination of the white species and calls for equality between both genders and both races.

As stated in *Americanah*, ecological feminism took part in the novel as there was a call for rejecting violence, marginalisation, exploitation, oppression and bias that all people of colour suffered from through Ifemelu's blog that uncover and reveal things that have the power to influence and affect the whole world through occurrences that prevail the American surrounding as ecological facts which resolutely define the American society.

Ecological Feminism in *Americanah* mainly advocates the concept of equality between all the species by forming a harmonious, righteous and valuable life in mankind African American environment. Adichie demonstrates how Ifemelu works for ameliorating the social relationships of the blacks through criticizing and excoriating severely all the problems she encountered and faced when experiencing life among Americans, a way that could raise public consciousness and awareness of these issues to create an equal and mutual culture besides a sustainable

development for the black community that could be only maintained through collaboration, equality and reciprocal love and care.

Ultimately, ecological feminism puts forth the thought that life in nature is based on different characteristics that go hand in hand with the state of people living in that particular environment.

For the blacks, for instance, ecological feminism calls for rejecting violence, cruelty, exploitation, oppression and bias that all people of colour suffered from and mainly advocates the concept of equality between all the species by forming a harmonious, righteous and valuable life in mankind African American environment. It also works for ameliorating the social relationship to create a pleasant and mutual culture and sustainable development that could be only maintained through collaboration and reciprocal love and care.

Finally, ecological feminism strikingly confirms the relation which demonstrates that everything happened and everyone's situations return obviously to several factors of nature.

4.4. Trauma, Slavery and the Reconstruction of the Self in the *TBE*, *Beloved* and *Americanah*

African American literature reveals the realities of the African Americans who live in a larger American society, it examines several issues related to the blacks who have long been ignored and marginalized in the United States. African Women writers such as Morrison and Adichie touched the deeper meaning of being a black in America and shed light on further themes of slavery, racism and discrimination. They featured the affecting agony linked with being black and evicted, by virtue of the foregoing issues of class and race in different white society. The writers demonstrate issues of race and slavery that traumatized the self in their narratives. The violence and oppression of the daily life experiences created a troublesome psyche either in Adichie's *Ifemelu* or Morrison's *Sethe* and *Pecola*.

These features expressed the injured female souls who witnessed hardship since their childhood.

Morrison and Adichie as for all the American writers from an African descent provided a more detailed historical explanation about race and ethnicity. This struggle to obtain dignity and social justice never ceased in the American continent, and these facts created a regime that is based on slavery and segregation. The writers negotiated their freedom and equality besides their right for imposing themselves as humans and as people proud of their black identity and Africanness.

4.4.1. Trauma

The white subjugation against the blacks has intentionally been denied; this is what Brown has called “insidious trauma” that describes from “the traumatogenic effects of oppression ... that do violence to the soul and spirit” (Brown, 1995, p. 100). The three sample novels of Morrison’s *The Bluest Eye* and *Beloved* and Adichie’s *Americanah* are considered post colonial traumatic novels, which reflect trauma narratives of real persons having endured real experiences in life. Both Morrison and Adichie provoke the reader and the critic; by inviting them to observe issues of repression, violence, in highly traumatized communities.

Violent scenes of dehumanization are portrayed with Pecola who is deprived from her innocent childhood, Sethe is deprived from her feminine nature by denying her motherhood, and Ifemelu is torn to build up her identity in a society indifferent to her colour.

The three novels meet to raise awareness about the aches of women debased, in a racist society, by violating their natural desire as infants, mothers and beautiful females. The novels represent the cruelty of subjugated white community viewing the blacks as subgroups enslaved, far away from having their personal identities unless after hardship and struggle. The female condition is exposed through different motifs of black families living in a world condemned by its blackness,

summoned to surrender and segregation by the brutalities of the whites, who represent the dominant culture and the authoritative power.

4.4.2. Slavery

Slavery is portrayed in the sample novels as the premeditated dehumanization of the blacks considered as marginalized slaves, which has ravages in their lives. In *The Bluest Eye*, Pecola's father becomes sexually aggressive because of the whites' contempt to him and his fatherhood is falsely expressed by raping his daughter Pecola. In *Beloved*, the agony of Sethe as a slave breaks her heart to an extent that she opts for killing her daughter than letting her endure the ravages of slavery. Ifemelu is rejected by the white society just because she is a woman of colour and she has suffered silent discomfort long before she reconstructs her identity in a white and black world shaped by intricate relationships.

Women of African descent are, in the sample novels, derogated; this makes them suffer the same drawbacks of slavery. Morrison and Adichie illustrate the invasion and erasure of black women and they take their defense because the weak members of the community need to be outspoken about the psychological and physical upshots of slavery.

The novelists update the diaries of memory for slavery that has been long kept repressed a crime that has to be remembered to seek justice for its black victims.

4.4.3. The Reconstruction of the Self

The reconstruction of the self has been dealt in the three sample novels; yet, different in each novel. The shattered self is viewed in *The Bluest Eye* in the female teenager Pecola whose traumatic childhood causes madness and schizophrenia and thus she fails to construct her identity. Rather Claudia is reported as a better fighter for a shining future that Morrison hoped for the coming generation. Thus, the reconstruction of the self in *The Bluest Eye* is examined through the quest for the self, by imagining a better self image. In *Beloved*, Sethe, after enduring sufferings

about the self that has no self, a rebirth from the past remnants that she likes to forget by a radical transformation of the self. In *Americanah*, Adichie deeper digs out the issue of the reconstruction of the self, which has become a more solvable concern than in the past. The search for the self via Ifemelu, is a search for self identity, reconstructed and negotiated throughout a whole migration course. The black female feels more courageous to face the challenges of racism, and strives to better herself image as beautiful and more self assured.

4.4.3.1. In *The Bluest Eye*

Morrison defines the concept of slavery in her own way by exposing, for the reader, a racialized beauty of the blacks who were ugly just because the whites view them so and the blacks just lay down:

You looked at them and wondered why they were so ugly; you looked closely and could not find the source. Then you realized that it came from conviction, their conviction. It was as though some mysterious all-knowing master had given each one a cloak of ugliness to wear, and they had each accepted it without question. (Morrison, 1970, p.39)

The word “master” is representative of ‘slavery’ in the novel. He orders the blacks, he beats them, he decides their lives and ends, and even their physical appearance:

The master had said, "You are ugly people." They had looked about themselves and saw nothing to contradict the statement; saw, in fact, support for it leaning at them from every billboard, every movie, every glance. 'Yes,' they had said. 'You are right.' And they took the ugliness in their hands, threw it as a mantle over them, and went about the world with it. (Morrison, 1970, p.39)

In *The Bluest Eye*, slavery is interchangeably the impact of trauma. Cholly, Pecola's father, rapes his daughter Pecola because of maltreatment of the whites to him. This makes of Cholly a desperate father in state of drunkenness all the time and was described in the novel as a 'dog' and a 'snake'. An animalistic nature that has not himself chosen but was himself a victim of harsh conditions, "Cholly Breedlove, then, a renting black, having put his family outdoors, had catapulted himself beyond the reaches of human consideration. He had joined the animals; was, indeed, an old dog, a snake" (Morrison, 1970, p.18)

In the context of post slavery America, Morrison reexamines the drawbacks of slavery on coming generations. Trauma again is the effect of post slavery and the white segregation. This effect is resumed in Pecola dream to have blue eyes and be a model of beauty. Hopefully for other characters in the novel like Claudia, a better future is planned to live, feeling more self confident and self independent, as a black girl in the midst of a white society.

The diagram sums up the difference of attitudes between the black characters vis-à-vis their well being.

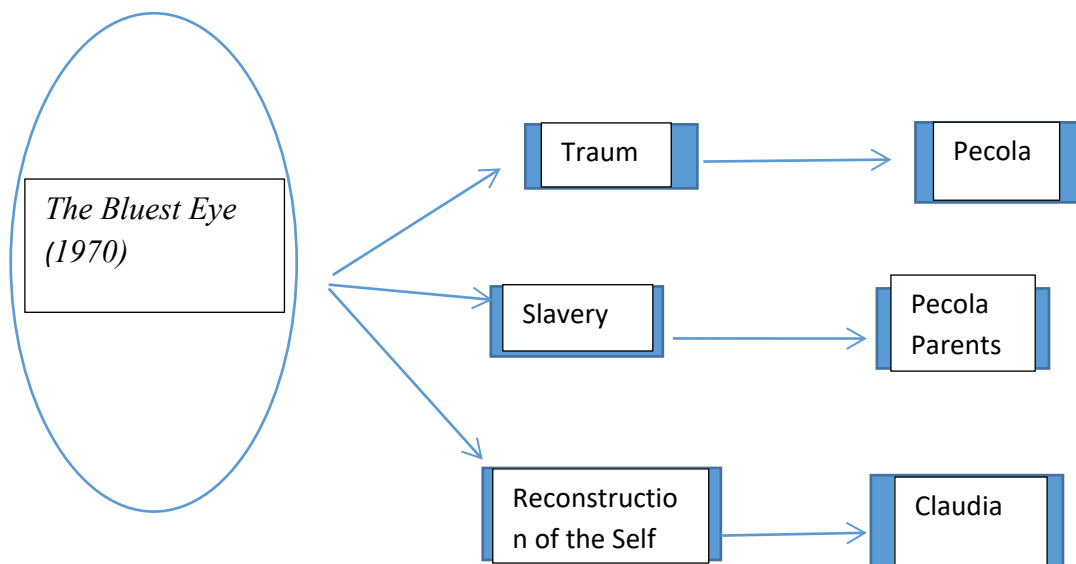


Figure 4.4. Trauma, Slavery and the Reconstruction of the Self in *The Bluest Eye*

The portrayal of trauma, slavery and the reconstruction of the self have been re examined by Morrison in *Beloved* in a way deeper than in *The Bluest Eye*.

4.4.3.2. In *Beloved*

The theme of slavery is central in *Beloved*. The character of Beloved is an allegory used by Morrison to symbolize a terrifying past of slave lives. Such horror is reappears each time to haunt the present. This makes of Sethe the killer of her own daughter just for the sake of saving her from the dehumanization of the whites: “That anybody white could take your whole self for anything that came to mind. Not just work, kill, or maim you, but dirty you. Dirty you so bad you couldn’t like yourself anymore” (*Beloved*, 1987, p. 251)

Trauma also is frequent with Sethe who is tortured by the schoolteacher and his sons:

This is worse than when Paul D came to 124 and she cried helplessly into the stove. This is worse. Then it was for herself. Now she is crying because she has no self . . . She doesn't move to open the door because there is no world out there. She decides to stay in the cold house and let the dark swallow her like the minnows of light above. (*Beloved*,1987,p.123).

Then, so traumatic times were endured by Sethe whose safety has become a dream “Baby Suggs is gone, Denver.’ And when she got around to worrying about what would be the case if Sethe died or Paul D took her away, a dream-come-true comes true just to leave her on a pile of newspaper in the dark.” (*Beloved*,1987, p.123)

Fortunately, Denver, Sethe’s youngest girl, represents a better future than her mother. Denver could gather all senses of bravery to rebuild herself out of 124, and be of help for her mother Sethe.

The following diagram resumes these issues:

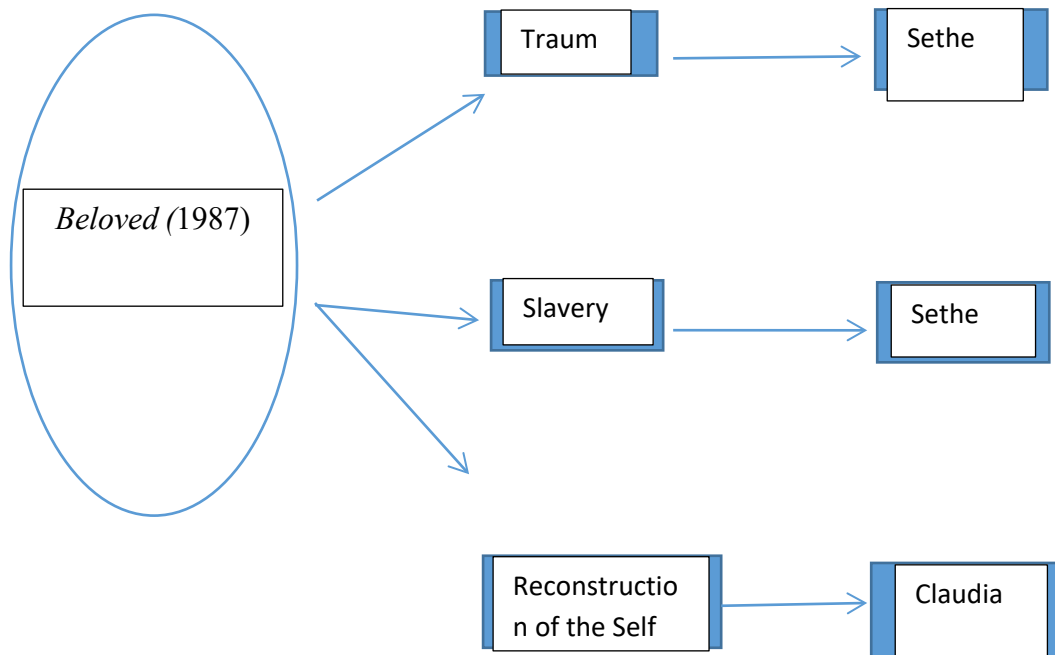


Figure 4.5. Trauma, Slavery and the Reconstruction of the Self in *Beloved*

In 2013, reshaping the self has been reconsidered; also, slavery turns to racism, and all this has its traumatic drawbacks on the black woman as portrayed by Adichie through Ifemelu.

4.4.3.3. In *Americanah*

By 2013, race has taken other notional dimensions. It is the era when the legacy of slavery has ended years before and slavery has become lessons taught in the history of Afro Americans. Still, trauma is intertwined with the suffering of the other who is compelled to migrate far away from home to abroad for the search then the reconstruction of the self. Adichie claims it:

The only reason you say that race was not an issue is because you wish it was not. We all wish it was not. But it's a lie. I came from a country where race was not an issue; I did not think of myself as black and I only became black when I came to America. When you are black in America and you fall in love with a white person, race doesn't matter when you're alone together because it's just you and your love. But the minute you step outside, race matters. (*Americanah*,2013, p. 290)

In chapter 21, Adichie ends it by a blog where Ifemelu makes up anew identity by collecting strength and bravery to face that American racist society. She says:

Dear Non-American Black, when you make the choice to come to America, you become black. Stop arguing. Stop saying I'm Jamaican or I'm Ghanaian. America doesn't care. So what if you weren't "black" in your country? You're in America now...What if being black has all the privileges of being white? Would you still say "don't call me black, I'm from Trinidad"? I didn't think so, so you're black, baby. (*Americanah*,2013, p. 220)

Trauma is a hard experience endured by Africans when they dislocate outside to search education and job, where Adichie uncovers the Diaspora experience through Obinze who says:

When I started in real estate, I considered renovating old houses instead of tearing them down, but it didn't make sense...But of course it makes sense because we are Third Worlders and Third Worlders are forward-looking, we like things to be new, because our best is still ahead, while in the West their best is already past and so they have to make a fetish of that past. (*Americanah*,2013, p. 436)

In *Americanah*, the heroine Ifemelu succeeds to impose herself as a self independent, and thus she decides to go home to Nigeria to be effective in her native society.

The diagram resumes main female characters within the search for identity.

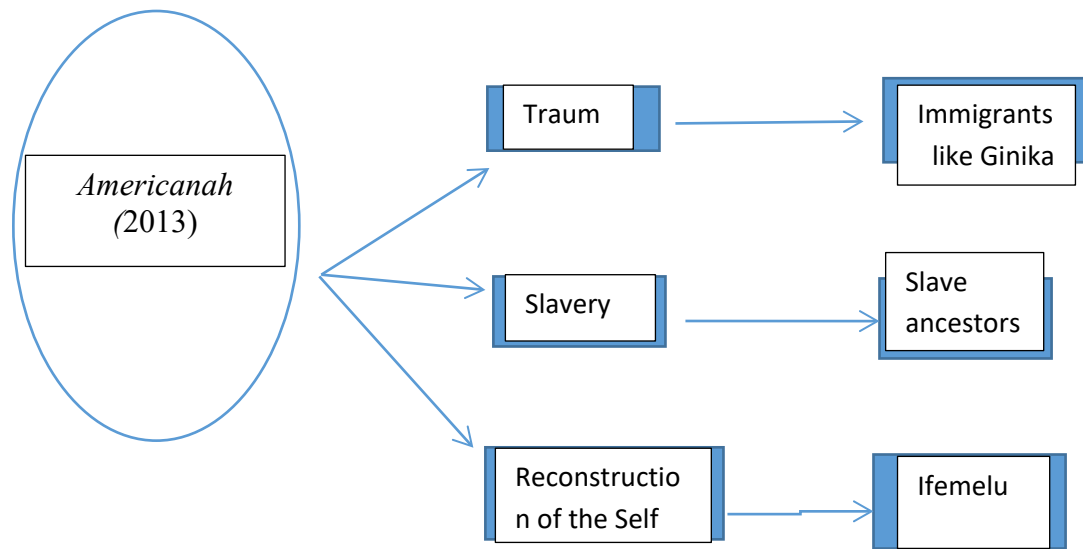


Figure 4.6. Trauma, Slavery and the Reconstruction of the Self in *Americanah*

Themes are taught and thought in *The Bluest Eye*, *Beloved* and *Americanah*, where the reconstruction of the self is viewed as black self discovery, struggling in traumatic conditions against slavery and racism. Morrison and Adichie agree to update the memory of a past that the blacks try to forget; but in the meanwhile, they raise awareness among readers to identify those white maltreatments that have been kept silent for a long time, by rewriting that black traumatic history. Indeed, Morrison and Adichie charge themselves as the spokeswomen of those black minorities.

The three sample novels are works of historical fiction about that dark side of Afro American history left blank starting from slave narratives to more ideological updated historical novels.

Morrison and Adichie unravel the secrets of intolerable behavior of the whites towards the blacks through their novels considered as conscious acts where reporting a hereditary history is re-imagined, with the objectives of healing the wound of that scattered past moving from no self to self discovery; then shifting from self recovery to reconstruct a free self identity.

The following table correlates between the three novels. It consists of the different female behavior as for race, trauma and the self.

The novels	Trauma	Slavery	Reconstruction of the self
The Bluest Eye (1970)	pecola	Pecola's parents	Claudia
Beloved (1987)	Sethe / Beloved	Sethe	Denver
Americanah (2013)	Immigrants like Ginika	Slave ancestors	Ifemelu

Table 4.1. The Search for Identity through Female Characters

The search for identity in the sample novels was drawn through the institution of different families via female characters, struggling for rights usually ordinary for any human being, but when it comes to the Negro world, these rights become hard to reach. For the reach of these rights, Morrison and Adichie reset a new conceptualization of the self.

4.5. Feminism from Morrison to Adichie

The shift of feminism from Morrison to Adichie is a move from women suppression to self assertion, from annihilation to protestation, and from submission to resolution. Black women stature has changed across time to cope with better life standards.

Thus the following table resumes the characteristics of female characters through the advance of time from Morrison to Adichie through Pecola and Ifemelu:

Characteristics	Pecola	Ifemelu
Father	Shorn of	Proud
Mother	Hating her daughter	loving her daughter
Frankness	Timid	Opinionated
Education	Ignorant	Educated
Occupation		Personal Raceteenth blog
Mind	Inferior	Intelligent and outspoken
Love	Denied	Obinze
Body	Hating her figure	loving her hair
Alien beauty	Vanished dream of blue eyes	Hair in its natural texture
Identity	Lost	Regained
Self	Destroyed	Rebuilt
Personality	Invisible	Imposed

Table 4.2. Physical and psychological characteristics between Pecola and Ifemelu

The job of Morrison and Adichie was completed to correct the mythic view of whiteness that had been perfect and untouched for a long time. This is why, exposing American culture as a compliment to the whites and a complication to the

Blacks was a support to the myth of racial differences, which Morrison and Adichie's novels concede with evidence to the contrary. In the time of Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*, speaking about the Negro world was considered a frustration, and the public audience easily ignores it. The negro is humiliated just for his colour as happens to Pecola with the storekeeper:

An absence of human recognition- the glazed separateness.... Perhaps because he is grown or a man and she a little girl. But she has seen interest, disgust even anger in grown male eyes. Yet this vacuum is not new to her. It has an edge, somewhere in the bottom lid is the distaste. She has seen it lurking in the eyes of all white people. (Morrison, 1970, p. 49)

This is not the first experience of humiliation to Pecola. She is often debased by the white surrounding. This is what Morrison explains "The distaste must be for her, her blackness. All things in her are flux and anticipation. But her blackness is static and dread. And it is the blackness that accounts for, that creates, the vacuum edged with distaste in white eyes." (Morrison, 1970, p. 49).

However, by the next coming years within the publication of *Beloved*, the American voices could no more ignore the interrelatedness of blackness and whiteness in its true terms. Morrison attempts to solidify the relationship of race and slavery which makes the white culture dominant and superior, with deteriorative drawbacks on the Black community. This is expressed through a tragic scene when Sethe is whipped while she was pregnant. However, she does not speak about the pain of beating her that she bravely endures. She rather cares for her milk stolen from her:

They used cowhide on you?
And they took my milk.
They beat you and you were pregnant?
And they took my milk! (Morrison, 1987, p.20)

She painfully expresses her grief for violating her milk which is her connection with her baby as she aches: “Nobody will ever get my milk no more except my own children. I never had to give it to nobody else—and the one time I did it was took from me—they held me down and took it. Milk that belonged to my baby” (Morrison, 1987, p.236)

Morrison succeeds to reach the emotion of the reader by many moving scenes in the novel where she clarifies the afro American past marked by a barbaric institutionalized slavery system.

With Adichie, the trend for deconstructing the falsehood of ideological whiteness has become truer with *Americanah* where the demystification of white racial superiority has been denounced. Racial hierarchy is introduced by Jane to Ifemelu explaining that public schools are for the Blacks and the private suburbs for the Whites when she says:

We pay good money for her to go to private school because the public schools here are useless. Marlon says we’ll move to the suburbs soon so they can go to a better school. Otherwise she will start behaving like these black Americans.” “What do you mean?” “Don’t worry, you will understand with time” (Adichie, 2013, p. 113).

This discrimination motivates Ifemelu to learn American literature in order to understand the constitution of such alienated society.

Morrison’s novels highlight the actual contextual life of black men and women in a white society indifferent to them; and Adichie’s *Americanah* represents the Afropolitan, the Afrodiasporic side of contemporary blacks, who are different in challenging racism, alienation and marginalization. Morrison shapes the portrait of the woman at that time but stands in her locale; while Adichie transports the portrait outside its African native place and migrates towards America. Morrison focuses more the woman inside home and outside in the streets around the surrounding;

Adichie goes beyond the borders and steps the evolution of the woman in and out native home.

4.6. Morrison and Adichie: Representatives of Black Identity

In the twentieth century, the Afro American writer Toni Morrison asked : “Is there no context for our lives? No song, no literature, no poem full of vitamins, no history connected to experience that you can pass along to help us start strong?”¹⁷ (Morrison, 1993, para 2).

Such a question reiterates postcolonial writings that anticipate in the self-appraisals of identities; a thing that Morrison masters so well as she said “Narrative is radical, creating us at the very moment it is being created” (Morrison,1993, p27). Indeed, the main thrust of this study in modern literature stems from the postcivil right era which brought more African Americans into politics after several decades of discrimination, poverty, and unemployment in the United States. In this sense, Morrison closely focused on the issue of identity according to social, political, and literary criteria: Feminism, postcolonialism, blacks, women, and third world societies.

In her novels, Morrison was brave enough to awaken the consciousness on race relations and black individuals in the white American society. Morrison writings were largely concerned with matters of sexuality, race, social class and rape. Thus, in order to create her niche of readers, she turned to history. Such flashbacks are indeed important to the undermining of racism which would, as well, reinforce black existence as a strong ideal community.

According to Du Bois, “the history of the American Negro is the history of this strife, this longing to attain self-conscious manhood, to merge his double self into a better and truer self” (Du Bois, 1994, p.43). Morrison’s novels are the expression of this clash of identities that denies to acknowledge the notion of “we

¹⁷ <https://www.goodreads.com/work/quotes/899-the-nobel-lecture-in-literature-1993>

became what we saw of ourselves in the eyes of others” (Naipaul, 1967, p.25), instead, “We are what we remember” as noted by Michael Roth.

4.6.1 A Trail of Indictments in Morrison’s Narratives

Morrison believes that writing in America is a liberating way to express herself and reveal the racist and sexist structure that control the American society. In *Contemporary Women's Fiction. Feminist Narratives in Selected Twentieth Century Women's Novels* Morrison tells an interviewer “I’m writing for black women, we are not addressing the men as some white female writers do. We are not attacking each other as both black and white men do. Black women writers look at things in an unforgiving loving way, they are writing to repossess, rename, reown” (Morrison, cited in Bhattacharjee & Barman, 2016, p.11)

Morrison tackled issues of race, class, segregation and bias that the African Americans suffered from, and tried to divulge the realities that shape the white American society in which the black community was long denied and marginalized.

4.6.1.1. Racial Intonations in *The Bluest Eye*

In her 1970’s novel *The Bluest Eye* that is Morrison’s first masterpiece, she set her narrative back to 1940, a decade of great depression, War Years, and social change in the United States. Black community, however, experienced segregation and discrimination especially in the Southern part of the country. *The Bluest Eye* writer could portray one of these facts through “Dick and Jane” excerpt.

As a fact, Morrison starts each chapter with this excerpt as a prologue. In each chapter, we find that the primer is disremembered and changed confusingly. In each version, Morrison symbolizes the lifestyle of each black family in the novel who struggle to survive amid poverty and marginalization.

To use Bower’s words, “the repletion of the passage is representative of the fact that, regardless of the seemingly obvious impracticability and specificity of the white middle class ideal, this ideal is beaten over and over again into the minds of

society as a whole.” He critically continues: “More specifically, the fact that the passage is extracted from Dick and Jane reader exemplifies that this ideal is introduced and indeed already deeply ingrained within the children of both white society and the black community from a very early age.”(Bower, 2013, p.03)

The process of deconstructing the primer in each chapter may, nonetheless, be a mechanism to place the shoe on the other foot. That is to say, we need to go beyond the language in order to understand how the ideal of whiteness is deliberately distorting the originality of African American society because “the novel is the foregrounding of its textual identity as the contradiction of dominant culture” (Grewal, 1998, p.22). The issue of identity, gender, and race relations coalesced with beauty standards which takes its largest proportion from the white community.

In the novel, Pecola fondly gazes at Shirley Temple’s face and admires her blue eyes. So we are asked to contemplate and speculate the idolization of whiteness through the portrait of Shirley Temple and white baby dolls: white skin, blue eyes, fair blond hair. The ideal standards of white beauty are disconnecting black individuals from their identity and culture.

In *Black Women Novelists*, Barbara Christian projects her views about *The Bluest Eye*, that is according to her “the portrait of a black woman artist as a young girl breaking through sanctioned ignorance and arriving, through internal struggle, at an emergent consciousness” (Christian, 1980, p.149). Pecola began to equate perfection with whiteness. “it had occurred to Pecola some time ago that if her eyes, those eyes that held the pictures, and knew the sights _ if those eyes of hers were different, that is to say, beautiful, she herself would be different.” , Morrison dramatized her character’s desire for beauty who “each night, without fail, she prayed for blue eyes” (Morrison, 1970, p.46).

In brief, Morrison brought currents from the twentieth century’s milieu, whilst the mass changes it witnessed affected mainly the African American community. In this vein, Grewal restates what Michael Roth notes about memory in

Morrison's novel. The critic finds that "[memory] becomes a locus of struggle over the boundary between the individual and the collective" (Roth, 1995, as cited in Grewal, 1998, p.12). In a different context Grewal comments "Morrison allows the reader to see the African American crisis of identity and alignment in colonial and postcolonial terms" (p80)

In keeping with Morrison's concern so far with race, class, and gender, the afro American writer is leading her audience to differentiate between second wave feminism of white women which focused more on how to regain power over patriarchic society, and black women who have to deal not only with white men but even with black ones. *The Bluest Eye* females are "oppressed not only by the white aesthetic, as well as white men and women, but also by black men, women, boys, and at times, even other black girls." (Sande, 2013). Indeed, there is an irony in using Breedlove as the name of a family which is far from living happy or lovely, for the only thing it is able to breed is hatred and poverty which parallels the intoxicated situation of black people in the twentieth century.

4.6.1.2 Revisited History in *Beloved*

The multiculturalism spread in the American literary canon allows many literary works to criticize and interact in serious matters as gender, race relations and identity. These themes again recall the works of Toni Morrison. In her *Beloved*, Morrison undergoes matters of identity and segregation of black community in order to orient its readers to a clearer image of how American ethics, culture, and racial relations had gone a century ago.

The African American writer speaks for the muted voices and the injured souls. She highlighted the hidden history of the social abuse against Africans in the United State. That history per se is being denied or being consigned to oblivion that many old and recent generation fail to remember. The fact that such a history is metamorphosed into nonentity urged Morrison to put into print her fifth novel *Beloved* as she explained in an interview with *World Magazine*:

There is no place you or I can go, to think about or not think about, to summon the presences of, or recollect the absences of slaves . . . There is no suitable memorial, or plaque, or wreath, or wall, or park, or skyscraper lobby. There's no 300-foot tower, there's no small bench by the road. There is not even a tree scored, an initial that I can visit or you can visit in Charleston or Savannah or New York or Providence or better still on the banks of the Mississippi. And because such a place doesn't exist . . . the book had to¹⁸ (The World, 1989, para2).

Beloved is written to necromancy the segregated spirits. It “is a witch whom knowledge must labor to hold and to identify through its exorcising.... It is only a drifting meaning. It is the siren from whom the historian must defend himself, like Ulysses tied to the mast”.(De Certeau, as cited in Grewal, 1998, p.96)

Unlike historians, Morrison could successfully unveil the strong stigma of having gone under fierce segregation and coercion by putting its characters in slave and pain position as Barbara Christian wrote: “the chaotic space of mother-love/mother-pain, daughter-love/daughter-pain”, while Linda Krumholz put, “the spirit of the past has taken on a personality in this novel, and thus Morrison makes the writing of history a resurrection of ancestral spirits, the spirit of the long buried past.” (Krumholz, 1999, p.116). In fact, the murder of Sethe’s baby girl in order to protect her from the atrocity of slavery “symbolizes the past and catalyzes the future” (1999, p.115).

Of course, *Beloved* is far more than a simple narrative. It gains a special poignancy because it embodies the trauma of slavery, the guilt of the past, and a warning from the future. However, the social wrongs are sketched through the unborn slave or the devil-baby. In this vein, Krumholz continues “Morrison resurrects the devil-child, the spiteful, beautiful, painful past, so that beloved__ and the novel__ will live on us.” (1999, p.116).

¹⁸ <https://www.tonimorrisonssociety.org/bench.html>

With a side glance at *The Bluest Eye*, *Beloved* has a close contact with Morrison's first novel which also demonstrates self-love and self-hatred in the narrative. Sethe's rejection to the unwanted beloved baby expresses both love and hatred to the black identity. The protective mother wanted to change the destiny of her child by omitting its presence in a cruel world. The refusal of black identity is embodied in the Bluest Eye through Breedlove's conviction of their ugliness. "it was as though some mysterious all-knowing master had given each one a cloak of ugliness to wear, and they had each accepted it without question. The master had said, "you are ugly people". They had looked about themselves and saw nothing to contradict the statement; saw, in fact, support for it leaning at them from every billboard, every movie, every glance. "yes" they had said. "you are right." And they took their ugliness in their hands, threw it as a mantle over them, and went about the world with it."(Morrison, 1993,p.39).

Morrison, in fact, echoes what W.E.B. Du Bois states about "this American world, a world which yields [the black man] no true self-consciousness, but only lets him see himself through the revelation of the other world." (cited in Grewal,1998, p30). Through Pecola, whose obsession for blue eyes and white skin, Morrison emphasises Du Bois' concept of "double consciousness" in plain language.

The Nobel laureate in literature had the ability to conscript the past of abuse, and to present both autobiographical and fictionalized narrative. Toni Morrison developed similar traits of characters by exposing her Sethe to ugliness, humiliation, and lack of beauty as her master keeps grounding her "Don't up and die on me the night, you hear? I don't want to see your ugly black face hankering over me."(Morrison, 1987, p.82).

Rewriting the past is not only concerned with narration but it aims to convey its significance. Morrison accounts history in accordance with former events. To use the words of Rafael Pérez Torres "black" was deemed "blank" and absent (p.179), however, the black female writer clearly wanted to raise the politicized slogan of

“Black is beautiful”. In a similar vein, Henry Louis Cates presents black identity in black literature that “can perhaps be usefully stated in the irony implicit in the attempt to posit a “black self” in the very Western languages in which blackness itself is a figure of absence, a negation.”(H.L. Gates. Jr. As cited in Torres,1999, p.179).

In much the same way, Morrison expressed this black existence denial when Sethe’s mother, after “her sixty years a slave and ten years free”, “ announced that there was no bad luck in the world but white people. “they don’t know when to stop,” she said”(Morrison, 1987, p.104). This is to say that, once upon a time “one finds one of the earliest figures of blackness, a figure of negation”(Morrison, 1987, p.179).

In particular, the attitude toward black people defined them as a passive group whose beauty remains a guise of ugliness, misfortune, and slavery. In fact, Morrison succeeded in reanimating the past and graving it in the memories of black community as well as white milieu. Her lineage continued with the Nigerian blogger and author Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie.

4.6.2. The Ubiquitous Influence of Adichie

In 2013, Adichie tackled issues of identity and race by portraying characters coming from Nigeria. The young couple Ifemelu and Obinze have to confront their blackness in America: a situation that parallels Morrison’s plot in *The Bluest Eye* and *Beloved*. Though written only seven years ago, it seems that white people never know when to stop. The young and beautiful Ifemelu discovers the lack of tolerance in the land of Columbus. Like many other African descents, she struggles to resist the dominant white norms. Again, Adichie draws her material from actual events in the context of *Americanah* (2013).

In an attempt to look beautiful as white standards dictate, Ifemelu is described as revolutionary and resistant to this global standardization. Adichie described a scene of Ifemelu’s non-conformity when the latter drove to beauty

supply to look for silky straight weaves but suddenly recalls Jamilah¹⁹⁷⁷ “I love the sistas who love their straight weaves, but I’m never putting horse hair on my head again.”(Adichie, 2013, p.213). As a fact, Ifemelu felt an intense longing for her natural beauty that identifies her the way she is. Thus she wrote in her blog: “Jamilah’s words made me remember that there is nothing more beautiful than what God gave me.”(Adichie, 2013, p.218). Adichie cherished the high self esteem of her protagonist who from the other hand received a strong backing and positive responses as Adichie penned “Posting on the website was like giving testimony in church; the echoing roar of approval revived her” (p218).

In chapter twenty of *Americanah* (2013), Adichie also represents a more specific slap across black community, and clearly expressed her distaste for “those who deign to have black wives.”, the ones who, as put by Du Bois, don’t “wish to Africanize America, for America has too much to teach the world and Africa”, or those who regard as true that “Africanism is inextricable from the definition of Americanness from its origins on through its integrated or disintegrated twentieth-century self.”(1992, p65). In short, Adichie is outraged at the attempt of American blacks to debase black beauty, those who refuse to marry a black woman for they appraise whiteness and light skin wives. Adichie proudly expressed her great affection for the former Black American president Barack Obama who is loved by dark women because “He broke the mold!” and “married one of their own. He knows what the world doesn’t seem to know; that dark black women totally rock”(Adichie, 2013, p.214)

Similarly, Morrison admires that self esteem and self acceptance of being black. That feeling of being beautiful and unique unlike “the sense of always looking at one’s self through the eyes of others” or “of measuring one’s soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity” (Du Bois, *The Atlantic*). Toni Morrison expressed that “It was lovely. Not to be stared at, not seen, but being pulled into view by the interested, uncritical eyes of the other.” (p118). The way Beloved looked at Denver “having her hair examined as a part of her self, not as material or a style. Having her lips, nose, chin caressed as they might be if she were

a moss rose a gardener paused to admire” (p118). That real sense of belonging and acceptance was the most pleasant felling any black woman would ever receive.

Afro American writers, as a fact, strive to obtain dignity and social justice. They believe that their revolution is not only a part of human rights because the notion of “the rights of human-ness are innate, and that this factor carries with it social and ethical obligations, not just for African Americans but for all” (Lyon, 2012, p18). In *Human Rights Rhetoric*, it is commented that African American writers like Morrison, Zora Neal Hurston or Adichie “have drawn on the idea of and language of human dignity to make social justice for all of humanity, including themselves, a priority” (p16). Postcolonial writers kept the old paradigm of their ancestors that looked for social, political and cultural rights as a part of humanity. The African American activism that aimed at protecting the black identity had been expressed in many ways from the social activist Maria Stewart in her essay “*Religion and the Pure Principles of Morality*”, Mary Church Terrell in her autobiography “*A Coloured Woman in a White World*”, to Frances.E.W. Harper in her speech “*Woman’s Political Future*”. As expected, Black studies have strong antecedents who could carry the index of their past.

Nothing illuminates the present more than a sense of history. Indeed, Nietzsche was right when he claimed that it is necessary to confront the past in order to avoid being overwhelmed by it. It is exactly what recent African Americans have done. They used history for real advantage. Morrison’s slogan of “*Black is beautiful*”, and Adichie’s scary facts that being black “is at the bottom of America’s race ladder” (p225), both writers, in short, echoed what Maria Stewart published in her first essay back then: “Many think, because your skins are tinged with a sable hue, that you are an inferior race of being, but God does not consider you as such. He hath formed and fashioned you in his own glorious image, and hath bestowed upon you reason and strong powers of intellect... and according to the Constitution of these United states, he has made all men free and equal” (2012, p17).

According to Adichie, the struggle of race and class never ceased because it seems to occupy a large room in the American lifestyle, albeit the continuous escape from history. Obinze in *Americanah* thinks that “class in this country is in the air that people breathe. Everyone knows their place. Even the people who are angry about class have somehow accepted their place”(p279). Indeed, African America writers and activists “were quite literally called on to engage in the already larger project of reclaiming, after centuries of oppression and abuse, their own humanity and the potential of that humanity, an activist project that continues into the twenty-first century, for example, through the participation of African-American women in the work of transnational feminisms.”(Lyon, 2012, p16). The searing criticism, either in the twentieth century with Morrison’s novels, or in the twenty-first century with the virtuoso Adichie in *Americanah* about the experience of African descents in the white American society, truly, identify the race-based class structure in different forms including the hegemonic norms of White people and the widely held stereotypes about black people.

4.7. Conclusion

Discrimination and injustice keeps mortifying black people even at many levels including wealth and education; A fact that Adichie and Morrison attempted to show in their novels through their protagonists who have been perplexed and traumatized by the cruelty of the white superiority. The relationship between women and nature created a new brand concept named Ecofeminism. As the case presents, the setting or the environment of the female characters was sometimes an abyss, other times a refuge. Thus the female character struggles to fit and survive in her environment. The psyche in Adichie and Morrison’s narratives was penetrated and deemed as the outcome of the slavery, trauma and violence. This feature has been shaped in the twenty century and reshaped in the twenty first century but kept similar traits. Again, the American society practiced a typical regime based on

enslaving the black race in order to provide a prosperous perfect life for the white society.

Undoubtedly, the notable contribution of Toni Morrison and Chimamanda Adichie as postcolonial writers helped in the emergence of black feminist literature; fuelled by facts and experiences from real life. Consequently, the traumatic events of slavery, psychological and physical violence practiced on, mainly, the female gender built extreme scenes and scenarios which aimed to orient the readers to the cruelty of the white world.

General Conclusion

General Conclusion

This research work examines three novels to investigate a diachronic progress of the Black woman through two of Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* and *Beloved*, and Adichie's *Americanah*. In the light of the named novels black feminism, race, colour, realism and naturalism are viewed under the selected novelists' lens. This has just enabled a deeper comprehension of women condemned by others because of colour. This research work revisits the existence of the black female from passive like Pauline and Pecola in *The Bluest Eye*, from aching and scarred like Sethe in *Beloved*, to a more revolutionary and self independent woman like Ifemulu in *Americanah*

Indeed feminism as a concept has undergone different epistemological updates to cover the well being of the woman; yet, it has not been set to represent all the women in the world especially women of colour. Thus, other women novelists, Morrison and Adichie in the scope of this research, endeavour to take the charge of defense for women demeaned by their "blackness". Both Morrison and Adichie respond against disgraceful alienation of the whites towards misjudging women up to race and colour. On account of this critical-based view, the first research question is answered denying the hypothesis that feminism has just come from its beginning to represent the Black female.

As for the second research question about Morrison's novels which examine the atrocity, the feebleness and the agony of black women faced, with internal and external injuries, it has been noticed that Morrison succeeds to denounce harsh conduct of injustice and inhumanity against Pecola in *The Bluest Eye* and Sethe in *Beloved*. Morrison also describes the reaction of these women against the white oppression through moving from the powerless and passive Pecola, to the more courageous and brave Sethe who strives to construct herself to live as a free creature. This confirms the second hypothesis about Morrison who endeavours to re-examine the continual stigmatization of Black sexual identity.

As for the third research question about Adichie who incessantly proceeds to reflect objective portrayal of the Black woman, it has been sought that the novelist, indeed, shows anger about racism and sexism. She also portrays the stature of a free African woman in the light of twenty-first century. Adichie fights for a free Afropolitan woman torn between her 'Africanness' as an inner struggle and 'otherness' as experienced in Western society. Therefore the third hypothesis about Adichie's success to represent new Afropolitan women is confirmed.

The fourth question about re-examining the cause of female subjectivity between Morrison and Adichie, the research evidence proves that *The Bluest Eye* and *Beloved* by Morrison and *Americanah* by Adichie, are satirical reviews of the Black woman with criteria of age, gender, level of education, home, parents, lovers, neighborhood, in opposition with the other, who represent sometimes the whites and other times the blacks as stranger in their own country; or emigrant from Africa to America. Thus, the black is the 'other' when he is in America and remains the 'other' when he migrates to America. The conflict of the Black when born in America, as Pecola and Sethe; or when migrating from Africa to America as Ifemelu, is an entanglement between disruption, colonization, turmoil and Diaspora. Importantly today, the black woman is different from Pecola in *The Bluest Eye*, and Sethe in *Beloved*, as proved in *Americanah* by Adichie through Ifemelu. The black woman has become rebellious as a fighter, turbulent as an activist, frank as a blogger through means of education and knowledge. The Black woman is different from Sethe in *Beloved*, by revolting against male oppression and voicing a new sexual identity. This confirms the third hypothesis that the female subjectivity turns from local to global and from turmoil to diaspora, in the sense that supports the black female cause.

By all counts, this research work, with proven results, asserts that feminism took the concept of womanism to represent the black female disruption and turns to Afropolitan to configurate the black identity worldwide through a liaison between three dimensions mainly national, racial and cultural. Morrison stays local

dialoguing the phenomenon of blackness; Adichie goes beyond the borders of Africa to interrogate ontologies of the other, racism, colour, and marginalization.

However, the scope of this research was limited to dig out deeper feminism as an epistemological theory. Indeed, this research work discloses the ways the two novelists share the same worries and objectives; but, it still requires fostering the strategies used in the three novels as a defense against humiliating and demeaning authorities whose use of power is unfair towards the blacks. This is why, investigating the endeavour of Morrison and Adichie, to hold the position of defensiveness against disgracing maltreatment of the black woman, who seems feeble in the time of Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*, less submissive in Morrison's *Beloved*, and more powerful in Adichie's *Americanah*, has to be sought for future focus, in order to configure the portrait of the black female into global stature. Accordingly, from Morrison to Adichie, feminism transcends its areas, from blackness to Afropolitan, widening the position of the black woman as an African or Afro-American to be self independent.

Indeed, the comparative study of feminist concerns of both selected women writers can only be understood within its historical, social and cultural context. It would be interesting to investigate further issues connected to the main themes of this Doctoral thesis. Particularly how transnational feminism writing challenges dominant structures of power? How women writers from different cultural backgrounds deal with feminism and female identity in their works, notably in Algeria or India...?

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GLOSSARY

GLOSSARY 1 : GENERAL CONCEPTS

These words are characterized by extremely controversial definitions . The ones provided here are usually considered as the most suitable.

Acculturation : the process of becoming adapted to a new culture . Second language learning is often second culture learning .

Alien : An alien meant a person who was not a British subject, i.e. who owed allegiance to the Crown in whichever Crown territory he was born; not a British Protected Person, i.e. who placed himself under the protection of the Crown or a citizen of the Republic of Ireland .

It refers also to a totally different cultural identity . It is important to note the literary meaning and use of alien , alienated or alienation. Alienation is to be seen as a withdrawal from society, a rejection of social values and a state of despair and anguish , failure and weakness, incoherence and doubt .

Alienation : is a turning away ; estrangement ;the state of being an outsider or the feeling of being isolated , as from society; in psychiatry a state in which a person's feelings are inhibited so that eventually both the self and the external world seem unreal .In law, it is the transfer of property , as by conveyance or will , into the ownership of another, the right of an owner to dispose of his property .

Americanness : Americanness is a belief in freedom , democracy and knowing the choice to be who you want to be . It is to have choice in the decision you make for your life . The freedom to express your own ideas and the ability to make your dreams materialized . It is the individualism and uniqueness of every soul , bonded together through their patriotism and love for America .

Assimilation : when cultural groups give up their heritage cultures and take on the host society's way of life .

Cultural assimilation refers to giving up a distinct cultural identity , adopting mainstream language and culture

Economic – structural assimilation refers to equality of access , opportunities and treatment .

Assumptions : are facts that individuals are capable of representing mentally and accepting as true, they are manifest to an individual that are perceptible or inferable by an individual .

Attributed gender : the gender and sex that one is taken to be by others. This is usually an immediate unconscious categorization of a person as being a man or a woman, irrespective of their mode of dress.

Binary opposition: a concept borrowed by structuralists and post-structuralists identifying a contrasting pair of signs.

Borders : are sites of homes and new beginnings, are contested cultural and political terrains where the individual and collective memories collide , reassemble and reconfigure .

Colonial literature : is often self-consciously a literature of otherness and resistance and written out of the specific local experience .

Cross-cultural : includes a comparison of interactions among people from the same culture to those from another .

Crossing the linguistic border : the border-crosser develops different speaking selves that speak for different aspects of his identity. Simply said it means that you decenter your voice.

Cultural identities : there are porous representations and are contingent on the author's singularity. The particular relations of writers to culture, the complex contexts within which they write , are always inscribed in the literature itself .

Culture : is a way of life. It might be defined as the ideas, customs, skills, arts and tools which characterize a given group of people in a given period .It is a

repertoire of socially transmitted and intra-generationally generated ideas about how to live, to think and to behave. Cultural models are thus inherited from the preceding generation through socialization and they are learned intra-generationally and through imitation, teaching and from the media

Deconstruction :the tendency of binary oppositions within a text to shift or reverse their valuation.

Diaspora: coming from dispersion evokes multiple journeys , as well as a center (a home) from which dispersion happens .

All diasporas are not the same because of their historical and contextual specificity (ways and under what conditions different languages and class groups travelled), how they arrived and settled , how they have inserted themselves within the social relations of class , gender , race , sexuality among others in the context and time they have located themselves.

Diasporic culture : includes connotations of engagement, rootedness and incorporating notions of hybridity. In this context, re-imagined communities and spaces are considered, re-articulated, reconfigured, taking into account style, sexuality, space and relationship.

Discourse: a literary work is rooted in a cultural and rhetorical context in which meaning is a collaborative construction involving author, text, culture and reader.

Enculturation : learning your personal culture from others .

Essentialism : It is the belief in the authentic essence of things . Essentialist critique is the interrogation of the essentialist terms .

In the post-colonial context , it is the reduction of the indigenous people to the idea of what it means to be African , Arabic ...

To Salman Rushdie , it is required that sources , forms , style , language and symbols belong to an unbroken tradition .

Nationalist and liberationist movements reduce the colonizers to an essence which invert or ignore the values of the ascribed features .

Ethnic identity: is defined as the personal dimension of ethnicity or how one identifies oneself.

Ethnicity: is the sense of peoplehood derived from distinct commonalities.

Ethnos : in Greek was employed for indicating a community which need not have been a tribe. The best equivalent to the Greek ethnos is the Sankrit idea of Jati , which refers to a subcommunity within a larger culture having different features on account of economic , professional or ritual differences.

The term acquired a distinct connotation when used by modern European anthropologists and sociologists for describing civilizations under colonial domination.

Ethnos came to indicate a non European civilizationally less sophisticated community (Africa, South America or Australia) , less technocratized society (as in Asia or China) , also referred to as the Other of the white man .

Exile : like other concepts in post-colonial theory and discourse , has been used to express a certain sense of belonging to a real (or imagined) homeland .

Yet , physical spaces are only one aspect of exile . Exile can refer to a sense of loss and displacement from a traditional homeland, particularly through such processes as colonization and modernization .

Post-colonial exile invokes not only cultural transformations generated by colonials, but a particular type of consciousness .

Existentialism : denotes things active rather than passive. Sartre said that man can emerge from his passive condition by an act of will.

Feminism :is a term commonly and quite indiscriminately used. Some of the currently used definitions are: a doctrine advocating social and political rights for women equal to those of men, an organized movement for the attainment of these rights, the assertion of the claims of women as a group and the body of theory women have created, belief in the necessity of large-scale social change in order to increase the power of women

Feminist writing : to assert a feminine language particularly challenges men literary canon (criteria). *Ecriture feminine* is the focus in the so-called French school of feminist criticism on the existence of a distinctive *woman's language* .

Gender :is the cultural definition of behaviour defined as appropriate to the sexes in a given society at a given time. Gender is a set of cultural roles . Unfortunately, the term is used both in academic discourse and in the media as interchangeable with *sex*. In fact, its widespread public use probably is due to it sounding a bit more *refined* than the plain word *sex*... Such usage is unfortunate, because it hides, mystifies the difference between the biological given-sex and the culturally created-gender. Feminists above all others should want to point up that difference and should therefore be careful to use appropriate words. Gender is expressed in terms of masculinity and femininity. It is largely culturally determined and effects how people perceive themselves and how they expect others to behave.

Gender Identity : The gender to which one feels one belongs, a continuous and persistent sense of ourselves as male or female.

Gender role or sex role : the behaviours, attitudes, values, beliefs ... that a particular cultural group considers appropriate for males and females on the basis of their biological sex.

Happiness : is individual in Western society , whereas in Indian societies the well being of the family / caste is valued over individual self-fulfilment .

Hegemony : A term used mostly by Marxist critics to delineate the web of dominant ideologies within a society. It was coined by the Italian theorist Antonio Gramsci; this refers to the pervasive system of assumptions, meanings and values that shapes the way things look, what they mean, and therefore what reality *is* for the majority of people within a given culture.

Home : as both the mythic place of desire and no return, of lived experiences (sounds, smells, feelings ...): a place for family to come together in rituals, a place of worship second to the church , mosque or temple , a protective space against isolation and in defiance of the breaking-up of family in modern society and in diasporas .

Home also refers to boundaries, becoming a space of no escape and for alienation and terror .

Outside the boundaries of home, the latter brings into play the questions of inclusion and exclusion as well as the ensuring of political and personal struggles of belonging .

Humour: a shared amusement

Hybridity : is transgressive, it refers to the integration or mingling of cultural signs and practices from the colonizing and the colonized cultures .

Identity : is always in process .It is a word carrying with it connotations of rootedness (to engage in various aspects of being an individual within a world which is plural)

Ideology: dominant values, beliefs, ways of thinking through which culture understands reality. Similar to the phrase *cultural mythology* , it usually represents in tacit fashion the prevailing views of a particular class. Examples of ideology relevant to American culture: gender roles, value of

capitalism, constitutional rights protecting individual liberties... But for Marxist, it includes the shared beliefs and values held in an unquestioning manner by a culture. It governs what that culture deems to be normative and valuable. It is determined by economics. Ideology exerts a powerful influence upon a culture. Those who are marginalized in the culture are most aware of the ways in which an ideology supports the dominant class in the society. Those who enjoy the fruit of belonging to a dominant group of the society are filled with what Marx called *false consciousness* and are not interested in the ways in which an economic structure marginalizes others.

Integration: a term which also implied assimilation but allowing for some linguistic and cultural residues. It can take place when the environment is favourable. *The environment*, to state John Dewey's own definition, *consists of the conditions that promote or hinder, stimulate or inhibit the characteristic activities of a living being.* Watts, 1962:2

Intercultural understanding : going beyond your own culture, understanding others' perspectives and points of view, assisting each other worldwide. A profound change in thoughts, perceptions and values can lead to changing how one views culture and one's place in it.

Intraculturality : occurs between individuals of the same culture.

Languages : can be differentiated into types in terms of their external social functions.

Stewart (1968) proposes a typology which depends on four attributes: standardization, vitality, historicity, autonomy by means of which seven sociolinguistically defined language types can be isolated.

1. Standardization-whether or not the language possesses an agreed set of codified norms which are accepted by the speech community and form the basis of the formal teaching of the language, whether as L1 or L2.

2. Vitality-whether the language possesses a living community of native speakers.
3. Historicity-whether the language has grown up or grew up through use by some ethnic or social group.
4. Autonomy-whether or not the language is accepted by the users as being distinct from other languages.

Fisherman, included the idea of nationalism when the language had a function of cultural integration and nationism when used for government public services.

Notes taken from a lecture given by Professor Bouamrane at the University of Sidi Bel Abbes (1999) at Magister level.

Literary Canon : the group of texts deemed to be major texts of literary tradition.

Metaphor : a figure of speech in which one thing is described in terms of another

Modernism : rejected the old Victorian standards of how art should be made and what it should mean (Woolf , Joyce , Eliot , Kafka and Rilke were the founders of the 20th century modernism) and emphasized fragmented forms and subjectivity in writing (stream of consciousness) as well as in visual arts .

Modernity : appeared first in the 19th century in sociology to distinguish antiquity .

Modernization : Historically , this term was used to replace *Westernization* in the recognition of the universal meaning of the modernizing process . This latter originated in Western Europe and has fundamentally transformed the rest of the world. First used in North America by a sociologist, Talcott Parsons, in the 1950s. Forces such as *Westernization* or *Americanization* are to engulf the whole world under the labelling modernization thought of as being probably more scientific and neutral.

Huntington, 2000:257

Orientalism : means a system of representations framed by political forces that brought the Orient into Western learning , Western consciousness and Western Empire . The Orient is a reflected image of what is inferior and alien, i.e. other to the West. Said claims that *the Orient* cannot be studied in a non-Orientalist manner but the would-be concerned would focus on the culturally consistent regions and that *the Oriental* is to be given a voice and not be given a second hand representation.

Other : The other is anyone who is separate from one's self . The existence of others is crucial in defining what is *normal* and in locating one's own place in the world .

The colonized subject is characterized as *other* through discourses as primitivism as a means of establishing the binary separation of the colonizer and colonized and asserting the naturalness and primacy of the colonizing culture and world view .

Othering : It describes the various ways in which colonial discourse produces its subjects . Many critics use the spelling interchangeable , but in either case the construction of the other is fundamental to the construction of the self .

Patriarchal : An assumption of feminist criticism that culture is rather ruled with its institutions and traditions so structured to promote masculine values and to maintain the male in a privileged position

Patriarchy : In its narrow meaning, patriarchy refers to the system, historically derived from Greek and Roman law, in which the male head of the household had absolute legal and economic power over his dependent female and male family members....Patriarchy in its wider definition means the manifestations and institutionalization of male dominance over women and children in the family and the extension of male dominance over women in society in general. It implies that men hold power in all the important institutions of society and that women are deprived of rights,

influence, and resources. Women's struggles are located in a context where the patriarchal control of major social and political institutions makes for special forms of discrimination against women .

Perception : Reader's insight or comprehension of a text. From different critical perspectives, the reader's perception of meaning can be a passive receipt , an active discovery or a creative construction .

Post-Colonial Studies: started obtaining fame since the 1970s, with the publication of Edward Said's Orientalism (1978) and Bill Ashcroft's The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures (1989). The term post-colonial in a very large sense is the study of the interactions between European nations and the societies they colonized in the so-called modern period. Yet, issues in Post-Colonial Studies often transcend the boundaries of strict definition, notably the formation of empire, the impact of colonization on post-colonial history, economy, science, culture, the cultural productions of colonized societies, feminism and post-colonialism, marginalized people, the state of the post-colony in contemporary economic and cultural contexts... Particularly pertinent to post-colonial literature are the use of the colonial language or return to the native one, preponderance of the post-colonial novel, writers to include in the post-colonial canon.

Post-colonial / third world : academics reacted to the term *post-colonial* more favourably than to the pejorative *third world*, administrators welcomed it as less threatening than *Imperialistic* or *neo-colonialistic* . Post-structuralists and post-modernists readily provided it a sympathetic audience .

Post-colonial : began to circulate in the Western academy in the early 1980s and congealed in 1989 with the publication of the Empire Writes Back : Theory and Practice in Post-colonial Literatures edited by Bill Aschcroft . It was most appreciated than the pejorative *third world* .

Post-modernism : highly debated between post-modernists themselves, it includes a wide range of concerns: reorganization of knowledge (utility), storing

(computers), challenging borders and limits involving those of decency, exploration of marginalized aspects of life and elements of society, refusal to live in a world under nuclear threat and threat of the geosphere , faster communication ...

The confluence of the post-modern and post-colonial is fundamental in its challenge to genre distinctions and the conventions of realism. They share both a range of concerns, a debate with the past and a concern for marginalization and differ in their conception of history and the location of their discourse.

It has been shaped by feminism . It does challenge dominant discourses as does post-colonial theory.

Post-structuralism : in literature reveals that the meaning of any text is unstable .

Protagonist : is the central figure of a story (e.g. anecdote, novel), and is often story's *main character*. Often the story is told from the protagonist's point of view. The protagonist's attitudes and actions are made clear to the larger extent than for any other character.

Representation : has a semiotic meaning in that something is *standing* for something else.

Representations are constructed images that need to be interrogated for their ideological content. There is always an element of interpretation involved in representation . There are negative images that can have devastating effects on the real lives of marginalized people.

Sex : Women are sex .Women are a separate group due to their biological distinctiveness. The merit of using the term is that it clearly defines women, not as a subgroup or a minority group, but as half of the whole. Men are the only other sex. Obviously , we are here not referring to sexual activity, but to a biological given.

Sex-gender system: is a very useful term...It refers to the institutionalized system which allots resources, property and privileges to persons accordant to culturally defined gender roles. Thus, it is sex which determines that women should be child bearers, it is the sex-gender system which assures that they should be child-rearers.

Sexism: defines the ideology of male supremacy, of male superiority and of beliefs that support and sustain it. Sexism and patriarchy mutually reinforce one another.

Sexuality : is a transnational issue .It is regarded as an innate human drive but its expression differs according to cultures . Sexual behaviours have different meanings and outgrowths in different societies .

Socialization: is the dynamic process that brings human beings into the human group, causing an individual to internalize the values, mores, traditions, language and attitudes of the culture in which they live.

Status quo : The class relationships determined by the base and reflected in the superstructure of a society . The ideologies of a culture work to keep those relationships .

Stereotype : when one judges people one *naturally* generalizes, simplifies and categorizes them. The classification is called stereotyping. Such stereotyping limits one's width of perception , while at the same time slowly killing one's ability to inquire and learn about others . Stereotyping is very useful in perpetuating self-fulfilling myths about people . So every body is an agent of change , the inner self should be allowed to modify and recreate .

Subaltern: Everybody who has limited or no access at all to the cultural imperialism is thus subaltern . G.C. Spivak points that speaking is a

transaction between speaker and listener, but it does not reach the dialogic level of utterance.

Syrian Christian: Christians who are believed to have been the earliest converts and in some cases claim to be descendants of earliest Jewish traders who arrived in search of St Thomas who had travelled to India. Language of worship in church is Syriac.

Third World : is a rather pejorative way to mean post-colonial world. It was first used in 1952 by Alfred Sauvy, the French demographer.

Transnational feminism : has enabled women's organizations from the South and North to organize jointly around a wide range of issues that have generated new problems and challenges .

Trope : any literary or rhetorical device as metaphor which consists in the use of words in other than their literal sense.

Understanding : understanding oneself , one's action , thought , behaviour , mind , feelings , surrounding , nature , is a process . The natural learning occurs when there is interest, curiosity and enthusiasm .

Womanism is a form of feminism focused especially on the experiences, conditions, and concerns of Black women

Women's emancipation: freedom from oppressive restrictions imposed by sex , self-determination , and autonomy.

Glossary 01 : General Concepts

Concept	Explantation
Alienation	The state of being an outsider or the feeling of being isolated from society.
Culture	An umbrella term, which covers creative products, including literature, music, drama, dance, and painting.
Cultural Identity	Cultural identity is the <u>identity</u> or feeling of belonging to a group. It is part of a person's self-conception and <u>self-perception</u> and is related to <u>nationality</u> , <u>ethnicity</u> , <u>religion</u> , <u>social class</u> , <u>generation</u> , <u>locality</u> or any kind of social group that has its own distinct <u>culture</u> . In this way, cultural identity is both characteristic of the <u>individual</u> but also of the culturally identical group of members sharing the same cultural identity or upbringing.
Cultural Shock	A conflict arising from the interaction of people with different cultural values.
Diaspora	A Diaspora is a scattered population whose origin lies in a separate geographic locale. In particular, Diaspora has come to refer to involuntary mass dispersions of a population from its indigenous .
Discrimination	The act, practice or instance of restricting something categorically rather than individually as the according or deferential treatment of person of an “alien” race or religion.
Education	any <u>experience</u> that has a formative effect on the way one thinks, feels, or acts .It can take pale in <u>formal</u> or <u>informal</u> settings.
Ethnicity	A social construct which divides people into smaller social groups based on characteristics such as shared sense of group membership, values, behavioral patterns, language, political and economic interests, history and ancestral geographical base.
Feminism	A movement which believes in the equality between men and women basically in all spheres of life.
Femininity	It is all about embracing the natural qualities of a woman.

Gender	"Gender" or sexual role, in a broad sense, is the role that society attributes to men and women according to their sexual differences, and how a person's opportunities, roles, responsibilities, and relations define this fact.
Globalization	It is the process of <u>interaction</u> and integration between people, companies, and governments <u>worldwide</u> . Globalization has spread due to <u>communication</u> technology. With increased global interactions comes the growth of international <u>trade</u> , <u>ideas</u> , and <u>culture</u> .
Hybridty	Hybridity refers to any mixing of east and western culture. Within colonial and postcolonial literature, it most commonly refers to colonial subjects from Asia or Africa who have found a balance between eastern and western cultural attributes.
Immigration	Immigration is the international movement of people into a destination country of which they are not natives or where they do not possess citizenship in order to settle or reside there, especially as permanent residents or naturalized citizens, or to take up employment as a migrant worker or temporarily as a foreign worker.
Love	A strong feeling of affection and attraction for someone or something.
Orientalism	Orientalism is a term used by art historians and literary and <u>cultural studies</u> scholars for the imitation or depiction of aspects in <u>West Asian</u> , <u>South Asian</u> , <u>Southeast Asian</u> and <u>East Asian</u> cultures.
Misogyny	It is the hatred or dislike of <u>women</u> or <u>girls</u> .
Patriarchy	It is a social system in which society is organized around male authority figures. In this system fathers have authority over women, children, and property.
post colonialism	It is the academic study of the cultural legacy of <u>colonialism</u> and <u>imperialism</u> , focusing on the human consequences of the control and exploitation of colonized people and their lands.
Prejudice	Favorable or unfavorable opinion or feeling about a person or group, formed without knowledge, or thought or reason.

Protagonist	is the leading character of a story .The protagonist is at the center of the story, makes the key decisions, and experiences the consequences of those decisions. The protagonist is the primary agent propelling the story forward, and is often the character that faces the most significant obstacles.
Sexism	This refers to the discrimination of people of one sex because they are considered inferior to people of the other sex. In general, it is associated with the discrimination exercised against women (machismo), which socially favors men. Sexism is a structured set of beliefs about the attributes that men and women possess that produces situations of inequality. These beliefs are shared within a culture and, in a way, are “naturalized.”
Sex	The biological distinction of an organism between male, female or intersex
Stereotype	Lipman (1922) introduces the term in social psychology, a preconceived notion, especially about a group of people. Many <i>stereotypes</i> are racist, sexist, or homophobic.
Race	A social construct that artificially divides people into distinct groups based on characteristics such as physical appearance (particularly color), ancestral heritage, cultural affiliation, cultural history, ethnic classification, and the social, economic, and political needs of a society at a given period of time. Racial categories subsume ethnic groups.
Racism	Any attitude, action or inaction, which subordinates a person or group because of her/his race/color/ethnicity. Racism is the systemic mistreatment experienced by people of color.
Rape	Rape is a type of <u>sexual assault</u> usually involving <u>sexual intercourse</u> or other forms of <u>sexual penetration</u> carried out against a person without that person's <u>consent</u> . The act may be carried out by physical force, <u>coercion</u> , <u>abuse of authority</u> , or against a person who is incapable of giving valid consent, such as one who is unconscious, incapacitated, has an <u>intellectual disability</u> or is below the legal <u>age of consent</u> . The term <i>rape</i> is sometimes used interchangeably with the term <i>sexual assault</i>
Transgression	An act that goes against a law, rule, or code of conduct; an offence. an act that goes beyond the limits of what is morally or legally acceptable.
Women's emancipation	is any effort to procure <u>economic and social rights</u> , <u>political rights</u> or <u>equality</u> ,

Women's empowerment	is the process in which women elaborate and recreate what it is that they can be, do, and accomplish in a circumstance that they previously were denied
Women' rights	The rights claimed for women, equal to those of men, with respect to suffrage, property, employment, etc.

Glossary 02: Nigerian Concepts

Concept	Explanation
Africanness	The quality or condition of being African; or acquiring African characteristics
Afro-Americans	African Americans (also referred to as Black Americans or Afro-Americans are an ethnic group of Americans (citizens or residents of the United States) with total or partial ancestry from any of the Black racial groups of Africa. The term may also be used to include only those individuals who are descended from enslaved Africans. As a compound adjective, the term is usually hyphenated as African-American.
Corruption	An illegal act by people, it is the use of powers by government officials or their network contacts for illegitimate private gain.
Lagos	Lagos (Yoruba: <i>Èkó</i>) is a city in the Nigerian state of Lagos. The city, with its adjoining conurbation, is the most populous in Nigeria, and the most populous on the African continent. It is one of the fastest growing cities in the world, and one of the most populous urban areas. Lagos is a major financial centre in Africa; it is also the largest and busiest seaports on the continent.
Religious Conflicts	They are wars primarily caused or justified by differences in religion. In the modern period, debates are common over the extent to which religious, economic, or ethnic aspects of a conflict predominate in a given war. According to the <i>Encyclopedia of Wars</i> , out of all 1,763 known/recorded historical conflicts, 123, or 6.98%, had religion as their primary cause, and of that percentage, 65, or 53.66%, were related to Islam.
Panafricanism	solidarity between all people of African descent

Glossary 03: Indian Concepts.

Concept	Explanation
Aryan	The English word “Aryan” originally spelt ‘Arian’ was borrowed from the Sanskrit word ārya, in the 18 th century and thought to be term that was used as a self-designation by Indo Iranian people. The word was used by the Indic people of the Vedic period in India as an ethnic label for themselves and to refer to the noble class as well as the geographic region known as Āryāvarta, where Indo-Aryan culture is based
Americanness	The quality or condition of being American; or acquiring Americans characteristics
Bangalore	It is the <u>capital</u> of the <u>Indian state of Karnataka</u> . It has a population of over ten million, making it a <u>megacity</u> and the <u>third most populous city</u> and <u>fifth most populous urban agglomeration</u> in India. It is located in <u>Southern India</u> on the <u>Deccan Plateau</u> at an elevation of over 900 m (3,000 ft) above sea level, which is the highest among India's major cities.
Bihar	Is an Indian state considered to be a part of Eastern as well as Northern India. It is the thirteen-largest Indian state, with an area of 94,163 km ² (36,357 sq mi). As the third-largest state by population, it is contiguous with Uttar Pradesh to its west, Nepal to the north, the northern part of West Bengal to the east, with Jharkhand to the south. The Bihar plain is split by the river Ganges that flows from west to east. Bihar is an amalgamation of three distinct regions: Magadh, Mithila, and Bhojpur.
Caste	The division of the Hindu classification of the society in principle into four varnas: Brahmins: priests, scholars and teachers. Kshatriyas: rulers, warriors and administrators. Vaishyas: agriculturalists and merchants. Shudras: laborers and service providers
Dalit	It means reduced and oppressed.
Dharma	The conformity to religious law, custom and duty or one’s own quality or character.
Devdas	Meaning in the Hindu servant of God
Endogamy	It is the rule that forbids the members of a group to marry from outside it.
Exogamy	First use of <i>exogamy</i> in 1865, Marriage outside of a specific group especially as required by custom or law is <i>exogamy</i> . Exogamous groups sometimes even specify the group into which members must marry. Such groups are usually defined in terms of kinship rather than in terms of politics or territory. Exogamy is usually characteristic of groups that trace descent through either the maternal or paternal line only
Gauripur	Gauripur is a semi-urban town under Gauripur Town Committee in the Dhubri district in the state of Assam in India.
Guru	A preceptor who gives personal religious construction.

Gotra	people who are descendants in an unbroken male line from a common male ancestor
Hindu Hinduism	Means those who are peaceful and keep away from the path of violence. Hindu thought evolved the idea of a trinity consists of Brahma , The Creator, Vishnu ,the preserver and Shiva , the destroyer.
Karma	Belief in the quality of action (good and bad ones).
Lakh	It is a unit in the Indian numbering system equal to one hundred thousand (100,000)
Maharashtra	is a state of India, in the Western region of the country and is India's second-most populous state and third-largest state by area.
Raj	Rule, reign and domination.
Sapinda	<i>Sapinda</i> relationship, reference to any person extends to the third generation (inclusive) in the line of ascent through the mother, and the fifth (inclusive) in the line of ascent through the father.
Sati	Bride burnt alive.
Sakti	Denotes the universal feminine creative principle and the energizing force behind all male divinity including Shiva(Lord of destruction)
Sita	Epitomizes marital fidelity wife loyalty and dutifulness.
Varna	(वर्ण) is a Sanskrit word which means class.
Vedas	The holy scriptures of the Hindus date back to the beginning if Indian civilization and are the earliest records of the Aryan race. They have been passed through oral tradition for over 10.000 years. They came to us in a written form between 4-6,000 years ago. The Aryan beliefs are described in the for Vedas: collection of poems and sacred hymns, composed in about 1500 BC. Vedas means knowledge, are divided into the Rigveda, Yajurveda , Samaveda, and Atharvaveda concerned with rituals and philosophical hymns to the deities and elements.

There are many writers whose pathbreaking works tried to fix feminism as a concept; but it was difficult to put it in a name as to what it fits all the societies. This research work is an attempt to set epistemological set of definitions about feminism which has been changing through time by distinct academic communities, in particular, black women who were faced with challenges to voice self identity and to break silence. Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* and *Beloved*, and Adichie's *Americanah*, are the research sample novels, used as primary sources to analyzing a better comprehension of black women issues. Both Morrison and Adichie, though never planned to do it together, worked as a collectivity, each in her own region, and her own standpoint to visualize, for the public, black womanhood. Adichie's *Americanah* is selected to talk back about what was formerly unthinkable; and bravely voiced in Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* and *Beloved*. One of the research findings indicates the contribution of both Morrison and Adichie to defend and assess brilliantly the position of black women. Further, the research reflects close attention that Morrison is a context responsive observer; while Adichie is a critically global reporter of the incidents of Black women. Accordingly, both novelists are natural and realist, to voice the experience of the woman under the prejudice of "blackness" and "africanness" wrongly viewed as negative.

Key words : Racism, Sexism, Discrimination, The Bluest Eye, Beloved, Americanah, Feminism.

هناك العديد من الكتاب الذين حاولت أعمالهم الرائدة دراسة النسوية كمصطلح ؛ ولكن كان من الصعب إيجاد اسم يناسب و ينطبق على كل المجتمعات. إن هذا العمل البحثي يعد محاولة لوضع مجموعة من التعريفات المعرفية للنسوية والتي تغيرت عبر الزمن من قبل مجتمعات أكاديمية متميزة ، على وجه الخصوص، النساء السود اللواتي واجهن تحديات للتعبير عن الهوية الذاتية وكسر الصمت. استخدمت الروايات لتوني موريسون *العين الزرقاء* و رواية *الحيبية* بجانب الكاتبة شيمامندا نجوزي أديتشي برواية *أميريكانا* كعينة للبحث ، وتستخدم كمصادر أساسية لتحليل و فهم لقضايا المرأة السوداء. عملت كل من موريسون وأديتشي ، على الرغم من عدم التخطيط للقيام بذلك معاً ، كمجموعة حيث أن كل واحدة منهما في منطقتها ، ولها وجهة نظرها الخاصة لتصور، للقراء ، الأنوثة السوداء. تم اختيار *أميريكانا* للرواية أديتشي للتحديث مرة أخرى عما كان لا يمكن تصوره سابقاً ؛ وتم التعبير عنه بشجاعة في *العين الزرقاء* و *الحيبية* لموريسون. كما تشير إحدى نتائج البحث إلى مساهمة كل من موريسون وأديتشي في الدفاع عن وضع النساء السود وتقييمهن بنزاهة. علاوة على ذلك ، يعكس البحث اهتماماً وثيقاً بأن موريسون هي ملاحظة متجاوبة مع السياق ؛ بينما تعتبر الرواية أديتشي مراسلة عالمية ناقدة لأحداث النساء السود. وبناءً على ذلك ، فإن كلا الروائيين طبيعيين وواقعيين ، للتعبير عن تجربة المرأة تحت حكم "السواد" و "الإفريقية" التي يُنظر إليها بطريقة خاطئة على أنها سلبية .

الكلمات المفتاحية: العنصرية - الجنس - التفرقة - العين الزرقاء- الحيبية- أمريكانا- النسوية

Il existe de nombreux écrivains dont les œuvres révolutionnaires ont tenté de fixer le féminisme en tant que concept ; mais il était difficile de le mettre dans un nom quant à ce qu'il convient à toutes les sociétés. Ce travail de recherche est une tentative de définir un ensemble épistémologique de définitions du féminisme, qui a changé au fil du temps par des communautés universitaires distinctes, en particulier les femmes noires qui ont été confrontées à des défis pour exprimer leur identité et briser le silence. *The Bluest Eye* et *Beloved* de Morrison ainsi qu'à *Americanah* d'Adichie sont des exemples de romans de recherche, utilisés comme sources primaires pour analyser et proposer une meilleure compréhension des problèmes des femmes noires. Morrison et Adichie, bien que n'ayant jamais prévu de le faire ensemble, ont travaillé en tant que collectivité, chacune dans sa propre région, et son propre point de vue pour rendre visible, pour le public, la féminité noire. *L'Americanah* d'Adichie est choisie pour parler de ce qui était autrefois impensable ; et courageusement exprimé dans *The Bluest Eye* et *Beloved* de Morrison. L'un des résultats de la recherche indique la contribution de Morrison et d'Adichie pour défendre et évaluer la position des femmes noires. En outre, la recherche reflète une attention particulière, celle que Morrison est une observatrice sensible au contexte ; tandis qu'Adichie est une artiste qui critique les incidents des femmes noires. En conséquence, les deux romancières sont naturelles et réalistes, pour exprimer l'expérience de la femme sous le préjugé de la « noirceur » et de « l'africanité » considérées à tort comme négatives.

Mots clés : racisme, sexisme, Discrimination, The Bluest Eye, Beloved, Americanah, Féminisme.