The respect for black literature has become a slowly emerging phenomenon. This involves looking at the black race with a historical perspective. Their life became a tale of oppression. The subject matter of black literature happens to be an excellent depiction and portrayal of the oppression of the blacks by the whites. The history of the black race is nothing but an expression of the history of suppression. Farming, coffee and tea plantations and several forms of agriculture and occupation forced the whites to employ the black race for the purpose of manual labour. As a consequence, the blacks were treated as mere tools for their work and hence they were reduced to subhuman status. The blacks were living human beings but they were treated as inanimate entities by the whites. Historically black women were put to greater torture on biological and physical grounds. To be born a black is a sin but to be born a female black is a greater sin. It is this motivating spirit which has led many writers to trace the history of black women’s writings. William Faulkner and Mark Twain brought out their perspectives on the mulatto black women. A well known social scientist Calvin Hernton points out that the negro woman’s function was to serve as a breeding animal and to procreate more slaves.

Many writers have explored the themes related to the tragic lives of the black women which are of three levels. The first two levels
are artistically conceived by the white men and women who spoke about the black women. They understood the problems of the blacks in their white perspective. The third level is filled with many black men writers who narrated the tragic lives of black women. All the three accounts or versions are unsatisfying and so they are found inadequate. The remark of Simon de Beauvoir is worthy of significance. Her complaint is that woman is not regarded as an autonomous human being. The idea that woman exists in relation to man is what displeases her. That she exists for herself and by herself is what a woman’s history must reveal. It is towards this destiny that all the black women writing is directed.

A big revolution is brought about by a group of writers in changing the traditional roles allotted to women. A mother, a whore, a sex slave, a working machine, dancer, singer were the various capacities in which black women appeared. Mary Helens Washington, Claudia Tate, Deborah E. McDowell, Valerie Smith and Barbara Smith have refuted such tragic pictures of projection of black women. Their endeavour was to create a new vision of black women. Sojourner Truth, Zora Neale Hurston, Margaret Walker, Lorraine Hansbury, Toni Morrison and Alice Walker form a host of women writers who wanted to evolve a new feminine aesthetics, sociology and a healthy life perspective. With them came a new way of looking at women. Woman instead of being regarded as a mere object has been elevated to the status of a subject by such writers. All the three closely
intermingled constituent concepts like race, class and gender were revolutionized. The subject matter of investigation lies in exploring Toni Morrison’s artistic comprehensive handling of art which adds charm to her novels. All her novels are intensely psycho – sociological and so they acquire new force in whatever she talks about by way of race, class and gender.

The word womanism according to Alice Walker addresses itself to the entire race of women irrespective of colour, caste and creed. Walker’s interest in the coinage of the term womanism explains her attempt at indicating the various shades of black behavioural psychology connected with women. Moreover, such a coinage of the term is based on her leanings towards her ethnic disposition which places pressure upon her in creating a total awareness of the plight of African feminism which becomes complete only when it is branded as womanism:

Feminism (all colors) definitely teaches women they are capable, one reason for it’s universal appeal. In addition to this, Womanist (i.e. Black Feminist) tradition assumes, because of our experiences during slavery that Black Women are capable ...I don’t choose womanism because it is better than feminism. Since womanism means Black Feminism this would be a nonsensical distinction. I choose it because I prefer the sound, the feel, the fit of it; because I cherish the spirit of the women
(like Sojourner) the word calls to mind and because I share the old ethnic American habit of offering Society a new word when the word it is using fails to describe behavior and change, that only a new word can help it more fully see. (Walker 27)

A distinction is made between European feminism, African womanism and black feminism. The white feminists want to be free from brutal sexual exploitation of the white men. A long established patriarchal system has made white women subordinate to white men. So the white feminists want equality of opportunity and sexual freedom but the black feminists are obliged under peculiar pressures to evolve the new ideology different from three great evils race, class and gender which oppress the black women very intensely. Therefore, the black feminist ideology otherwise known as womanism, is rooted in their plea for total spiritual freedom. Powell’s remark on the dividing line between white feminism and black feminism is worth quoting:

One of the basic issues that divides feminists is whether they consider the goal to be reform of the present social system or its revolution. And it is one this point that black feminists and the mainstream of the white feminist movement have diverged… (2)
Barbara Smith’s article “Some Home Truths on Contemporary Black Feminist Movement” does not do justice to the race of black women as it dilutes the real tragedy of the black women race. She underplays the significance of the suffering of the black race. It is in such places that a revolutionary counter-discourse to the white feminist’s attempt at diluting the importance of the tragic plight of the black feminists is required. Lorraine Hansberry can be considered as a forerunner. Her statement “I was born black and a female” summarises the entire history of the race of black women. Black feminism is nothing but an expression of education in self – determination. African womanism is a total life perspective of black women who suffer more terribly than the white women. The phrase African womanism is used in order to indicate the intensity of the oppression of the black women. African womanism is a search for a new black feminist ideology. Black women can have their own interpretations of life and reality. Racial domination, class discrimination, and sexual exploitation are problems which beset the life of black women. A total freedom from such perplexing issues is what the black race longs for. The struggle to get complete emancipation from such evils seems to be their effort. In such a struggle the black women race stands alone but they fight with knowledge, awareness and self-realisation. This is the essence of black feminist ideology.
Ancient history shows that the black negro women were treated as subhuman species. They were reduced to the status of animals. They were shown as having no souls. They were also treated as body toys and sex pots. Labour slavery and sex slavery were the two targets for the white masters. The whites encouraged the negro race in the matter of procreation. The black race must go on breeding by multiplying and thereby increasing the population of the black race for the convenience and the service of the white race. This was the hidden agenda of the white race which was later discovered by the blacks who started total resistance movement towards such notions:

As a woman her physical image was defamed and became a target of the white master’s lust… In simple, black women, like other blacks, were believed to be animals, living beings who according to most whites were “without souls, a strange exotic new kind of creature… The Negro woman was brought to America, not out of curiosity but as a slave and to serve as a breeding animal, to procreate more slaves”. (Ranveer 2)

Toni Morrison has attracted the attention of many critics through her vigorous discussion of burning social problems. The most comprehensive is David L. Middleton’s Toni Morrison: An Annotated Bibliography (1987). Critical Essays on Toni Morrison (1988) enlightens her works from various angles, besides giving an overview of Morrison’s literary career and critical responses to it. It is a collection
of eight reviews, two interviews with Morrison and twelve essays about Morrison’s novels. There is an introduction by Nellie Y. McKay, followed by reviews of *The Bluest Eye*, *Sula*, *Song of Solomon* and *Tar Baby* by critics like Ruby Dee, Haskel Frankel, Barbara Smith, Roseann P. Bell, Melvin Dixon, Samuel Allen, Robert G. O. Meally and Valerie A. Smith.

Karla F.C. Holloway and Stephanie A. Demetrakopoulous have brought out *New Dimensions of Spirituality: A Biracial and Bicultural Reading of the Novels of Toni Morrison* (1990). This book has six chapters besides introduction. Each chapter critically examines the novels of Toni Morrison from *The Bluest Eye* to *Tar Baby*. This two authors mention two other critics, Nina Anerbach and Elaine Showalter who plead for a feminist theory based on a model of women’s culture. This book bears a resemblance Miriam Schapiro’s ‘femmage’ which is nothing but a term for collage or assemblage. ‘The Legacy of Voice’ is an important chapter in this book. It is a request for the blacks to return to native voice reflected in language, culture, myth and ancestry.

Wilfred D. Samuels and Clenora Hudson – Weems’ *Toni Morrison* (1990), makes a reference to the literary quest for selfhood and it is taken up as a major theme in contemporary American works. A brief biographical sketch of Morrison finds a place in this book. The literary renaissance created by Phyllis Whatley, Frederick Douglass, Langston Hughes, Richard Wright, Zora Neale
Hurston, Janes Bladwin and Ralph Ellison, is expanded in the novels of Toni Morrison. A new vision of life, search for authentic existence, innovation and experiment, search for self, return to folk tradition are the major themes taken up by the author in each chapter in great depth.

Linden Peach’s *Toni Morrison (1995)* contains nine chapters which deal with a wide variety of issues. Each chapter takes up a novel of Toni Morrison and analyses its significance from an Afro-American point of view. The author shows the intrinsic conflict between Euro-American criticism and African-American scholarship. Resistance to Euro-American literary scholarship is the first condition to view a novel in the context of inequality, racism and social injustice. The last chapter postscript makes a frontal attack upon ethnic absolutism. It’s an awful plea for a new pluralism of racial, ethnic, class, and cultural forms.

*Circles of Sorrow, Lines of Struggle: The Novels of Toni Morrison (1998)* edited by Gurleen Grewel which has a preface and introduction with six chapters. The author speaks of masculinist Eurocentrism and refers to ‘The Death of Literature’ by Alvin Kerman. Care is taken to pick up the theme of internal colonialism. Chapter one projects decolonisation as an antidote to cultural nationalism. The second chapter visualises a new life for the blacks as a freedom’s absent horizon. A return to native heritage is conceived as freedom reflected in the third chapter. The relationship between whites and
blacks is shown by the author as the relationship between Prospero and Caliban. Therefore, the theme of resistance is taken up in the fourth chapter. The institution of slavery and the unspeakability involved in mother’s infanticide reveal the rocking loom of history as discussed by the author in the fifth chapter. The author states that the project of *Beloved* is continued in *Jazz*. The language of music in *Jazz* is described as polyphonic. The author concludes by saying that Jazz music is a soothing consolation for the repressed past. Humanising of the black is projected by the author as one of the major themes in the last chapter.


A critical study of the six novels of Toni Morrison is undertaken in the thesis. The objective is to bring out the possible shades and nuances which Toni Morrison examines in her critical review of the tragic predicament of the black race. Two standpoints and perspectives clearly emerge from a careful investigation of the six novels. There are two themes which get clubbed and intertwined in these novels. Basically, these themes relate themselves to race and gender. Along with these two constituent themes class is also added.

The main question before the novelist is whether the blacks will wake up to the reality of the situation. All the resources of the novelist in gathering the energies in writing these novels come from seeing the degrading of the blacks by the whites. No one should ill-treat anyone. She has felt the necessity to come out with a graphic account of what is happening among the blacks and she also launches into a question of analyzing whether what is happening among the blacks is right or not.

The life of the blacks is the subject matter of the theme of Toni Morrison’s novels. There is no joy and calmness in their life on account of the racial discrimination created by the whites. Under these
circumstances their life becomes very complex. The desire to live a full-fledged life has become impossible for the blacks. Under the domination of the whites who refuse to give full freedom to them, the word ‘complexity’ is used only to denote the failure and struggle of the blacks to have a fulfilling experience. It is this difficulty of living with an attitude of fulfillment which is very closely analysed in the critical review of the six novels. Therefore, the three critical terms womanism, racism and their complexity form a kind of running commentary on the tragic life of the blacks.

Toni Morrison hails from a humble family. Her family was basically a family of migrants. They went to the north in order to escape from the problems of southern racism. Chloe Anthony Wofford, later known as Toni Morrison, the second of four children was born on 18th February, 1931 in a small town in Northern Ohio to George and Rahmah. She changed her name to Toni in order to enable people to pronounce her name easily. She received her M.A. degree in 1955 from Cornell University New York. She had a very chequered career. In 1984 she taught at the University of New York. The publication of her first novel, *The Bluest Eye*, (1970) secured her specific identity. *Sula* appeared in 1974. With the publication of *Song of Solomon* (1977) she became the good narrator of the ancient past. *Tar Baby* appeared in 1981. Then she became a professor at Princeton University in 1988. In 1988, Morrison was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for the novel *Beloved* (1987) followed by

The novelist raises the most fundamental question in The Bluest Eye and it deals with the habits of the blacks which lie in a slavish imitation of the white system of values. What pains her mind is that almost all the blacks do not behave independently but they act under the false inspiration of the white system of values. Liberation from the white mandate is viewed as the only solution for the future of the black race. Pecola is a victim of the white system of values while Claudia is shown as a formidable fighter against the imposition of such values.

In Sula the problem is not with Sula. According to the novelist the crux of the crisis lies in the relation of the black Medallion community with Sula. Sula is a strong and formidable forward looking figure who has an anticipatory glimpse of what the blacks must do in order to become free.

In the third novel Song of Solomon the roots of African heritage are traced. The clue for the black emancipation is suggested through the idea of acquiring wealth and gaining status. A black’s memory of African heritage makes one mature in becoming aware of one’s understanding of one’s own identity. Milkman is a representative example of a black character in whom the spiritual evolution is
projected. The ancient African race had the power of flight. The first Macon Dead was an ideal character and he brought the blacks together and established communal togetherness among them. He earned wealth through hard work and labour. He saw wealth as a means for emancipating the blacks from the white race. He also shared his wealth with his people and united them by his act of love and generosity. Pilate, Milkman's aunt is an embodiment of ideal womanhood. Her function was to awaken Milkman to the roots of his African tradition.

**Tar Baby** is a novel which explains the cultural turmoil and complication in the life of Jadine who is shown as a contemporary black woman whose major struggle was to reconcile herself with the modern materialism.

The three novels **Beloved**, **Jazz** and **Paradise** form a sequence. **Beloved** is the story of a mother killing her own daughter for the purpose of saving her from the horror of slavery. All old slave narratives were not true accounts of their lives according to the novelist. The greater climax in the novel appears in the scene where the white boys suck the breast of Sethe. **Sweet Home** was a home meant to be for the slaves. But the home was not in accordance with the sugar coated title. Horrible accounts of the ill-treatment of the slaves are highlighted in the character of Paul D whose hands and legs were chained and whose mouth and shoulders were smashed by the rifle.
Jazz deals with the assassination of a young girl Dorcas by a married man Joe Trace. The act of killing is prompted by Jazz music. Joe’s dissatisfaction with his wife Violet and relation with Dorcas do not come under any rational system of analysis. His fascination for Dorcas is nothing but a symbolic search for his lost mother. The relation between Joe and Dorcas is a love hate relation. This novel hits upon the idea of aiming at the black liberation through aesthetic independence embodied in Jazz music.

Paradise is nothing but a clear depiction of how blacks fatally discriminated among themselves in terms of coal black colour and brown black colour. The truth is that the blacks are blacks whether they are of coal colour complexion or brown colour shade. The dilemma reaches its height in the founding of two contrasting black communities known as He – Ruby and She – Convent. The binary opposition between male and female is the by – product of the European heritage. A black community to be modelled on that binary opposition is nothing but a death knell to the future salvation of the black race. The black sociology of Morrison carries no trace of Judeo – Christian – European heritage. Dualism between good and evil and man and woman is fundamental to the Judeo – Christian faith. The black religion of magic and mysticism dispenses with the load of Judeo – Christian faith for a black to create an ideal community from the model of a white system is nothing but a self – defeating endeavour. This seems to be the message of the novel Paradise. A
black race to be really free must become culturally, racially free. This purpose can be achieved only by a conscious and active dispossession of the Judeo – Christian – European heritage.

The novel Love is a melodrama of the Cosey family. It is the story of how women are cheated by men. Lust and domination figured prominently. True love was absent. Ill-gotten wealth left a corrupting influence on men and women. Heed and Christine are two female characters who are systematically exploited by men. The title of the novel Love is deliberately projected by Toni Morrison as a misnomer. Lust instead of love had gripped the minds of men and women.


The thesis entitled **The Complexity of African Womanism and Racism in the Novels of Toni Morrison: A Study** is a comprehensive attempt at examining the three issues race, class and gender. There is no separate analysis of anyone of the three issues in the novels of Toni Morison as all the three are simultaneously taken up for close investigation. Lorraine Hansberry, Toni Morrison and Alice Walker share affinity in regard to the examination of the three issues, race, class and gender. But the first two novelists give greater priority to gender and race whereas Toni Morrison takes up the three issues in a web of deep interrelationship.

The first chapter **Black Imitation and Internal Discrimination** deals with the pathetic story of a simple black girl Pecola who endeavours to be as good-looking as the whites in her wish to have bluest eyes. The intensity of grief in Pecola makes her depressingly a tragic girl and a sad woman as she feels that her complexion does not present a close resemblance to the white girl or the white woman. The woman in her being is shaken up by her intense consciousness or awareness of her own ugliness which is born out of a certain inferiority complex. The idea of African womanism is a complex phenomenon because it finds its expression in many forms. The inability of a girl character like Pecola in her attempt at feeling being equal to a black in terms of colour and beauty is a particular portrayal of the tragic state
of an African woman. Therefore, the tragedy of Pecola is the tragedy of a typical African woman whose average perception of life does not liberate the woman from the plight. In a sense, the entire novel is a plea for exploring the complexity of African womanism. Each woman character is typically a complex figure. Both Claudia and Pecola pass through the stage of girlhood. One is timid and submissive but the other is very courageously rebellious. They undergo two totally different experiences. The coinage of the term African Womanism is helpful in explaining the intense psychological sensibility of Pecola and Claudia. Pecola is a typical embodiment of an African woman showing a kind of complete submission to the tragic plight of life. But Claudia’s womanhood is expressed in terms of resistance and fight against the white establishment. The European feminism makes a claim for woman’s freedom but the African womanism is much deeper as it goes beyond the framework of European feminism. For Claudia, freedom is the breath of life. An African woman to be a woman according to Claudia must be certainly a woman of freedom but for them freedom does not only mean liberation from male domination. It means a total emancipation from the white standards of life. It is precisely in this sense the complexity of African womanism is expressed by a character like Claudia.

All the life energies of the little girl Pecola are spent along the line of acquiring the bluest eye to be good looking as the whites. It is an impossible task but what is unattainable remains to be a main
source of attraction for Pecola. The novelist deals with the peculiar black psychology of a girl like Pecola in order to denote how some of the blacks are not fully aware of what they are striving for. Pecola does not know that there is no need for her to have bluest eyes. But the point of the novelist is that the prevailing white system of values proves to be a source of temptation for the blacks. Through Pecola one comes to know the actual state of affairs which prevails among a large section of blacks. While Pecola is a victim of the white system of values, Claudia is shown by the novelist as a strong denouncer of the same system of values imitated by the blacks. There are two incidents in the novel which indicate the theme of imitation of white system of values and the act of opposition to the same system of values. The Dick Jane Reader is the story of a father and mother playing with their children, Jane and Dick. It is a description of a white family shown in a close posture of family relationship. According to the novelist, the Dick Jane Reader is a school Primer which creates a mythology for blacks to accept and imitate. The traditionally established white pattern of family relationship is an undeniable frame of reference for the blacks to organise their family. There is an implication which is hidden in the Dick Jane mythology that the black race is amorphous, structureless and disorganized as far as the question of organizing the family life is concerned.

There are about four characters who move about and draw inspiration from the white pattern of organisation of life. They are
Maureen Peel, Geraldine, Louis Junior and Soaphead Church. These four characters claim superiority to the other blacks on the basis of their being slightly brownish in colour. For instance, Maureen Peel and Pecola are school mates. Pecola likes Maureen Peel but Maureen Peel hates Pecola. This hatred of Maureen is born out of a superiority complex. She even goes to the extent of cautioning and advising Claudia to avoid the twenty first street and move along a different line. The feeling of Maureen Peel is that so inferior a being like Claudia should not be seen walking in her street. One wonders along with Toni Morrison whether such a behaviour of a black ill - treating another black is an acceptable phenomenon or not. Actually this phenomenon of a black claiming superiority to another black on the basis of his slight different brown skin and thereby degrading another black is actually known as internalized racism. Geraldine is a black woman who advises her son Louis Junior not to move and play with black children. She goes to the extent of saying that avoiding the company of black children should be the life mission of Louis Junior. It is this aspect which distresses the mind of the novelist when she is reviewing the lives of the blacks in her novels for their betterment. Soaphead Church being born in a mixed family of blacks and whites practises the life of a clergyman. But he is not a real clergyman because he wants to have illicit sexual relationship with little girls. He has no sympathy for the blacks although he is a black.
When the issue of black liberation arises, one has to move with the subconsciously hidden statement of Toni Morrison that the blacks must first free themselves from the blacks as there are peculiarly ill-conceived notions of racial superiority which seem to be ironically prevailing among the blacks themselves. The idea of black liberation from the whites comes only after the eradication of internalised racism.

The gender question is a deeper question for the novelist to answer because the tragedy of Pecola is the tragedy of being a woman who remains unfree in her mental and intellectual state. This novel is noteworthy for another important trait which critics like Lacan call inter-generational mirror. Doing what has been done by the elders in the past is the source of inspiration for every black character. To follow a particular line of thinking which has been in traditional existence for many centuries appears like a mirror which reflects mechanically the past events. There are two characters involved in the situation. One is the white who is a reflector of impression and the other is the black who is a recipient of impression. Therefore, the reflector - recipient relationship is comparable to the colonial idea of domination-subordination theme. What Pauline’s mother and Pauline Breedlove did is a frame of guidance for Pecola. Transmission of values from one generation to another is what is known as inter-generational mirror which indicated such problems prevailed among black women. Therefore, the tragic plight of women is connected with
such attitude of slavish imitation of the white system of values which has over-powered black women. The novelist has occasions to discuss questions of black womanhood and the black motherhood.

The helplessness of Pecola and her instability in being a free black woman come from her sentimental attachment to the white system of values. Pauline Breedlove is very happy about endorsing the white system of values. There is enthusiasm in Pauline in such consciously held attitude. But in Pecola there is apathy because she is unsure of anything.

The British doctor’s comment on African women delivering children right away with no pain like horses is an example to show how the black race is very much disliked by the whites. There are three views in regard to the black African American woman. The traditional black African attitude to woman is that a woman must be a bearer of all kinds of family burden. This view is unacceptable to Toni Morrison because it reduces woman to the level of a beast. The white American view of black motherhood is a racially prejudiced view whereas the white American view of idealistic woman is not relevant to Toni Morrison as it has nothing to do with the ideal conception of a free black woman.

The second chapter depicts Black Conservatism and Sula’s Radicalism. The novel Sula is a telling example of the novelist’s fundamental attitude which gets entangled in her view of an ideal
black woman. Again, the two basic concepts, race and gender, operate with equal force in this novel. A careful reading of the novel leads to the conclusion that there are two views hidden in the novel portraying a conflict between the Medallion black community unquestioningly following the white pattern of life and a character like Sula openly challenging such an act of slavish imitation of an unfamiliar pattern of life which is not at all related to the black race. The novelist brings with great vitality and life the attitude of the white race exploiting the black race. The pity is that no black is alive to this tragic plight of exploitation of the whites except Sula.

The novel Sula contains a prelude which gives an excellent criticism of Toni Morrison in commenting on the atrocity of the white race. The nigger episode is a clear demonstration of the basic character of white race which lies in the victimisation of the blacks. A nigger and a white master enter into a contract. The term of the contract is that if the nigger finishes the work allotted to him by the white master in time, he will in return get the bottom land. The term of the contract is fulfilled but the nigger to his surprise gets the land in the valley instead of the bottom land as promised by the white master. The nigger is deeply disappointed. When he reveals his displeasure to the white master the nigger is appeased by a round about reasoning method. The master continues to argue that the land given by him in the hills becomes bottom land when God looks from above. The bottom land is in the bottom and the hill land is in the hill and one will
not become the other whatever might be the reasoning offered in justification of the argument. The white master applies a new system of logic to convince the nigger that when God views things from above, the hill land will appear to Him as a bottom land. But to the nigger the hill land appears only as hill land because he views things from below. The slave knows that the logic of the white master is nothing but an intellectual trick to convince him. The novelist keeps her focus upon this nigger episode in order to highlight what the white does and how a black remains helpless in the face of injustice. Though the novel starts with a powerful description of this nigger episode, it is nothing but a caustic analysis of the ruthless racial exploitation of the blacks by the whites.

But this theme does not get extended in the rest of the novel although it remains as a deep undercurrent in the unfolding of the problem of the confrontation between Sula and the black community. There is an obvious shift in the emphasis of the novelist from race to gender. The two categories are inextricable. The most urgent problem before the novelist is to show a revolution which is required to awaken the black community to the idea of black human freedom. Roughly speaking, there are five characters who figure very prominently in the novel Eva, Hannah, Sula, Nel and Helene Wright. They are the five women characters whom Sula very much distinguishes herself from. Sula differs from both men and women in the Medallion black community. The basic structural unit of life is family relationship. The
most important integral part of family life lies in marriage. In regard to this question, the black race has agreed to follow whatever notion of family life is imposed upon them by the whites. In this respect, the blacks remain uncritical and they are fully unaware of the real idea of human freedom. Eva, grandmother of Sula is abandoned by her husband Boy Boy. Eva deliberately loses her leg putting it on the railway track in order to earn a huge insurance amount for the purpose of running the family. For Eva, family is a unit which needs to be nursed at the cost of any risk. This is an attitude of heroism. Eva kills her son Plum unable to bear the sight of his moral degeneration. This act is an example of her belief in a traditionally rooted morality. Sula remains very much inattentive to such questions like taking risk for family life and killing children in the name of preserving morality. In one realm of jurisdiction Eva’s act of self-sacrifice and killing Plum are considered heroic because they all come from a deep noble human emotion. But Sula placed in juxtaposition with Eva is radically different and her problem is seen in analysing how the black community is immersed in a blind imitation of the white system of values. Eva is a deeply traditional woman. Taking care of family is her life breathe. She is not alive to revolutionary ideas of rebellion. Her existence is for the family welfare. All her life is rooted in traditional ways. Sula is completely the opposite of her grandmother Eva. While Eva lacks power to fight against the traditionally established system of thinking, Sula develops a new critical perception to discover that a new life is
possible for the blacks only when they develop a different way of seeing life and reality.

Sula is very different from her own mother Hannah but Eva is a traditionally morally oriented woman who will treat sexual promiscuity as a sin whereas Hannah believes that sexual freedom is a source of pleasure. But at the same time Hannah is not for breaking the established pattern of life which is formulated by the whites and simultaneously endorsed by the blacks. Sula is anti-traditional, in that, she looks upon sexual freedom as a most important character of womanhood. Both Eva and Hannah believe in a regulated family life while Sula follows the line of resisting all such established patterns of life. Sula is of the opinion that the black race is not mentally and intellectually free. Her revolutionary attitude paves way for a new vision and it is only a plea for making a long preparation to make the black realise the need for their freedom. The return of Sula to the Medallion after a long absence of ten years is looked upon by the black community as an evil omen. The superstitious remedy adopted by the blacks to circumvent the ill–omen which ensues upon the return of Sula, is seen in their act of placing the broom–stick before the house. The novelist in almost a concealed way argues that for the black race to remain in the state of superstition is not at all a healthy state of affairs. Everyone shuns the company of Sula. Their deliberate avoidance of Sula indicates the fear that the very sight or any contact or association with her will lead to curse. She is really pained to see
that her own race is caught in the quagmire of superstition and blind belief. Two instances suffice to prove how Sula becomes a great revolutionary woman. A heated conversational dialogue is presented between Eva and Sula. It is a debate about marriage. For Eva marriage is an arrangement made by parents. But for Sula the option of the individual must be taken as a deciding factor. To decide marriage by parental agreement alone looks absurd and unconvincing to Sula. Therefore, she says that her grandmother’s option for her marriage was not her own option. It was imposed upon Eva by her parents. This is a tragic affair to Sula because a marriage without the bride’s option is equal to slavery.

The traditional reading of the Bible prompts Eva to caution Sula when she goes to the extent of saying that God will strike at her for her act of disobedience. But Sula’s reply is a fitting answer to Eva. The question before Sula is why God should strike at her when the same God remains silent and indifferent to Plum being burnt. Sula’s question carries no import obviously as it is unanswerable. It is in this respect Sula becomes a revolutionary black woman who responds to every question and issue of life by subjecting the blacks to severe scrutiny and investigation.

The third chapter is concerned with the crucial issue of *Tribal Heritage and Black Emancipation*. The novel *Song of Solomon* is preoccupied with a pertinent question which is connected with the issue of the freedom of the black race. Gender becomes a
subordinate theme which has only a secondary role to play. In no other novel is the issue of the racial problem dealt with in so much length as in this novel *Song of Solomon*. The novel is a close description of a particular black family which has flourished economically. The origin of the novel comes from a sensible and meaningful black character known by name the first Macon Dead. According to the novelist, he is the most ideal blackman who lived upon this earth with meaning and purpose. The philosophy of the first Macon Dead is the most moving part of the novel in which his rich experience and deep perceptions become great lessons in human life for any black to imitate and follow. But so little space is devoted to so much a great man who has become the beacon light for the entire black race. Although the three issues race, gender and class are interconnected only one or two issues are found in prominence. There seems to be a simultaneous juxtaposition between race and class. The first Macon Dead is a close adherent to the philosophy of economic freedom. He has seen that it is only economic prosperity which has enabled the whites to keep the blacks under their subordination and treat them as servants and workers. He has felt that wealth controls the functioning of people in gaining prominence in the society. Therefore, he has distinguished himself by acquiring wealth through hard work. It is his firm faith that black human freedom should be based upon gaining economic freedom. Loss of economic freedom is identical with loss of human freedom. The first Macon Dead has lived nobly but his wealth has never left a corrupting influence on him.
The coexistence of wealth and nobility in the character of the first Macon Dead should be taken as the greatest example for any black to emulate and follow and live by. Magnanimity, charity, kindness and sharing wealth with others are some of the traits which are found in such a noble character. The sum and substance of the philosophy of the first Macon Dead is that wealth is a means to an end. The first Macon Dead’s son the second Macon Dead remains irresponsible to the racial question as against his father who was keenly alive to it. What the son failed to realize from his father was that wealth is a means through which the black race can gain freedom from the white race. It is indeed a worthwhile suggestion arrived at by the first Macon Dead after a long experience of brooding and reflection. His is a way of life in which nobility and virtue flourished. His accumulation of wealth without attachment to it but with a motive of gaining economic freedom from the white race can be treated as an acceptable scheme of life. The tragedy begins with his son who ignores his father’s way of life. He starts ill-treating his own people without any warmth and affection for them. His sister has separated herself from him as his way of life is ignoble and therefore unacceptable to her. The whites were in the habit of killing those black people who come to prominence by gaining wealth through hard work. One such victim of killing was the first Macon Dead. This historical fact has led his two children the second Macon Dead and Pilate to move from the south to the north. South was the home of the Macon Dead’s family where the ancestors of the first Macon Dead were gifted with the power of
flying. The novelist concentrates all her energies on the portions of the
south tradition which carries a rich history of African heritage in which
magic healing capacity for flying and worshipping of trees and
mountains as spirits were the innate gifts of the black race. Therefore,
one knows along with the novelist that the black race has carried a
rich heritage of culture which places them on the pedestal of
prominence. There are two themes in the novel. One is the search for
the lost gold and the other is the quest for the spiritual evolution of
Milkman, son of the second Macon Dead.

Milkman bears a close resemblance to his grandfather unlike
his father. But his state of immaturity is revealed in his aping the white
pattern of life, his love of wearing watch, his preference for dress and
shoes are indications of his imitative habits. The question of racial
freedom appears filled with different approaches in comparison and
contrast with two characters namely Milkman and Guitar. Seven Day
Killing known as “Seven Days” (i.e. a black killing a white on each day
of the week as a mark of retaliation of the whites killing the blacks),
has come to be known as a resistance movement by the blacks to get
rid of the whites who eliminate the blacks by killing. Guitar has been
brought up in this tradition of Seven Days. Milkman does not
subscribe to this ideology of Seven Days. He has wisdom to realize
that killing and counter killing can never be accepted as a solution for
achieving a social remedy in regard to the racial question. It becomes
now clear that the novelist conducts the debate on the question of
racial freedom in the clash between two points of views represented by Guitar and Milkman. The only two characters who conform to the specification of the first Macon Dead are Pilate and Milkman. Both are concerned with human problems in which racial questions do not acquire priority. Man must grow into independence and he must evolve into perfection. This view seems to be the motive force in the character of Pilate. Here is seen a shift from the racial question to the question of character formation. For Pilate character formation of Milkman is more fundamental than any other racial question.

That a black must live a noble way of life seems to be more important than anything else for Pilate. It is this perspective which brings about a change in the focus of the direction of the novelist. The ultimate purpose of life for Milkman as far as Pilate is concerned is to become a noble man like his grandfather. Pilate feels that life becomes worthwhile when Milkman is brought into contact with the south and when memories of his grandfather's way of living are kindled in him. Other minor characters First Corinthians and Magdelene are of subordinate importance. The main focus is upon the first Macon Dead, Milkman and Pilate. These are the three black characters who provide unfailing inspiration and enthusiasm to the blacks in their way of life.

The fourth chapter deals with the theme of **Slavery and Aesthetic Independence**. The novel *Beloved* is based on the powerful account of how slavery existed in the past. Toni Morrison
mourns that all the available historical records dealing with the theme of slavery are largely prejudiced and therefore they are not true to the facts of life. The entire western historiography according to the novelist did not go deep into the actual historical facts connected with slavery. Idealisation was one of the methods of art and so all the historical accounts in the view of the novelist are modified ones. A real research investigation is conducted by the novelist in order to get at real facts. This enterprise has ended in the recapturing of the account of the historical story of Margaret Garner who has adopted a peculiar method of planning to kill her children in order to save them from the atrocity of slavery. Almost all slaves were treated as sub-human beings. This is the main spring for the novelist to put in a rational form the story of Sethe who kills her child named Beloved. No Western history has ever dealt with this gruesome fact concerned with slavery. Therefore, according to the novelist, all the western texts are unauthentic accounts of slavery. The novel Beloved is an attempt at reconstructing the actual account of slavery. The story of the novel is a moving one as it involves the tragedy of a mother killing her own child. This act of the mother establishes a concrete historical fact that death is preferable to slavery. There is an element of humour when the picture of Sweet Home is projected before the reader for analysis. It is a home run by the Garners who are very good-natured people. Their benign treatment of the slaves makes the home sweet. But when the caretaker, Schoolteacher takes charge of the home along with his nephews, Sweet Home becomes sour home. The greatest
tragic scene in the novel is depicted in the form of a white young boy sucking the breast of Sethe. Halle, her husband is helplessly witnessing the scene. Another equally horrid scene is a jail where Paul D is subjected to an ignominious low level sexual treatment. Moreover, all the slaves are shown to be chained. Unable to bear the atrocity and body pain innumerable slaves committed suicide by jumping into the sea. Whatever may be the conception of the narrative art popularised by the white race, the novelist lodges a protest against all kinds of false endeavours which the Western concept of history creates.

There is no truth in the historical text dealing with slavery created by the white race. The novel Beloved is only an attempt at capturing many true facts ignored and glossed over by the western colonial text. The most moving moment in the novel lies in the sermon delivered by the preacher, Baby Suggs who is an ideal black character who longs for an intensely united black gathering. The only way to ensure the liberation of the black race according to the preacher lies in the unified internal gathering of the blacks. The novelist dismisses a misconception that slavery is a divine curse in the second epigraph to the novel. The Bible pronounces a curse upon the Jewish race for their misbehaviour. The black race cannot be equated with the Jewish race (in the biblical episode) because the black race is the victim of slavery. But there is a remote hint in the Christian episode that God will one day establish justice on earth. This message brings relief to
the novelist that the black race will be suitably rewarded by God one day.

**Jazz** deals with the same theme of slavery but with a difference in perspective. The migration of the slaves from the South to the North has made many blacks rich. The greatest aesthetic expression of the black race lies in the creation of jazz music. The origins of Africa and its actual nativity are akin to jazz music. It creates an exhilaration in the emotions instead of silence in them. Western classical music bases itself on certain forms of tranquillity and sobriety. The question with the novelist is why the Africans should follow a music which is not native to them. The novelist is emboldened to see in the movement of jazz music a particular aspect of a soul of the black race. Unfortunately this kind of jazz music is connected with the murder of a lady love Dorcas by a married male love partner Joe Trace. The actual killing is brought out in an atmosphere of music. The Harlem Renaissance is a kind of culmination in the achievement of the black race in the field of jazz music. Toni Morrison clearly proves that the murder scene is prompted by jazz music. Even then the human condition of the black in the wake of recently gained freedom brought by jazz music is what is emphasised. The novelist does not claim that the blacks are totally error free. They are like any other race capable of being influenced by emotions. Along with this theme a subordinate idea of unhappy motherhood is also emphasised. Joe’s tragedy stems from this fact. Alice Manfred sternly opposes jazz music on the ground
of puritan leanings. She dislikes jazz music but later on admits that its value is undeniable. The awakening of the black race to their freedom is rooted through this jazz music. This is the only novel in which the aesthetic freedom of the black race is emphasised. It is an important thesis with the novelist that the racial freedom has to come through this channel of aesthetic freedom. The jazz music gives a rare chance and an important education in the emotional integration of the black race. One of the worthwhile ways to strengthen the unity of the black race is by exposing them to the native music of their own. Although it has harmful repercussions and side effects, jazz music and its value cannot be ignored. The novelist treats jazz music as a kind of spiritual healing to the black race. Moreover, it is the group - togetherness which the jazz music encourages and which the blacks need for their survival. No doubt, the black race has to achieve their internal emotional freedom through this kind of aesthetic expression of music. There is no doubt that there is an ingathering of the entire human spectrum in this music carnival. It is this fact which becomes more noteworthy for the novelist in the analysis of jazz music.

The fifth chapter Androgyneity and Human Unity deals with the novel Paradise which is a serious novel as it depicts a particular strain in human nature which tends to separate the black race from their own brethren. In the narration of the migration of the ex-slaves the interest of the novelist is to highlight how the light coloured blacks in the land called Fairly refuse to accommodate the coal–coloured
migrated ex-slaves. A certain irony is revealed which shows that the escape of the ex-slaves from the whites does not seem to be a real escape. When the blacks (coal–coloured) make an appeal to the blacks (light – skinned) there seems to be no response to their appeal. Toni Morrison has already dealt with such a phenomenon known as Internalised racism. The land called Fairly does not seem to be fair in dealing with the blacks because there the light-skinned blacks drive away the coal- coloured blacks who have later called themselves eight-rocks. For them the first escape is from the whites and the second escape is from the light-skinned blacks. Therefore, these ex-slaves create a new settlement called Haven near Oklahoma. Three important principles go in to the making of Haven. The ex-slave black community is specifically made for a black male cultural settlement. Women have no place in the new habitat. They make it a point to avoid contacts with other blacks. Their major work in Haven is to convert it into a new paradise on the lines of the American idea of creating a new social and political Haven. The black male ideology leads to the creation of a second generation black male settlement known as Ruby. The purpose of the novelist is to highlight a major error committed by the African race in the creation of two settlements Haven and Ruby. The novel is almost a kind of satire on the black male monolithic cultural settlement. The distinction of the European civilisation lies in the creation of a monolithic cultural civilisation imbued with racial identity. The black male community in Haven and Ruby commits the same mistake which the whites have perpetrated.
The standpoint of the novelist must be made very clear that a black novelist need not attack a black cultural settlement. It is evident that the novelist has no sympathy for the same African race who commits the same mistake previously committed by the whites. The question with the novelist is as to why the blacks should imitate the whites even in the creation of an ideal cultural settlement. Therefore, the novelist is of the view that the African race should not be spared from criticism. In a way the novel is powerfully criticising the excessive enthusiasm of the Africans in following a way of cultural settlement established by the whites. Actually, the black male cultural settlement in Haven and Ruby is nothing but a self-willed and self-embraced imprisonment. A new civilisation is planned to be created by Haven and Ruby. Unfortunately, the African plan has no originality of its own. The very new plan of the African race in Haven and Ruby is borrowed from the whites. This is the turning point which becomes a kind of irony in the unfolding of the theme of the novel. The novelist has nearly reached a conclusion that imitation in any form is suicide. It is really funny when the novel comes with two terms He-Ruby and She-Convent. This is nothing but mounting a very powerful attack on male-female dichotomy which has reached its tragic heights in Ruby and Convent. A male in Ruby is a threat to a female in the Convent. The He-Ruby embarks upon committing mass killing in the She-Convent. This is nothing but a picture of atrocity to show that the blacks become much worse than the whites in their treatment of women. Ill-treatment of women is different from elimination of women by killing. The novelist
concludes in the novel that ill-treatment of women is a serious error and killing of women in the name of hating female sex is a greater sin.

For the first mistake which is committed by the white feminism has become a counter thesis and for the second mistake which is committed by the blacks, womanism has become a greater counter-thesis. The novelist indulges in a wistful creation of black male cultural settlement in order to demonstrate how the black race condescended to a low level of imitation. The novel is nothing but an imaginative depiction of how the male blacks look down upon the female blacks. In course of time the Convent blooms forth from a monolithic cultural settlement into a multicultural settlement.

This dissertation analyses the fundamental question of the black freedom. The three enslaving forces race, class and gender are reviewed critically and they are placed in the proper perspective. A close textual analysis is made to capture the essence of the genius of the novelist with very relevant corroborating secondary sources. The relationship of race, class and gender and the complication arising out of an interaction between the three entities and a resolution and reconciliation find their place in the thesis entitled: **The Complexity of African Womanism and Racism in the Novels of Toni Morrison: A Study.**
The position of Toni Morrison as a novelist is unique. She is deeply concerned with the welfare of the blacks but she does not spare any efforts or pains to criticise the behavioural shortcomings and limitations of the blacks. If she criticises the blacks mercilessly, it is because she loves them really. It is from this standpoint that her portrayal of character and incident must be analysed. The most important function of the novelist is to indicate the peculiar psychological frame of the blacks. Roughly four or five characters are placed in simultaneous juxtaposition with each other. In fact one can call such a portrayal an excellent character gallery. What these characters do to each other is what primarily matters to the novelist. A pronounced attitude is seen in the blacks who distinguish themselves from the other blacks on the basis of their acceptance of the white paradigm of values. Consequently, such characters look down upon other black characters claiming superiority over them exclusively on the ground of an imitation of a white mandate. There is little realisation in them to know whether they are right in adopting an alien standard to condemn and turn down their own brethren. A marvellous game of trick is played by the novelist in creating situations where the blacks are critical of the blacks.
It is a fine piece of art to watch the novelist manifesting the relations and the interactions between five sets of characters: Pauline – Pecola, Geraldine – Louis Junior, Maureen Peal – Pecola, Soaphead Church – Claudia – Frieda and Cholly – Darlene.

What the novelist does with these characters is something which a black sociologist must watch and notice carefully. A particular cross-section of what one can call black psychology or black sociology can be culled out from the vivid description of these characters. The condemnation of the blacks by the blacks and the hatred of the whites for the blacks are interesting to note.

The main purpose of Toni Morrison lies in representing the complicated problems of the black race. The major thrust in her novels shows her interest in discovering the actual depressing relations between the blacks and the whites. The sufferings and humiliation of the blacks in the face of the white European cultural imperialism puts her mind in a deep state of anguish. Her novels without exception express a deep concern for the blacks who are almost treated as sub-human beings. It is no doubt that Toni Morrison wants every black to wake up to the reality of the situation. A deep awareness of what is happening to them is very important for many blacks who live in total ignorance. The novelist’s motive is not to suggest solutions and panacea but to highlight the problem which has reduced them to the level of mules. She thinks that to make the blacks become alive to
their actual problem is the greatest service that a black novelist can do for the race. It is fact-finding and not problem-solving so far her endeavour as a novelist is concerned. An intelligent investigation of what is happening to the blacks engages Toni Morrison’s immediate attention.

The novel *The Bluest Eye* begins with a traditionally established and a well-known description of the Dick-Jane Mythology pointing out the nature of a well-ordered family. The following passage brings out the white cultural frame of cultural reference for human behaviour and conduct:

Here is the house. It is green and white. It has a red door. It is very pretty. Here is the family. Mother, Father, Dick, and Jane live in the green-and–white house. They are very happy. See Jane. She has a red dress. She wants to play. Who will play with Jane? See the cat. It goes meow-meow. Come and play. Come play with Jane. The kitten will not play. See Mother. Mother is very nice. Mother, will you play with Jane? Mother laughs. Laugh, Mother, laugh. See Father. He is big and strong. Father, will you play with Jane? Father is smiling. Smile, Father, Smile. See the dog. Bowwow goes the dog. Do you want to play with Jane? See the dog run. Run, dog, run. Look, look. Here comes a friend. The friend will play
with Jane. They will play a good game. Play, Jane, play.

*(THE BLUEST EYE 1).*

The following critical passage is cited from Linden Peach:

> In its preface, which provides an introduction to some of the chapters, extracts from a Dick-Jane American primer present a standardised, white American family embracing Euro-American views of beauty and happiness (24).

The opening passage in the novel about the Dick-Jane Reader gives a clue to the novelist’s treatment of the theme of racism and complexity in human relationship. The Dick-Jane Reader is a book filled with simple sentences and it is a description of a coherently organised family with Mother, Father, Dick and Jane. Jane wants to play with the mother. The mother is nice but when the question of mother playing with Jane comes the mother simply laughs and she does not want to play with Jane. Jane wants to play with the father and the same question is put to the father whether he will play with Jane. The response is no better than that of her mother. It shows that Jane’s interest to play with father and mother remains unfulfilled although both are said to be nice. Toni Morrison does not do without purpose when she puts the Dick Jane Reader in the opening passage of the novel which can be taken as a comment on the values of the whites. So much is said in so little a paragraph that one has to bring out the hidden meaning with lot of critical effort. It involves some
familiarity with the European history. So long as the medieval Catholic civilization was the moving force in European life it was not externalised or formalised.

Real family relationship in its depth prevailed obviously among the whites according to the Dick Jane Reader. It is a satire on the white family human relationship. A certain amount of historical knowledge is required to explain the element of irony in the Dick Jane Reader. It must be taken as a reference to a life of sophistication which was practised by the whites after the advent of the Renaissance. So long as Christianity unified the European life it made everything wholesome affair. After the Renaissance and the Enlightenment, life came to be dominated by science and technology and as a result the entire Christian way of life is given up and a pattern of life influenced by science and technology came into existence. After the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries, life was measured in scientific, materialistic and technological terms. It is worthwhile to know historically that science and technology gave an added impetus to the supremacy of the white European culture. Imperialism and Colonialism combined with science and technology gave a new white mandate which meant that the white race is the leader and the negroid race are the followers of the white race. Such a view never prevailed in the medieval Catholic Europe. What happened after the Renaissance and the Enlightenment was something fatal to the very survival of human life. A shallow understanding of life based on
science and technology without any inner awakening became the basis for artificial cultural pattern.

Therefore, the Dick Jane Reader is a reference to a pattern of family life which the whites introduced after the Renaissance. The idea of the white racial domination was clearly mooted out only after this. Two important lessons can be drawn from the Dick-Jane Reader. There is an apparently organised family with father, mother, Dick and Jane. There is the presence of sophistication without any element of love. Jane’s question requires profound sympathy to understand. But a civilisation influenced by science and technology and a way of life uninfluenced by human love and sympathy can never be a model for anyone. Apparently, things look very fine in the description of the family relationship portrayed in the Dick Jane Reader. But the watchful and critical eye of Morrison will see in that things are not fine and nice. They are apparently nice but they are not really nice. Because real relationship is nourished by the springs of love and sympathy and the Dick Jane Reader chances to miss it.

Toni Morrison shows her brilliance in indicating to the black readers the white frame of cultural reference, which according to her is embodied in the “Dick Jane Mythology”. The unwillingness of parents to attend to a child who loves to play is something which looks very peculiar. A surface reading of the Dick Jane Reader may apparently seem to capture the spirit of family togetherness and cohesiveness.
But what Toni Morrison wants is a critical reading of the Dick-Jane reader. There is a reference to a dog which shows the white man’s attraction which is nothing but a symbol for social sophistication. It can be even said that the mythology contains a concealed allegory. The parents turning away from the child may be symbolic of the whites turning a blind eye to the actual welfare of the blacks. Allegorically, in the Dick Jane episode the child is apparently alienated from the parents who are not satisfying the desire of the child to play. This description of alienation remains as an undercurrent in the description of the episode but this Dick Jane Reader is projected by the whites to all including the blacks as an ideal way of life to be followed. Toni Morrison employs a different kind of deconstructive reading to bring out the hidden implications of what the whites think about the blacks and how they should organise their life in a servile manner. The mythology is very simple but Toni Morrison is very clever in her analysis because what the mythology meant to the white is one thing and what it meant to the black is another thing. It indicates clearly an organised behaviour pattern laid down by the whites which should be followed by the blacks and the rest of the race. The novelist thinks very deeply about the Dick-Jane mythology and she arrives at a conclusion that it is no longer a term of reference for the blacks as they have their culture of their own, which, if they realise, can furnish an equally enduring pattern of life for them. The mythology by itself does not belittle any human conduct. What it shows is a regulated
behaviour pattern. The episode according to Toni Morrison, contains a concealed strategy to keep the blacks in a state of permanent intellectual, mental and physical slavery. This is a truth to be deciphered by a kind of unconventional and critical reading. Therefore, Toni Morrison says that the same regulated behaviour pattern need not be followed by the blacks, however wonderful and excellent the Dick-Jane mythology might be.

The novelist projects the actual problem of the novel in the form of a concealed dialogue and debate between Claudia and Frieda on the one hand and Pecola on the other. Pecola is raped by her father Cholly and subsequently abandoned. It is this desolate situation which drives Pecola to the loving embrace and shelter of Claudia and Frieda. All the three are not of the same age. The purpose of the novelist is to highlight the complexity of racial problems in the light of these three characters. One aspect of the racial problem is whether one should follow the system established by the whites or one should become critical of it. Pecola is a follower of white ideal while the other two wish to be leaders among the blacks by resisting the whites. For Claudia the problem of Pecola is artificial. Somehow, Pecola feels discouraged about her own physical complexion and beauty. Her only wish in life is to have blue eyes. The novelist conveys the same message that an average black girl like Pecola is unable to liberate herself from the white conception of beauty although she registers her sympathy for Pecola. She intelligently creates another character Claudia through
whom she disapproves of what Pecola has done. But the attitude of Claudia and Frieda is one of kindness and benevolence in their relation to Pecola. Claudia throws an open challenge to the system of the whites by breaking the white doll. The distinct identity of the black as a black can never be realized so long as a person remains servile like Pecola. There is vigour in her criticism of the whites in the doll breaking incident. The doll represents symbolically the white system of values. Claudia breaking the doll is to be understood as her special way of opposing the white pattern of life. The white woman loves a doll which is inanimate. But she does not love the blacks who are animated human beings. It is an irony. Therefore, for Claudia, the white's love of doll is a symbol of vanity and vainglorious attachment. The act of breaking the doll is a satirical hit at the social vanity of the whites revealed in their love of doll. So breaking the doll is comparable to Claudia’s symbolic act of demolishing the white system of values. It is after all a symbolic gesture on the part of the novelist to show the awakening of the blacks to the actual situation in which the blacks are slavishly imitating the whites. Pecola’s behaviour carries a movement which according to Claudia goes deeper. But anyway the novelist establishes a perspective through Pecola that some black women are unable to emancipate themselves from the white hallucination.

A sympathetic understanding of the family antecedents of Cholly Breedlove is an essential part in the analysis of the depression found in his character. His parentage is a mystery and his upbringing
is an accident. The only traceable character who befriended Cholly is Jimmy. The sexual perversion found in the character of Cholly is partly attributable to his peculiar character maker. The most abominable moment in the life of Cholly is to have raped his own daughter Pecola. This is a case of abnormal sexual behaviour which amounts to incest. What is important in this incident is that Cholly has no faith in anything. Moreover, he is deeply imbued with inferiority complex and his poverty and the unscientific sanitation around him throw light on his mental makeup. He thinks very low of himself and is traditionally conditioned to think high of the whites. He is not able to liberate himself from this complex which makes him move along a line of mental humiliation. The novelist by portraying a character of this type drives home the point that the state of affair in a black society is not only appalling but also degrading to the human mind. For Cholly to evolve into a new dimension is nearly a utopia which means that such an evolution is an unrealisable and unattainable idea.

The parentage of Cholly is a mystery. It is this unknown parentage which makes the character behave like a maniac. Obviously, according to the details provided by the novelist Cholly’s mother wanted to abandon the child. Textually, Cholly’s mother wrapped him in a pair of blankets and was about to throw it by covering a piece of paper on the body. Cholly’s aunt Jimmy happens to see this and the child was saved. Cholly’s knowledge of his parents is obscure. Moreover, he is literally thrown into the world as an
orphan. First, he is a black and as a black he is depressed and despondent, and second, he is an orphan and so the dependency and depression get intensified. There is utter lawlessness in his behaviour. Two incidents surround the life of Cholly. One is when he is found cohabiting with Darlene. The whites in a sarcastic manner embolden him to carry out the sexual act in a more vigorous manner than it is done by him. Cholly instead of blaming the whites for their unwarranted interference charges Darlene with the acquisition that she was entirely responsible for the sexual mismanagement. Cholly did not have the courage to point to the whites to mind their business. This proves an important fact that a black character like Cholly does not have the courage of conviction to put the white characters in their place. On the other hand, he found fault with Darlene who was willing to be an accomplice in the sexual act. Moreover, Cholly thinks very low of himself and very high of the whites. The reason is that he does not have a critical mind to review and re-examine what is happening to the blacks. His perspective is that a black has been reduced to the position of a slave and it is difficult for a black to emancipate himself from this tragic conviction or conception created by the whites for centuries.

The main question with the novelist is whether the blacks can live as blacks with self-respect and dignity without dependence on the white mandate. The novelist knows that the issue is simple but the solution involves a complex awareness on the part of the blacks to
know the actual state of affairs. The peculiar situation according to the novelist is that the black happens to be the greatest enemy of the blacks instead of the white being an enemy of the black. This situation according to the novelist must be reversed. It is in this move that Toni Morrison creates situations where characters like Pecola and Darlene are shown to be at fault. A verdict is delivered by Toni Morrison that the blacks are their own grave-diggers because of the ill-treatment of the blacks with the help of the white mandate. The truth projected in these episodes is that internal damage (black ill-treating the black) is much greater and much worse than external damage (white ill-treating the black) which comes from an alien source. Toni Morrison frankly admits the facts and points out that the enemies for the blacks are not outside the black racial context but they are inside the black frame of reference. Instead of the black characters resisting the imposition of the white mandate upon the blacks, they delight themselves in paining the blacks without knowing that they are blinding their own eyes with their fingers.

An attempt is made by Toni Morrison in the novel The Bluest Eye to demonstrate how Pecola, the heroine of the novel, yields herself to become a victim of the Dick Jane mythology. The opening pages of the novel subscribe to a telling comment on the behaviour pattern of the whites. Pecola somehow unconsciously imbibes this white behaviour pattern as a model to be adopted in her life.
Pecola becomes a problem to herself because she wants her life to be in tune with the white standards of beauty and dignity. The peculiar predicament with her is that she lives under the illusion that whiteness is an index of physical beauty. Linden Peach throws light on the complexity of black colour and its association with ugliness in the passage given below:

Beauty is as much a political as an aesthetic concept whilst ugliness is not merely a matter of appearance; it is a manifestation in Western thinking of an inner ugliness, a spiritual and moral failure, if not an innate evil. (24)

This is a sorry phenomenon which is distressing to the mind of the novelist. The actual intention of the novelist is to create a character like Pecola and make her live like a victim of the white ideal of beauty. Is Pecola right? This is the main question which is not directly stated by the novelist in her novel but it is hinted at very carefully. What happens to Pecola is a particular problem of a black girl who is caught in the quagmire of cultural framework of the whites. The novelist does not appreciate the self-created problem of Pecola. The self-deception of Pecola as a black character is a problem of her own making. This view is illustrated clearly in the words of Linden Peach:

The concept of black in the novel is a construct partly of the characters own making but mostly social, based on
white definitions of blackness which associate it with violence, poverty, dirt and lack of education, whilst Africa is perceived as uncivilised and (negatively) tribal. (26-27)

Her real motive is to focus her attention on the actual mental conditions of the black who wish to imitate the whites. There is no denying the fact that such an imitation would be suicidal or self-destroying as far as the novelist’s judgement is concerned.

The novel is cast and put forth in the form of a drama where two characters Pecola and Claudia move in two opposite directions. The main mission of the novelist is to build up a picture where Claudia acts as a total antithesis to Pecola. Pecola’s thesis lies in the adherence to white cultural frame of reference and Claudia’s antithesis involves an open defiance of the white line of thinking. The programme of Claudia is to resist whatever the whites lay down as the values for the blacks. Thus, Pecola is shown as a passive victim following the white cultural value system while Claudia is projected as an active fighter challenging the very concept of the whites.

The deeply ingrained conceptions of racial prejudices are brought out very clearly in the passage cited below:

That which was white (or Anglo, male, Christian, wealthy) was extolled and infused with connotations of benevolence and superiority, while that which was not
white (or not Anglo, female, non-Christian, poor) was debased and associated with malevolence and inferiority.

(Braxton and McLaughlin 153)

A Blue-eyed baby doll is a permanent source of attraction for the whites. It is after all a lifeless doll but to the whites it speaks in many possible ways. The whites imaginatively assume the figure of a living baby in the doll and they even sleep with it and fondly caress it. To Claudia the baby doll looks very disgusting first because it is not a living thing, second because it is foisted with lot of human significance. It is really unthinkable for Claudia to attribute life and human warmth to the doll. According to Claudia the habit of the whites is silly, foolish and snobbish in regarding the doll as a living thing. For the whites it is an act of courtesy, efficacy and sophistication to play with the doll as a source of immense pleasure and joy. But for Claudia this is absurd not because it is a white man’s doll but because the whole act of playing with the baby doll is nothing but pretension and hypocrisy. Claudia feels that it is a tragic error on the part of the white to play with the doll in a mood of mental hallucination. It emboldens Claudia to revise and introduce a new line of thinking in regard to the whites. The old custom of the whites is commonly accepted as it is an established convention as far as others are concerned. Claudia’s act of breaking the doll goes in the way of overthrowing the established system prevailing among the whites:
It had begun with Christmas and the gift of dolls. The big, the special, the loving gift was always a big, blue-eyed Baby Doll... I learned quickly, however, what I was expected to do with the doll: rock it, fabricate storied situations around it, even sleep with it. Picture books were full of little girls sleeping with their dolls.

*(THE BLUEST EYE 13)*

Claudia breaking the doll is symbolic of a radical break with the Western system of values:

It inspires hatred toward and among people of African descent, inducing destructive behaviours and an equally adverse disconnection from anything not western. (qtd. in Linden Peach 29)

Mirror image is nothing but creating a possibility or scope for self-imprisonment. Freedom to look out of the mirror and see what lies outside the world and outside the mirror is completely denied in the picture of mirror which stands for self imposed exile in isolation. What the image signifies is that it limits perception of reality and gives what can be perceived within that limited framework. Therefore mirror is nothing but an image representing self-perpetuation of slavery. The following lines build up this idea of mirror being a prison limiting freedom:
To be caught and trapped in a mirror rather than a window ...is to be driven inward, obsessively studying self-images as if seeking a viable self. [This inward search] is necessitated by a state from which all outward prospects have been removed. (Gilbert and Gubar 37)

Mirror image is more in the form of an allegory. At one level in a mirror there are two themes which are to be noted. One is a reflector of outside impression and the other is the receiver of the same impression which comes from the mirror. At another level mirror as a property is in the possession of the whites. The whites are the reflectors of impressions and the blacks are the receivers of the impressions. Symbolically, it means the blacks follow mechanically what the whites lay down as cultural norms and social axioms.

The critical idea of intergenerational mirror has become phraseology of plain truism. Actually it implies a system which is based on the principle of transmission of values from one generation to another. But in the context of the blacks it gains significance but in a dubious way. Reverence for the white mandate is what is found in every character in the novel. Pauline’s mother, Pauline Breedlove, and Pauline’s daughter Pecola form the series in which the intergenerational mirror is found. What Pauline gets from her mother is what is transmitted by Pauline to Pecola. It is the situation in which the blacks act under the inspiration of the white standards but it leads to a
kind of fatalistic character determinism which makes Pecola tragic. Pecola happens to be the most pathetic character. She is the first and the foremost victim of the intergenerational mirror theory. Her acute awareness of being ugly gives her a shock. Contrarily her desire for prayer to have the bluest eye is a kind of wish fulfilment or a kind of mental hallucination. The transmitter in this process is Pauline who does not suffer from any problem whereas the victim, Pecola, who is kept under the process of transmission suffers.

Pauline’s attitude to the white is one of admiration and Pecola’s feeling towards the white is identical with her mother’s perspective. But there is a small difference. Pecola is innocent and she is not in a position to know whether the white ideal is the right one. But being brought up in an atmosphere she wants to follow the white idea because she is placed under pressure which arises out of the intergenerational mirror theory. Pauline approves of the white ideal as one worthy of imitation but Pecola thinks very naively that to do so like Pauline would be the right attitude. Pauline is incapable of being a real mother to Pecola as she has willingly observed the white ideal of beauty and behaviour. Her own daughter Pecola looks ugly to her in the light of these ideals of colour and grace. The spirit to be a real mother to Pecola is what stands in the way of Pauline loving her own daughter with kindness. The critic Wade - Gayles correctly points out that Pauline is only a sophisticated mammy and not a true mother:
Pauline rejects her own daughter because she has erased from her psyche the line separating reality from illusion, mammyhood from motherhood. (Wade - Gayles 18)

While Pauline is not apathetic Pecola is cold and frigid about her own image of being ugly. Pauline clearly knows that the blacks are inferior to the whites on the basis of many things. And so the white ideal must be upheld. The position of Pecola is simple but precarious. Her longing for having a better appearance is born out of being ashamed of her black ugly face. She does not have the power of judgement to arrive at a different conclusion that the ideas like so-called ugly or black in complexion are only ideas put forth in relation to the concepts derived from the whites. Pecola’s attitude is not similar to that of Pauline but the emotional pressure of longing for a better face is partly derived from what has been pointed out as intergenerational mirror impression or in other words, it is known as fascination for white concept of beauty.

Toni Morrison’s personal comment is of great significance. She captures the problem of the blacks very excellently in these lines:

I do not want to bow out with easy answers to complex questions. It’s the true complexity of how people behave under duress that is of interest to me. (McKay 420)
The behaviour of the blacks is of immense interest to the novelist because they are carried away like papers by the puff of the wind. Unemancipated from the white domination the behaviour of the blacks cannot be otherwise. What engages the attention of the novelist is the peculiar psychological complexity of the characters. Therefore their behaviour is certainly not appreciable according to the novelist. Nevertheless, it cannot be totally and mercilessly condemned. The whole issue has to be looked at sympathetically. Nearly two hundred to three hundred years of white domination has kept the blacks in a regulated behaviour-pattern from which they are not able to either free or release themselves. The purpose of the novelist is to highlight the solution of the problem comprehensively. She brings to focus the whole behavioural psychology of the blacks. It is what the logical positivist psychologist would call conditioned reflexes and responses. Just when the sexton bell rings, the knees automatically come to worship. This can be cited as reflex response. The behaviour of the blacks is comparable to this. The problem before the novelist is to portray the several nuances of the issue and make them aware of it. It is in this angle that the behaviour pattern of Pecola, Pauline, Cholly and McTeer must be examined. The following quotation from the novel throws light on the major issue of problem – examining:

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. (THE BLUEST EYE 28)

The standards of the whites are the standards of the entire human race and any contradiction is treated as a violation of the norm. The blacks have accepted the white master’s voice as a totally unerring one. That the blacks are ugly is an estimate which the whites have made. All the blacks must accept this estimate without any questioning. What the novelist wants to impress upon the reader is that these characters helplessly act in accordance with the standards set by the whites. Their agony is brought upon themselves by their own making. There is little realisation in them to know that this psychological dilemma is created by the whites. The novelist’s focus on the dilemma is only to show the white parameters which lie unquestioned and so they remain non-controversial among the blacks.

Ugliness is a mental impression of the whites about how the blacks appear to them. It is not the opinion of the blacks about themselves. The whites have told them consistently that they look ugly. Some of the blacks feel shameful when they are told in that way. But Toni Morrison’s question is whether the blacks look good or
whether they look bad need not be necessarily and arbitrarily decided by the whites. So the description of ugliness is a mentally created attribution of the whites. Therefore, the so called ugliness is not a matter for shame according to the novelist, because she thinks that the blacks are beautiful in their own way.

The greatest tragedy according to the novelist is the abomination of self-hatred of Pecola. The standards of the whites have completely changed the mental mechanism of the blacks in such a way that they hate themselves because they are not in accordance with the demands of the whites. But the novelist does not spare this in a very light-hearted way. The injustice done to the blacks must be treated as a kind of injustice done to the human race:

The whiteness she [Morrison] castigates represents the dehumanizing cultural values of society given over to profit, possession and dominance. It is a whiteness worn by blacks as well as whites. (Otten 96)

The peculiar predicament indicated in this line is that the blacks commit some errors in their judgement that the whites are excellent and the blacks are ugly. The other mistake which sprouts from the foregoing is that they want to wear the white appearance on their face. All their life is a struggle to achieve this idea. “You nasty little black bitch. Get out of my house.” (THE BLUEST EYE 72).
The black characters carry the impression that their blackness is a sign of sin and to keep the white ideal in the mind gives a relief from this sin. This is nothing but a case of self-deception which is pointed out by the novelist.

An attempt is made to assess the problem of the novel or the predicament of Pecola or Pauline Breedlove in the light of a post-modernist critic Jacques Lacan who held the view that the idea of mirror and reflection is dominant in the white patriarchal culture. The mirror is the property of the whites and it gives as many reflections as possible. The view is that the white patriarchs are creating or giving reflections and the Negroid races are recipients of reflections. So a black is a passive receiver of the reflection, while the white patriarch is the active giver of the reflection. It is this relation of giver and taker which keeps the white race in supremacy and simultaneously the blacks in subordination. In this respect, a particular line is cited from the novel in order to bring out the force of Lacan’s criticism. “This soil is bad for certain kinds of flowers. Certain seeds it will not nurture, certain fruit it will not bear…” (THE BLUEST EYE 164).

The most important line in this passage which is subjected to deep critical analysis is, “…and say the victim had no right to live” (164).

Two images put forth in this line are in the form of a victimiser and the victim. It is not an exaggeration to say that the white is the
victimiser and the black is the victim. The key point is that the entire statement is made by Claudia. It is a brilliant stroke on her part to have stated as to what is happening to the black as a tragic phenomenon. The pathetic plight of Claudia is that the black woman does not live whereas they are lived by the whites and again pressurised by them as far as any type or notion of living is concerned. In fact Claudia hints at the pessimistic mood of the blacks who create a wasteland for themselves. By deluding themselves under the impression that there is no separate concept of life for them and that whatever concept exists, it exists as it is given and planned by the whites. In a wasteland soil of this kind according to Claudia, the seed will not get fertilised and the soil will not bear any fruit because the black pessimism and their keen depression of spirit affect the conditions of the soil and make them infertile. The black land has lost its fruit bearing capacity because the black mind is in a state of hopelessness. The supremacy of mind over matter is what Claudia wants in the present condition. A culturally settled and long established view of the whites exists like an inert matter. Mind can alter matter. This is the modern psycho-biological view. Therefore, the novelist argues that the opinions of the whites about the blacks can be changed. The black mind has fallen a prey to the whites to be regulated and controlled like a block of building which is synonymous with the picture of physical matter.
The experience of cultural discrimination on the basis of colour is the outcome of a long established past. This condition of discrimination is compared to unchangeable and inert matter. Toni Morrison through Claudia hints at the fact that this condition of cultural discrimination has come to stay fixed like non-moving physical matter or stone. The word fixity implies metaphorically the element of unchangeability in a traditionally established situation where racial discrimination has become an unavoidable fact. But Toni Morrison is of the view that human mind is gifted with the power of creativity to melt the fixity found in the existing cultural order by radically reviewing and altering it. It is certainly a very remarkable insight on the part of Toni Morrison to create a character like Claudia and put forth an existentially meaningful passage in her mouth. Many black characters like Cholly Breedlove, Pauline and Pecola have no independence of judgement and originality of vision. The greatest tragic error is that they humiliate themselves in an unwarranted manner. The humiliation is a self-created psycho-neurosis from which the blacks suffer.

The phenomenon called psycho-neurosis is easily applicable to characters like Pecola and Pauline. What is meant by psycho-neurosis is the failure to face reality. So long as one follows a mirror image of someone else’s one is not true to oneself. The actual problem is that the black characters like Pecola and Pauline have no faith in themselves and in their own choices of life. What comes to them is what they receive from outside. Actually what comes from outside is
the reflection of the white mirror. The white mirror for a black becomes a mandate to them. It implies that the white mandate should be followed without any questioning. It is this unquestioning acceptance in the life of Pecola and Pauline that the novelist points out as a tragic event.

Therefore this psycho-neurosis is the condition of hopelessness which is partly self-created and mostly imposed upon the blacks by the whites. The pre-established view is that what is aesthetically pleasing is what deserves the status of love. This is the image from which the black characters like Pecola and Pauline are not able to get rid of themselves. The white mandate according to the novelist is fraught with sinister consequences. There are obvious references in the novel which are put through Pecola, Pauline, Geraldine, Junior and Maureen Peal that the white mandate is the model. Only a very shrewd and formidably forward looking character is created by the novelist in order to devalue the white mandate. The novel projects two moments which obviously proceed in two contradictory directions. One pattern is concerned with the over-valuation of the white-mandate which is followed by Pecola and Pauline and the other is concerned with the devaluation of white mandate which is manifested by Claudia. “Long hours she sat looking in the mirror, trying to discover the secret of the ugliness, the ugliness that made her ignored or despised at school, by teachers and classmates alike” (THE BLUEST EYE 34).
The passage is nothing but a vivid expression of self pity on the part of Pecola. In fact the passage is deeply filled with poetic sentimentality. The character melts into tears to look at her own ugliness. It is an act of sentimentality because it is not concerned with the positive assessment of life and things. Anyhow the realisation of Pecola’s ugliness on her own part is the outcome of the weight of a system which hangs upon her back resisting her capacity to review life. If Pecola thinks that she is ugly only in accordance with the white standards, perhaps for Claudia that one being ugly is like one being beautiful, because she is free from the weight of the white-mandate which hangs upon Pecola’s back. This creates a very big tragedy in the creation of a character like Pecola. The purpose is to enforce the point which shows how blacks oppress themselves by deluding themselves to think of the infallible white standards and it also shows how they are oppressed by the white mandate. The psychological depression is two fold, partly Pecola oppresses herself and mostly she allows herself to be oppressed by the white standards of beauty.

Toni Morrison’s major idea in her analysis of the problem of Pecola is that black girlhood does not find a conducive soil to flourish or flower. The reason is that any black view which is put forth independently meets with resistance because it has been decided already that the whites are fair, beautiful, excellent and intelligent. The novelist explores the possibility of contradicting this view through the creation of a character like Claudia. The idea that the black race is to
follow what the white race has laid down as a mandate is abominable to the novelist. Therefore a character like Claudia receives greater dramatic concentration in the hands of the novelist in order to project a view which is antithetical to the white mandate.

The actual act of a child performing the work in accordance with the mother’s command may appear burdensome. But it is a fact which forms the basic efficacy of black womanhood.

In Toni Morrison’s *The Bluest Eye* the behaviour of the women characters is more problematic than that of the men characters. The reason for this oddity in behaviour is attributable to the history of their parentage. From the hints provided by the novelist in the novel it is clear that the parentage of Pauline is riddled with difficulties. The actual act of a child performing the work in accordance with the mother’s command may appear burdensome. But it is a fact which forms the basic efficacy of the black womanhood. Childbearing is looked upon as a blessing. This view is common to all traditions. A passage is quoted to throw further light on the problem of marriage and its interconnection with womanhood:

> In the absence of her mother who goes to work outside the house, Pauline is forced to baby sit and run the house. Early in life she is introduced to what are traditionally believed to be the duties of a woman which she performs with efficiency. (Sultana 36)
There is no trace of happiness in this relation between mother and daughter. More labour comes from Pauline’s mother to Pauline as a burden but Pauline receives it as a gift because of the nobility in her. A good child obeys the mother. The child does the work as allotted by her mother. To follow what the mother tells the child to do is treated by Pauline as a mark of obedience and reverence for the elders. Therefore, for Pauline a good woman is one who obeys the tradition of following what the mother tells the child to do. Such a picture of the child obeying the mother is visualised by Pauline as the mark of a good woman.

Pauline certainly sees the unhappy predicament in black motherhood. There is no idealism involved in painting the black motherhood in rosy terms. A critical passage is cited to make this issue clear. “The notion of motherhood as a sacred calling lived out in Sistine tranquility is a rhetorical lie in Pauline’s culture” (Wade – Gayles 72).

The issue can be settled in a clear way. For Pauline the idea of black motherhood is certainly not pleasant. Pauline is of the opinion that a black woman becomes the beast of burden. This is true of Pauline’s mother who suffered hell in her life. She worked as a mother and enjoyed very little. It is therefore rare to see any freedom or joy in the picture of the black motherhood or womanhood. Lacan in another context when he discusses the theory of the intergenerational mirror
cites this incident as a racial transmission of ideas from the elder to the younger. But what is transmitted is not a pleasant job. It is a burdensome work. Again it is very difficult to unilaterally decide that the picture of black motherhood is not at all praiseworthy. The black motherhood has problems but with all the problems it still is an enjoyable experience according to Pauline.

Two passages are quoted in order to illustrate the black attitude to motherhood vis-à-vis the white attitude. Pauline knows that pregnancy is a painful experience. She is a woman and that she is a black woman and so she does not treat pregnancy as a burden. She comes out with an imaginary visualisation of her own pregnancy as an escape from loneliness. The lines given below in the first passage indicates woman being endowed with a very honourable role as a mother. Motherhood is seen as a source of procreation which is considered to be a noble act. “...only honorable creative role in which they can reasonably hope to participate” (Thomson 81).

The following lines in the second passage lay emphasis upon a black mother feeling the necessity for pregnancy and motherhood. The vacuum and the loneliness which a woman eternally feels can be only driven by motherhood:

She experiences a sense of power and possession in this second pregnancy because she made it happen...

The myth of maternal service is reversed here. Instead
of taking up a ‘sacred calling’ to which she will give a lifetime of unselfish devotion, Pauline sees her second venture into motherhood as a retrieval from the pits of loneliness. (Wade-Gayles 74-75)

In modern European feminist thought child bearing and pregnancy are treated as problems and they are looked upon as obstacles to woman’s freedom. There is even a clearly expressed view that biological motherhood is a curse. It is this modern European feminist view which is brought in contrast and comparison with the view of Pauline for reassessment. The idea of black motherhood reaches poetic heights. Pauline is an existentialist willing to face the hurdles of life but a modern European feminist is an escapist unwilling to face the consequences and the painful realities of life.

Two ideas emerge clearly from Pauline which go in the way of building up the ideal picture of black motherhood or womanhood. The activity of childbirth is looked upon by Pauline as a creative act. She feels that woman is a creator and in this aspect she got magical power over man. Pauline is too simple a woman to know and arrive at a conclusion whether marriage and childbirth are a sacred calling. But she is perfectly in accordance with a healthy view of life that marriage is meant for the purpose of procreation. The second reason cited by Pauline for her second pregnancy is based upon more substantial motherly grounds. She sees pregnancy as a relief from the routine
burden of life. Pauline does not see marriage or pregnancy as problems as they are perceived by the modern European feminist. The withstanding capacity of the black woman is what makes the black motherhood and womanhood much more pleasant and praise-worthy. One clearly sees from the passages cited above that the black motherhood is nourished by the warmth of human love, compassion, pity and joy.

The white Western attitude to black motherhood is shown in negative terms by the novelist. There is a textual explanation to show that Pauline’s experience at the labour ward in the Charity Hospital is painful. But the comment made by a white doctor is much more painful than the experience of labour pain to Pauline. The white doctor’s comment for the purpose of emphasis touches her very deeply. “They deliver right away and with no pain. Just like horses” (THE BLUEST EYE 97).

This is a line which shows the white attitude to black motherhood. The remark is more caustic and less appreciative. Actually the comment of the white doctor brings before the readers the picture of an animal giving birth to its calf. It shows nothing but the white man’s contempt for black motherhood. Pauline may be right or wrong but the white man is certainly in the wrong for having made a sophisticated and superficial comment.
Pauline is a pitiable character incapable of showing love towards her daughter Pecola. Through Pauline the novelist projects two different attitudes to the black motherhood. No one can accept that the black women deliver away children with no pain just like horses. Such a caustic comment is born out of racial superiority and it also indicates irreverence for the black idea of motherhood. Pauline playing the role of a wife to Cholly is different from Pauline playing the role of a daughter to Pecola. The reasons are obvious. But what is to be noted is Pauline’s role as a wife to Cholly. An idealistic picture of black motherhood can be easily built up with the help of Pauline looking upon pregnancy as an action of procreation. Pauline’s role as a mother to Pecola may be questionable.

The major reason is that she belongs to a suppressed race. But she had a wonderful attitude towards her daughter in the choice of giving a name. It shows her longing for making Pecola a central figure in her life. Perhaps Pauline may not be charitable to Pecola. It is because her behaviour pattern is determined by the white ideal of beauty.

The present novel clinches the issues of feminism and womanism much more historically and precisely. In the early African tradition an exaggerated idealisation of womanhood is found. The proverbial statement *that mother is God or Goddess* runs through the entire stream of African literature. A distinction is drawn between
black motherhood and white motherhood. It is widely acknowledged that the concept of black motherhood is far more comprehensive, human and realistic than the picture of white motherhood:

...all black women become superhuman mothers, not only for their own people, but for white people as well. More than white women, it is assumed, black women look to motherhood as their chief justification in life; and more than white women, they are physically and emotionally capable of handling the responsibilities associated with it. (Wade - Gayles 59)

Black mothers were nearer the earth and so were nearer the truth of life, whereas the white mothers were cut off from human concerns and realism. The historical view of black mother is that there was a glory surrounding the woman and the glory has disappeared. What is obtained now in the present American climate is a picture of the suffering woman who is unable to deal with the complex reality of life. The complexity involved in the concept of mother is very well brought out by Christian in these words:

The Afro-American community’s view of motherhood, the white American view of motherhood, and the white American view of black motherhood - intersect to produce a distinctly complex ideology of Afro-American motherhood. (219)
The theme of motherhood becomes the target of the attention of the novelist. The three outstanding views with regard to the concept of women are outlined: The Afro-American view of motherhood, the white-American view of motherhood and the White-American view of black motherhood.

The problem before Toni Morrison is very complex. The traditional black African view of woman is too idealistic to be acceptable in the scheme of Morrison because it has no relevance to the reality of the present situation. The white American view of idealistic woman is unacceptable to the novelist because it has nothing to do with their own tradition. The white American review of black motherhood is born out of a racial prejudice. Under these circumstances the task before the novelist is to discover the true view of black woman. What are her resources and what are her weaknesses and what are her merits are questions to be explored by the novelist. One particular trend in the concept of black mother is the conscious artistic resistance to resorting to stereotypes which idealise women:

They (Black women writers) freed themselves from the roles assigned to them in the writings of their male counterparts, where, depicted as queens and princesses, or as earth mothers and idealized Big Mommas of
superhuman wisdom and strength, they were
unrecognizable as individuals. (Henderson xxiv)

One has to go into the actual issues of the two novels in order
to explore these three different conceptions of women. Only then does
it become possible to find out where the sympathies of the novelist lie.
The striking feature is that the black woman should be independent
and she must be capable of leading a very decent life with all freedom.

According to Toni Morrison there are black characters who are
deeply convinced of their ugliness and there is a deep realisation in
them that their ugliness is a matter of shame for them. Four such
characters are listed below: Pecola, Cholly, Pauline and Sammy. It is
very tragic that these four black characters have developed a view
that they are born inferior and their ugliness is a symptom of inferiority
or degradation. Consequently, these black characters develop a kind
of neurotic psychology that the whites are the superior race because
they are blessed with beauty and purity.

Such characters are mentally depressed and the deep dejection
stems from their feeling of inferiority. They even think that their
blackness is a sin and their ugliness is a greater sin and they are not
able to extricate themselves from this network of mental thinking.
Their deeply held reverence for the whites pleases them because they
think that the whites are to be venerated and respected. There is a
feeling in such characters that there is nothing wrong to adhere to the
white standards and act in subordination to them. The real concept of a black human being is not found in this picture of psychology. There is no real concept of a human being ever evolved by the blacks and so there is no possibility for them to develop the real picture of a black woman. What is held by these characters as a model is projected as a model for the entire black race. The relationship between Pauline and Pecola is not a relationship between a mother and a daughter. The reason is that there are two attitudes which emerge - Pauline disregarding Pecola and Pecola looking for emotional attachment to Pauline. Pauline is proud of her following the white ideal but the sorry fact is that there is no motherliness present in the character of Pauline. What is the reason for the absence of motherliness in the character of Pauline is a question to be explored. Two issues are to be made clear.

Pauline’s approval of the white standards makes her look upon Pecola not as a daughter but as a physical unit. Her love of the white race takes away from Pauline her love of Pecola. Pauline is one who loves the whites and so it is perfect logic to say that she cannot love Pecola. As a mother Pauline cannot love Pecola because she has in her mind a different white notion of how a dignified daughter should be. She is less a mother to Pecola because she is very much carried away by the white man’s view.
The second real issue which does not make Pauline at home with Pecola is that Pecola does not come up to the white standards. Pauline is very proud of her allegiance to the whites but the same Pauline is not proud of her relation to Pecola as a daughter. A judgement has to be made in the light of the manner in which characters are placed. Cholly, Pecola and Sammy represent their moods of dejection and frustration. Their frustration comes from the fact that they belong to a cursed black race. Pauline moves from an exactly opposite perspective that she is superior to these characters because she enjoys delight in following the white ideal. The victim of such an ideal is Pecola. Pauline is not sufficiently a woman and she is not sufficiently a mother because she is not prepared to go to the roots of the black culture. According to the novelist, the characters mentioned are non-existent. He who is alive to the reality of the black situation and he who fights against the white mandate alone really lives. The person who is not alive according to the novelist is he or she who feels inferior about being black and he who feels proud of himself for adhering to the white ideal. A person who does not respond to the actual issue does not live. Perhaps the true woman envisaged by the novelist culminates in a conception of Claudia and Sula who emerge as fighters and revolutionaries.

So far the whites have defined their standards in regard to what actually constitutes the true character of a real human being. This concept defining capacity of the white race puts them in the centre
and the black race in the margin. The black have slavishly accepted these standards as irrefutably acceptable. The novelist says that the blacks face the imperative necessity to visualise and define the character of a real human being. Such an attempt by the blacks will go in opposition to the white standards. The effort of the blacks will demarginalise the white notion of marginalisation. It is in this light Toni Morrison discusses the notion of true human being and also she simultaneously propounds the concept of a true black woman.

A true human being alone can be a true black woman but the idea of a true black human being is clouded by black characters. This is a pitiable condition. The greatest disaster is that womanhood and motherhood have no place at all in black women. The obstacle that stands in the way of envisioning the black motherhood comes from Pecola’s feeling of inferiority and Pauline’s feeling of superiority. Pecola feels that she is inferior because she is ugly and moreover according to her, ugliness is not a characteristic of a good looking woman. Pauline feels that she is superior to other blacks because she is proud of the whites and proud of her following the whites. This is also not a good characteristic feature of a black woman. In fact, the two questions, racism and womanism are inter-connected. If the black woman is not appreciable in the present situation it is because she is a slave to an accepted notion of their inferiority. The inferiority of the black woman is derived from the racial superiority of the whites.
The novel *The Bluest Eye* is a wonderful melodrama depicting conflict and contradictions among the blacks. The so called light skinned Maureen is not light hearted in her attitude to the blacks. The very idea of the light skin enables Maureen to claim infinite superiority over the other blacks. But the situation does not stop with the claim of superiority but it leads her to caricature other black characters. One such incident is found in Maureen taunting Pecola. Pecola’s return trip from the school is the occasion where Maureen ridicules Pecola looking at her personal appearance. The purpose is to shame Pecola and to create disgust about her own self. The attempt made by Maureen is not accepted by the novelist but it is shown elaborately for the purpose of bringing into limelight a particular type of black psyche which tends to oppress the blacks. Maureen’s advice to Claudia not to walk through the street in which she lives and take a detour to some other street is an example to show how a light skinned black has nothing but contempt for a black:

“Why don’t you go down Twenty-second Street?”

“ ‘Cause I live on Twenty-first Street.” (*THE BLUEST EYE* 49)

For the novelist it is a phenomenon which cannot be either understood or digested. But she moves through the artistic treadmill to show and analyse the characters like Maureen whose behaviour can never be adjudged as praiseworthy by any human standards.
Toni Morrison brings to focus a particular pathetic phenomenon in the novel The Bluest Eye. It is concerned with a peculiar behaviour pattern of the blacks. For some blacks, to endorse their faith in the superiority of the European Americans and to develop a tendency to taunt and ill-treat their own black brethren on that basis of such an upheld ideal can be described as taking a special name or cultural label called Internalised Racism. The whites openly treat the blacks as their inferiors. This open and blatantly pronounced superiority is external racism. The idea of external racism involves the idea of the white attitude of the systematic treatment of the blacks as abominable and inferior people. The two ideas in external racism are the acknowledged relation of domination of the whites and the subordination of the blacks. This fact makes a reference to the idea – the idea takes for granted an obviously acknowledged superiority of the whites and the accepted inferiority of the blacks. In internal racism many blacks are treated as inferior by other blacks. The question how a black can claim superiority to the blacks is not intriguing because these blacks are worse than the whites themselves. There is a difference between a white ill-treating the black but there is a greater difference between a black ill-treating another black. Toni Morrison is deeply concerned with this theme. Whites are bad but the blacks are no better but they are much worse than the whites.

The issues are made very clear by Toni Morrison. The conflict is not between blacks and whites but the conflict is between blacks
and blacks. According to the novelist the first conflict is a real one from which all the blacks must secure independence. The second conflict is artificial and unnatural and so it is unnecessary and false. There is grief in the tone of the novelist when she is pained to see the blacks castigating the blacks. The focus is on three or four important characters so far as the subject of artificially generated internal inequality among the blacks is concerned Cholly, Pauline, Maureen, and Geraldine are the characters who are to be pitied for they divert the blacks from the main issue which must be fought wholeheartedly by all the blacks. The situation is so depressing that a character like Maureen is nothing but critical of other black characters like Pecola just because she is a little superior to them in complexion. Pride, vanity and vainglorious attachment to life are the motivating factors which are false values bequeathed to Maureen by the whites to ill-treat the dark-skinned. The values are false whether they are propagated by the whites or whether they are followed by the blacks. The novelist certainly moves with an answer that anyone who speaks like Maureen can have no relevance to the blacks. Such a voice of Maureen does not go in the way of settling the racial question. On the other hand, it dilutes the actual racial problem. Toni Morrison creates a cultural psychology which claims the equality of the blacks with the whites. Maureen is a black. However light skinned she may be, she is not a white and she can never be a white. But for her to say that she is superior to Pecola, Claudia, and Frieda is nothing but sheer arrogance
born out of a self-imposed superiority which is derived from the implicit and unquestioning acceptance of the white standards. All the energies of the novelist are spent in portraying characters where one light skinned black is treating the other dark skinned black as his or her inferior. The three tendencies which form the basis of the novel include *Diffidence, Defiance and Deference*.

Pecola being an example of diffidence can never get blue eyes as she is not able to extricate herself from the clutches of white values. She wants to look as beautiful as a white girl. According to the novelist this is a stupid wish born out of foolish longing for white standards of beauty. Loss of faith in her own choice of life makes Pecola a character of diffidence. Claudia as a character stands for defiance. Doll breaking incident is a direct hit at the white mandate. There is no mystery or obscurity in the incident because it is a clear cut case of an awakened character like Claudia who is engaged in overthrowing white value system. Geraldine and Maureen are characters of deference. Their life style is an agreement to act in deference to the white standard of values.

The novel skilfully employs a theme, which becomes crucial in the development of the novel. The entire idea of Toni Morrison is to show the exact line of thinking which goes in to the interior cavities or brain of the black characters. There are some elegantly portrayed incidents wherein the novelist handles some situations and characters
in order to bring out a theme which pervades the entire novel. But there are complicated scenes where one black character is found pitted against another black character. A heated conversation follows among the three characters Pecola, Frieda, and Maureen. The frame of reference built up by Maureen in this conversation is nothing but a sarcastic comment on whether Pecola has seen her father sleeping naked. The issue is very complex not because Pecola does not come with a direct reply to the question but because the question itself is false when it is judged under black standards. According to Frieda two questions need to be raised as to which race Maureen belongs. She is a black character although she may be light-skinned instead of being dark-skinned. Maureen’s repeated question of Pecola’s father sleeping naked is a shameful situation. The reason is that the entire question springs from a self-imposed superiority which Maureen assumes wholeheartedly endorsing the white system of values as the following lines portray:

Black e mo Black e mo Ya daddy sleeps nekked.

Stch ta ta stch ta ta

Stch ta ta ta ta ta. (THE BLUEST EYE 50)

The novelist certainly comes with a comment which amounts to saying that characters like Maureen and black boys who talked about Pecola’s father’s nakedness are themselves black characters. To humiliate the habit of a black girl seeing her black father’s nakedness
with the help of the white man’s values is nothing but self blindedness according to the novelist.

Maureen is a believer in the superiority of white culture. She is a black. To accept white culture is not a mark of shame for her. Maureen is under the impression that blacks have no decency and culture. She further thinks that black daughters see black father’s nakedness. Therefore she arrives at a conclusion that the blacks have no culture. It is on the basis of logical syllogism that she moves. The question whether she is right is to be answered. In the eye of the novelist she is certainly wrong because blacks instead of fighting against the whites are ridiculing their own brethren blacks on the basis of the acceptance of the white culture.

Racism is a big problem. Internal racism is a bigger problem. The main reason is that the external racism is blindly accepted by the black insiders without little realising that the blacks are not alive to the real issues (the whites have suppressed the blacks for centuries and that the blacks must be free from this slavery). What the whites have done to the blacks is different from what some of the blacks have done to their own blacks. This is a shameful internal racial situation which is projected in some other incident also. The most peculiar thing is that Maureen seems to be much more beautiful than other characters. This is a pride bred by her adherence to white standards. The actual truth is that the white characters will never appreciate a
black character like Maureen. What happens when a light-skinned black character is brought into juxtaposition with another black character, a new psychology is in operation (light-skinned blacks believing in their superiority over the dark-skinned blacks):

That they themselves were black, or that their own father had similarly relaxed habits was irrelevant. It was their contempt for their own blackness that gave the first insult its teeth. *(THE BLUEST EYE 50)*

Specifically there are four characters who uphold openly unconsciously the white value system and on that basis they ill-treat other black characters. The greatest tragedy for Toni Morrison lies in the light skinned black ridiculing the dark skinned black. Actually, the novel reaches the heights of a great Greek tragedy. The main purpose of the novelist is to point out the internal inequality which the blacks themselves creates among the blacks. In a sense it is funny but in another sense it is profoundly pathetic. Half the volume of the novel is taken up with describing how the black characters are humiliated and insulted by the blacks themselves. What is interesting to notice is that so long as this situation of a black looking down upon another black continues, the racial problem for the black is in a state of contradiction. What the novelist has in his mind is that the blacks must awaken themselves to the horrid reality of the situation. The actual problem is the white domination and the actual solution is the liberation of the
blacks from the white domination. But for the novelist the given situation in the black context does not warrant or call for the liberation of the blacks from the whites.

Instead of seeking liberation from the whites, the blacks have to secure emancipation from the brown skinned blacks. Three or four important situations get outlined in the novel in order to vindicate this tragic phenomenon. The request of Maureen Peel to Claudia to walk through a different street avoiding the street in which she lives is an instance to prove that Maureen Peel does not want to see the ugly Claudia to move through her locality. This shows how a black character is put in an awful predicament. It looks as if brown skinned character like Peel should not be found coming across an ugly black character like Claudia. Claudia knows that Maureen Peel ill-treats her by advising her to walk through a different route. Peel thinks that Claudia should not cross her street. Her instinct is to avoid seeing Claudia what usually the white does to a black is what Peel does to Claudia. But Peel is not a white. On the other hand, she exactly does what a white does when he confronts a black.

The relationship between Geraldine and Louis Junior is an example to show how Geraldine the mother is less interested in the son and more interested in the cat she brings up in the house. The novelist is very firm in pointing out that, for Geraldine love of the cat is of greater importance than the love of her own son. Naturally this is
typically symbolic of the white habit of regarding the cat as the first love. Louis Junior is frustrated to see his mother showering love on the cat and not on him. A trick is played deliberately by Junior for the purpose of involving Pecola in a tragic dilemma. The scene is so arranged that when Geraldine enters the room the cat is thrown on Pecola by Junior. It is at this time that Geraldine ushers where Pecola and Louis Junior are found in simultaneous encounter or juxtaposition with each other. In a cunning manner the blame of throwing and killing the cat is shifted on to Pecola by Louis. The circumstances appear in such a way to Geraldine that the cat must have been thrown by Pecola only. A kind of severe scolding follows and Pecola is put to shame. “In Geraldine’s home, Ogunyemi comments that ‘the only surviving feeling in her home is anger’ “ (106).

Louis Junior dramatises this incident, on two grounds. One is to bring out the stupid love of the mother towards cat and the other is to put the black character like Pecola to shame.

The mother daughter relationship in the novel is very peculiar for the novelist. Pauline is working in a house owned by a white. The mental frame of Pauline is to be in tune with the same wavelength of the white sensibility. This seems to be the measuring yardstick by which Pauline views everything and imposes order which is in agreement with the outlook of the white. The novelist brings a scene before the mind of the readers. Pecola is handling a cup very
inadvertently which makes her slip the cup and allow the purple juice to fall down on the floor. The floor is made dirty by Pecola’s act. Pauline as a mother could have taken a light view of this incident. Pauline as a follower of the white system of values views this act as an act of outrage. It is certainly for her a violation of all the norms of decency and decorum. For an external observer, Pauline is at fault and not Pecola. Toni Morrison plays the role of an external observer. But how to make Pauline know that she is at fault is a big intriguing and enigmatic problem to the novelist. In full, this is the major problem posed by Toni Morrison.

The novelist’s comment is very ferocious and virulent. The question *Who is sleeping naked* is a question which looks ridiculous to a novelist like Toni Morrison. The characters who are interested in knowing whether Pecola has seen her father naked or whether she has seen her father sleeping naked are engaging themselves in self-destroying endeavours according to the novelist. It is equal to spitting one’s saliva on one’s own face. The sentence of the novelist. “That they themselves were black…” (*THE BLUEST EYE* 50) is a telling sentence because it brings out the gravity of the racial crisis.

The interrogation of Pecola by Maureen is both teasing and harassing for her. The reply from Pecola that she never saw her daddy naked was not convincing to Maureen. The undercurrent of Maureen’s question is nothing but an attempt at asserting her
superiority over Pecola. Maureen wants to demonstrate to Pecola that she belongs to a downtrodden family. Only people who belong to a very low family see their father sleeping naked. This is the inner intention of Maureen but one must watch the intention of the novelist in showing this scene before the readers. The truth according to the novelist is that Maureen is a stupid and unenlightened girl to put this question to Pecola. The reason according to the novelist is that she is also a black and not a white. If a white were to make similar comments there would have been some justification. Even then such comments even if they were to be made by a white are to be condemned. Much more serious is the question for the novelist when the comment comes from Maureen who according to the novelist is after all a black character. She can never be forgiven for having made a comment of this kind, because, for the novelist Maureen is a black character hitting at another black character called Pecola. The light skinned complexion in Maureen does not make her a white character. But it induces in her a false feeling to feel superior to Pecola because she is in agreement with the white style of living and she also consciously endorses her belief in the supremacy of white culture.

The character Louis Junior is brought up in the tradition which believes in the superiority of the whites over the blacks. There Geraldine's son Louis Junior is vigorously trained and indoctrinated to take care about his choice in his behaviour with people:
...his mother did not like him to play with niggers...
Coloured people were neat and quiet; niggers were dirty and loud. (THE BLUEST EYE 67)

Geraldine's instruction to Junior is a wonderful textbook on the subject of internalised racism. Geraldine requests Junior to avoid moving with a particular type of black people who are treated as low lying people and therefore they are known as niggers. Louis Junior is strongly advised not to play with niggers. The ground for such an advice comes from her attachment to the white system of values. Geraldine knows that she and Louis Junior cannot be equal in comparison with the whites. The only easy thing for them is to differentiate themselves from the dark skinned who appear worse than themselves. The difference between Geraldine and Louis Junior and other low lying people is the status difference between coloured people and niggers. The major line that Geraldine takes is very interesting because a very low type of behaviour is traceable in niggers. According to Geraldine niggers are awkward loud and dirty and therefore they are uncultured. Geraldine is adjudged to be wrong by the novelist, if one examines some passages very carefully which reveal clues about the peculiar behaviour of some of the blacks.

The opening passage of the seventh chapter is extremely interesting in bringing to limelight a somewhat concealed and openly
pronounced psychology of the blacks who believe that they are on par with the whites:

They go to land-grant colleges, normal schools, and learn how to do the white man’s work with refinement… The dreadful funkiness of passion, the funkiness of nature, the funkiness of the wide range of human emotions. (The Bluest Eye 64)

The chief question before any proud black character like Geraldine is how to imitate the white man’s work with excellence. This is precisely the preoccupation of Geraldine. There is a standing advice given in the college to get rid of funkiness. Funkiness is a symptom of a wild display of emotion. According to the white standards funkiness is a sign of low culture. Geraldine who believes in following the whites follows the axiom of the whites which states that funkiness is the sign of low and uncultured temper. Geraldine has not built up any other yardstick to review the white system of values. She a blind follower of the whites is not in accordance with the white pattern of life, as her mental conception of culture is not in conformity with that of the whites. The distinction that she made between the coloured people and the niggers is born out of her implicit belief in the superiority of the coloured people over the niggers. One has to watch the progress of the novel especially in chapter seven which locates the roots of internalised racism.
Geraldine steeped in the established tradition of the whites is very eager to follow the white ways of life. It is this ideal which inspires her to instruct her son Louis Junior to avoid moving with niggers. The policy of doing the “white man’s work with refinement” creates in her a kind of hatred for the blacks who are niggers. It looks as if Geraldine is an advocate of the policy of internal inequality among the blacks. Toni Morrison comes down heavily upon Geraldine for her uncharitable attitude towards the niggers. The novelist’s view is that the blacks must be awakened to the reality as a whole race. Characters like Geraldine are a threat to the awakening of the black race. The relationship between Geraldine and Louis Junior is false for the reason that Geraldine has no worthwhile and healthy psychology to regard Louis Junior as her son and Louis Junior has no chance or training to look upon Geraldine as his affectionate mother due to the presence of internalised racism where human relationship is not cemented by real love and sympathy. It is the very clearly pronounced conviction of Toni Morrison that all the light skinned black characters are running after falsehoods of life. Refinement in behaviour is the yardstick by which Geraldine measures life. The novelist feels uneasy about this yardstick and she does not spare any chance to attack it either in a concealed way or in an open and explicit way.