CHAPTER - I
INTRODUCTION

The present research work aims at analyzing the racial exploration and race discourse in the novels written by Dorothy West, Pauline Hopkins and Alice Walker. The period, 1865-1916 saw the rise of a generation of active, outspoken, and versatile African American women. Not surprisingly, the decades from the 1880s to the beginning of Harlem Renaissance are called the Black women’s era. Between the end of the civil war and the opening decade of the twentieth century, there were roughly two generations of women writers who undertook the task of presenting the hardships, injustices and wrongs committed against their race and gender. Together, they formulate a theory of race literature; they wrote about slavery, its abolition, and it’s aftermaths of violence in their contemporary period. They have rewritten traditional stereotypical images of manhood and womanhood and modify the generic boundaries by mixing melodramatic, sensationalist, utopian, detective, political, romantic, and evangelical forms.

Writers like these are basically concerned with the oppression, exploitation, and plight of women in the national and global context. Various themes and thematic patterns are exploited by these women authors, directly and indirectly, indicate their central concern with the problems of oppressed women and characters in their novels. The characters are discriminated
primarily on the basis of gender, race and also on the basis of patriarchal, cultural conscriptions. African American women novelists insist on their freedom of expressions, their right to depict violence, lynching and the often cruel legacy of slavery, however unliterary their subject might seem to an audience divided between negro-phobia and a taste for local colour, the exotic, and sympathy for African American issues. From the point of view of the female writer, they are steeped in a gender awareness that allocates certain fixed roles to African American women. Torn between the conflicting images of the loose woman, the mammy or servant, the beautiful heroin of mixed, racial origin, and the modern middle class and educated women, these writers are intend to alert their audience that these stereotypes and expectations are flowed. (Graham 2011:54-55) The research work, therefore, aims at analyzing the selected fiction of authors chosen, as these discourses, essentially address racial aspects in different senses of the term. In order to pinpoint the distinguishing features that underscore racial based marginalization of women, the study borrows extensively from the recent theory and other disciplines simultaneously.

African American literature is the body of literature produced in the United States by the writers of African descent. The Harlem Renaissance of the 1920s was a time of flowering of literature and the arts. Among the themes and issues explored in this literature are the roles of African-Americans within the larger American society, African-American culture, racism, slavery and equality. African American writing has tended to incorporate oral forms such
as spirituals, sermons, gospel music, blues or rap. It has a rich tradition of oral culture including poetry, spiritual narratives, gospel music, blues, and rap. This oral poetry also appears in the African-American tradition of Christmas sermons, which make use of deliberate repetition, cadence, and alliteration—especially written poetry, but also prose has a strong tradition of incorporating all of these forms of oral poetry. Many scholars of African-American literature have studied the way Africa is portrayed. Addison Gayle’s *Edition of Black Aesthetics* (1972), and *The Way of the New World* (1975) advanced the notion of African American culture whose destiny was inexorably linked with African culture. Other important critical works that illumine the place of African-American literature are Houston A. Baker’s *The Journey Back* (1980) *Blues, Ideology, and Afro-American literature: A Vernacular Theory* (1984), Robert Stepto’s *From Behind the Veil* (1979), *Afro-American Literature: The Reconstruction of Instruction* (1979), Henry Louis Gates Jr’s *The Signifying Monkey* (1988), and *Figures in the Black* (1987).

African-American literature is designed with a mission to make their consciousness known to the world. It’s aim is to change social, political, economical aspects of society. Readers get acquaint with exploitation, oppression, persecution and consequent revolt of African-Americans. The revolt is dominant theme or motif in Afro-American literature. African-American has proceeded along with different paths and taken different turnings. However its moment is struggle for human rights and against exploitation of white people. Despite differences of country, religion,
conditions, society and language, the lives and experiences of Afro-American community derives from the fact that subjected to injustice and slavery. Still it is to some or greater degree is the victim of this social evil.

The characters in Afro-American literature have been created through the chemistry of life, experiences, society and problems, pain and rebellion against the set order. We find there are numerous expressions of red and hot experiences and fighting in Afro-American Literature. The problem of twentieth century as the problem of color line, the relation of the darker to the lighter race of men in Africa and America. African-American Literature is in search of it’s respective identity. In it’s own country African people lived the life of others. They were not considered as human being though they have surfaced from social life based on inequality and was roasted alive. They could not live in the white locality. American culture allotted them the bottom place in society and even they could not raise their voice against exploitation.

The history of the African Americans is the history of slavery and exploitation. Slavery is a system of society since the ancient civilization to till today. The evil structure of slavery system is being worked out in various forms like labors, child workers, prostitutes, sex workers, farm workers and domestic servants. The ignorant people have been forced to do such inhuman work for the sake of the betterment of exploiters. These people are kept aside from their natural rights and freedom as human beings. The established system of slavery has enforced them to follow the instructions of this system’s
ideology to become mental slaves. Once, the people become mental slaves, and then anything can be imposed on them. The slavery as a system takes the advantages of illiteracy, ignorance, poverty and directionless of the people.

Slavery was the prime and pivotal part of democracy and civilization. Athens and Sparta were on the forefront states of the Greece in terms of democracy and civilization. However, the slavery was as a system introduced in these states and in the form of domestic servants. These domestic servants were totally dependent on their owners. In addition to this, they did not have the freedom of socio-economic, political and cultural nature. They had been enforced to do hard jobs in the houses of their owners and they got absolutely inhuman and painful treatment from their owners. In case of the women servants, they were forced to do extraordinary works and services for their owners. To serve their owners was important as well as for the favour of their owners from these slaves. It would have decided their future and direction of their life. The predicament of the Negro woman in the slavery era was much more serious and critical than the Negro man.

“Black women in America were made victims of triple jeopardy: racism, sexism, and classism”. (Ranveer 1995:02)

She was the victim of the white and black patriarchal social order. Whenever the white master felt, he was able to rape or harass the black woman who was in his ownership as if she was an inanimate thing. The Negro woman in the slavery era was forced to be used and was used as a sex instrument in
order to create more slaves for the sake of plantation and domestic works. Therefore, there were many ‘breeding houses’ of Negro women were cows. The Negro women were treated like the private property of their masters.

“Some masters branded the litters of their names on the inside of their legs”. (Kahin 1995:02).

It indicates the harassment and inhuman exploitation of the Negro women that was done by their masters.

The rise of Du Bois as a leader of African Americans was most crucial phenomenon because he strongly challenged the traditional policy of Washington and led the African Americans towards the radical change of their education and culture. Du Bois strongly stated that the self of black is ruined in the racist American society. In addition, he wounded self led him towards the identity crisis and this crisis is two-ness. This is the two-ness as American and African. Black is suffering from the question whether their identity is being an African or American. Hence, every black in the United States has the feeling of ‘Double consciousness’ and that is African as well as American. He articulated that the American society is influenced by colour conflict.

“The problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the colour line”. (Du Bois 2006:09)

The black were tortured and ruined by the whites due to the colour of their skin. Hence there is colour line between the blacks and whites. Because of the colour line, they are not able to exchange culture, beliefs and faiths to each other.
Being a higher intellectual and educated, Du Bois rationally refused to solve the racial problems of African Americans. “He had always been mildly skeptical about the ability of religion to solve any man’s major dilemmas”. (Law 1956:241-258) Du Bois redefines the concept of democracy and religion in connection with the dilemma of African Americans. He strongly asserted that the religion is not the solution of human dilemma. Moreover he has shown that the church itself is a weapon for exploitation of the African Americans. Du Bois cultivated the cultural heritage of the blacks to empower their confidence as the Africans. To create negritude among the Negros he initiated the Niagara Movement in the year 1905 in order to gain civil liberties and freedom of blacks. Du Bois and his followers held a meeting at Nigara falls and decided to fight against segregation as well as traditional leadership of Booker T. Washington.

W.E. B. Du Bois’ Niagara Movement within four years transformed into National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). Although, the movement was established considering the empowerment of the blacks, the white social activists were also on the forefront to expand the ideology of the movement. The NAACP is very strong and constant organization today in the United Nations to solve the racial issues. Moreover the significant characteristic of the NAACP is its progressive and mixed racial members. The important objectives of the movement were to annihilate the segregation, to achieve the equal rights for education and vote and to implement the fourteenth amendment. This movement succeeded in achieving
the various rights of equality, annihilation of segregation and socio-economic as well as cultural enlightenment among the blacks.

Ever since the eighteenth century, African American literature has consistently incorporated forms ranging Jazz and film, effectively demonstrating its versality as a medium of African-American cultural expression. The literature has consistently documented the struggles of African-Americans with race and racism, African freedom, constitutional enfranchisement and education progress, political agency and social assimilation, as well as the specters of history and modernity. Finally African-Americans have also regularly wrestled with the critical and commercial expectations that guided, compromised, or contradicted their agendas as creative writers or as proclaimed agents of social change. (Jarrett 2003:01)

African-American’s place in American society has changed over the centuries. Before the American Civil War, the literature primarily consisted of memoirs by people who had escaped from slavery and the path of justice and redemption of freedom. At the turn of the twentieth century, nonfiction works by authors such as W.E.B. Du. Bois and Booker T. Washington debated whether to confront racist attitudes in the United States. During the American Civil Right Movement, authors such as Richard Wright and Gwendolyn Brook wrote about issues of racial segregation and Black Nationalism. Today, African-American Literature has become accepted as an integral part of American Literature, with books such as *Roots: The Saga of an American Family* by Alex Haley, *The Color Purple* (1982) by Alice Walker.
Nonetheless, early African American writers such as Hammon, Wheatley, Marrant, Equiano, king, Smith, and Prince Hall belonged to Boston and Philadelphia based religious networks of Anglo Protestantism. From here the scholars connect the struggles of these writers against racial discrimination and oppression with their literary uses of certain rhetorical forms and religious themes, as well as with their cultural and commercial strategies to publish the literature within religious networks. (03) So identity is an important part of this situation. It is very studied in detail because, It is shaped by various factors.

**Identity** is generally defined as the distinct personality of an individual, and the condition or character as to who a person is? The components of identity include a sense of personal continuity and of uniqueness from other people. In addition to curving out a personal identity based on the need for uniqueness, people also acquire a social identity based on their membership in various groups-familial, ethnic, occupational, and others. These group identities, in addition to satisfying the need for affiliation, help people to define themselves in the eyes of both others and themselves.

The identity of a person is shaped by various factors such as gender, race, class, nationality, culture, and generally by the society the person lives in. Identities are constructed on the basis of various traits and experiences.

According to Louis Kriesbrg,
“Race and skin colour are important makers of identity in many societies”. (Kriesberg 2005:161)

This issue is more problematic in the multicultural societies where identity is not appreciated and the concept of ‘other’ plays a vital role in human life and destiny. How the person is treated, accepted, praised, humiliated, or rejected by others have a great impact on the formation of identity of in or other.

The identity of African American is shaped in the racist society which considers term as inferior; relegated to the lowest and most unwanted jobs. Black Americans have faced the evil effects of racial discrimination such as suppression, segregation, slavery and poverty. Even those who have not been slaves have suffered the discrimination in the daily interactions with white society. After all, many people tried their best to abolish slavery and remove discrimination in order to establish democracy in the society.

African American women, on the other hand, have been the target of constant hostility because of the “intersectionality” of gender and racial issues that give rise to compound discrimination. The key to realization of black woman’s identity is the understanding of the intersectionality of oppressive forces; knowing that she does not experience discrimination only on the basis of gender or race; that various socially and culturally constructed categories of race and gender based discrimination interact simultaneous levels and cause more suppression for her and these factors are what form her self concept and identity. Black woman has faced this double jeopardy and has been perceived as lacking essential characteristics possessed by whites, looked as the ‘other’
who is almost always a lesser or inferior being and is treated accordingly with few or legal rights, characterized as less intelligent or as immoral, and at times regarded as subhuman.

“There is no protection to be female in this place is to an open wound that can not heal. Even scars form, the festering is ever low”. (Mercy 2008:161)

Women writers in Afro America have acquired the considerable name and fame today and also achieved position of independent existence of the women by presenting the real world of women and their strengths and weaknesses and also throws light on the causes for their dominance and delineation. They have not only portrayed women talking about their women in patriarchal society. The depiction of women literature time and again exhibits their responses to the upcoming challenges and also throws light on their longing and wishes which could not get outlet sometimes because of the limitations of the system and sometimes also because of too much rigidity and resistance.

The status of African American woman is seems to be extremely horrible. Being black these women suffered from racism. Being female they were the victims of sexual atrocities at the hands of white particulars as well as blacks. In this way the black women in Africa were the victims of triple jeopardy: racism, sexism, and classism. To liberate from this all sided brutality caused the black woman to raise their voice and made reliable to quest for their identity or the self realization. We find racial identity an echo especially
in the works of African American novelists. To understand racial identity in the above said women novelists, it is necessary to pinpoint the study of race, racism and racial elements in detail.

‘Race’ has become a central category in social, political and cultural theory since mid 1980. It is also become an important part of critical race theory which includes studies of race in literature and culture, ethnicity studies, studies of minority literatures and specific traditions in literature and philosophy. ‘Race’ has become a central concern within literary and cultural theory for various reasons. Racism and racial discrimination questions have become a component of critical race studies. ‘Race’ is a form of collective, communication, identity, one that is shared and not necessarily unique to an individual. Thus, the question of racial identity has a larger social and political significance. It involves questions of belonging, rights, citizenship, empowerment, welfare, affiliation and could be the locus of discrimination, exclusion and oppression. ‘Race’ studies in the latter decades of the twentieth century has thus seem cultural expressions and manifestation of race as both contexts for and consequences of political and social problems. Studying race means, to study the social roles, prejudices, resistance, collaboration and political significance of racial identity. It must be pointed out that race studies, especially in literary and cultural theory has, unfortunately, focus mainly on the most visible minority race-black, for many decades now. W. E. B. Du Bois, a sociologist and first African American Ph. D. from Howard University, London was a leading civil-rights activist of the early twentieth
century. His *Souls of Black Folk* (1903) is now a classic in the race studies. His main focus, besides civil rights for blacks in America, was the scientific racism of his age. Eugenics, social Darwinism and Nazism combined racial prejudices with scientific theories that demonstrated the inferiority of black race. This scientific racism was based in biology—a trend critiqued in race studies and feminist theory as ‘biological determinism’. It was also visible in aesthetic theories where black bodies and physiognomies were marked as ugly. Grotesque and even evil. Du Bois disputed the view that the blacks were biologically inferior. He argued that,

“There is no scientific basis for such a belief and that such a belief was more social than scientific”. (Nayar 2011:219)

In this argument Du Bois was clearly moving toward a social constructionist view of race, where race as a category is not scientifically demonstrable, but in fact emerges within social discourses and practices. Racial difference in biology does not, in this social constructionist view, validate racial inferiority. (219)

Race remains a critical category within academic and social theories. Poetics, politics, legal reform, welfare, access to education, health or employment remain embedded in categorization and census operations that deal in race. (30) In the last decades of the twentieth century, and especially after 9/11, many first world nations have been concerned with and about the questions and issues of human rights, race and racial identity. (234)
Biopolitics has become the new technology of control, surveillance and oppression. It is a new form of racialized discourse and racism too. (237)

Race is in fact striking complex, one fairly predominant element of the folk theory of race is that might be biologically real. According to one understandable line of thought, we have skin colors and hair textures and facial features—we have, a biologists like to say, phenotypes (roughly, the macro-level expressions of our genotypes, our genotype makeup). If we classify these phenotypes in a biologically kosher manner, then this is one way in which race might be biologically real. Another way in which race might be biologically real is not in terms of what we look, but in terms the genetic material that significantly determines what we look—a theory we can call genetic racial realism. And then there is the source of our genetic material, namely our ancestry. So a currently popular wave of biological racial realism-popularanism-holds that races are breeding populations or clusters of breeding populations, populations whose intra-group reproductive rate is sufficiently higher than their rate of reproduction with other populations, thereby ensuring genetic distance (and, usually, phenotypic differences) from each other over multiple generations. Many contemporary realists, taking inspiration from Du Bois maintain that race is not ultimately about biology at all. Instead of being a biological kind of thing, race is, on this alternative theory, socially constructed but real nonetheless. That is, race is real as a social kind thing.
In this regard, many philosophers, thinkers and scholars define ‘race’ in different ways, Among them a famous philosopher Hardison comments:

“The concept of a group of human beings distinguished from other human beings by visible physical features of the relevant kind” and “who originate from a distinctive geographic location”. (Glasgow 2009:4-5)

Graves argue:

“The term ‘race’ implies the existence of some non trivial under-lying hereditary features shared by a group of people and not present in other groups”. (20)

Many people seem to think that race is tied to ancestry, but then there is sizable chunk that seems to think that one’s race does not necessarily have to be the same as the race of one’s ancestor’s. Many, in fact, seem to think that one’s race can be determined by social relations, although many disagree with that claim as well. (71)

Observing above elements we can say that race thinking seems to involve both biological and social elements. We can say that phenotype is in some sense central to race, without going so far as to say that one’s race at times might turn out to be a function of one’s place in a matrix of social relationships. We just know at this point is that race-thinking involves both social and biological elements that visible traits and social relations sometimes seem relevant to determining a person’s race.
It is observed by Joshua Glasgow,

“Races are groups of human beings distinguished from other human beings by visible features of the relevant kind that the group has to some significantly disproportionate extent” (78)

‘Race’ is a social kind. Many thinkers pointed out the roles that race plays in our lives-in material status, housing, education, employment, criminal arrest and environmental toxins and so on-as evidence that it is considered as socially real as any other social category, such as wife or student or journalist. Obviously, there are various ways one might go about spelling out the details, but whatever social facts we recruited into this picture, the basic idea to constructivism is that race is a social construction in the way that monetary value is entirely social; but apparently real. And generally the constructivist’s developmental story is that races came to be, and continue to be, social kinds because we acted as if race was real, and since the racially oriented norms and beliefs by which we divide and sort our conscious selves affect the lives of anyone who is ‘raced’, which is to say pretty much all of us in the United States, our race based practices have corralled us into social races. (115)

In this regard, Taylor opines that:

“Races are populations constituted by social forces that give meaning to visible traits and ancestries in a way that links those populations to distinctive Probabilities for various “life chances”. (116)
Race as biological category and differing it from other categories such as caste on that basis is to ignore the recent development in theoretical research on race. Gerald D. Berreman has argued elsewhere that anthropologists today overwhelmingly recognize that race is no more a biological or genetic tact than is caste. Both are social constructions: both arbitrarily separate and rank people according to culturally specific valued qualities (e.g. ritual purity in India; moral and psychological qualities in America) that are falsely regarded as innate. As race is socially constructed and acted upon in the form of racism, it is real and devastating.

In a similar vein, a scholar, T K Oommen observed that stony academic pronouncement that race is a biological category. According to latest research, race is a biological concept does not have any validity. So much so that the American Anthropological Association has recommended to the US government to eliminate the term ‘race’ in the 2010census because research in human genome shows that DNA of human beings is 99.9% alike irrespective of race. Therefore, what is relevant is not race, but racism, that is, the ranking of human beings based on their presumed biological origins and features. It is practiced on the basis of physical difference. (Thorat 2004:1-2)

Race is about physical appearance and has been a characteristic of humanity for centuries. It is dividing up people into ‘races’ is an act of categorization. A race as, as defined by skin color, is no more a biological entity than is a notion. Instead we understand the criteria of ‘race’: skin color,
hair type, eye color, shape of mouth, shape of eyes etc. It has always been about linking culture and behavior to physical appearance. How we think about ‘race’ is to assume, for example, that person x is part of group A, therefore he behaves in a certain way. (Garner 2010:1-2)

Race has social meanings but not biological ones because we use term like, ‘black’, yellow, red etc. Our social worlds are full of ways to distinguish between one group and another in a specific context. We distinguish ‘race’ as a form of categorization. The interpretations of physical differences that we make in our societies are determined not by the indisputable fact of racial difference, but by the social imperatives that enable us to do so. In other words, the social world provides us with tools specific to both our culture and our period of history, which we then use to read ‘race’ from the bodies of human beings. We are bombarded with ways of admitting that ‘race’ is a natural part of our social world, one of the legitimate ways in which we try to make sense of difference. (03)

In biological terms (of simply what people look like) matters a lot. For example, it bears importantly on the way resources are made more or less accessible. It is not individuals alone, but also important like the state, which have input in determining the meaning of ‘race’. We find race at different social systems and their cultures attach different types of meaning to physical appearance. (4-5)

If one accepts, that race is only a special case of more general social facts, it follows that there can be no general theory of race and that race
relations must be placed within the total institutional and cultural context of the society studies. A few sociologists like R. E. Park, Gunner Myrdal, Robin Williams, and Oliver C. Cox have from a variety of perspectives related race relations such basic elements of social or cultural structure of social stratification, ideology, the distribution of power, and the system of production; most, however, have adopted a piecemeal rather than a holistic approach. Physical anthropologists note that,

“Races the various sub species of homo sapiens characterized by certain phenotypical and genotypical Traits. (e.g. the “Mangolide race” or the “Negroid race”). They have not agreed themselves, and biological classifications of the human species include three to more than score of such races”. (Berge 1978:08)

As Laymen puts it:

“The word race to describe a human group that shared certain cultural characteristics such as language or religion (e.g. the “French race” or The “ Jewish race”)”. (09)

While understanding the race, one understands the human group which shares curtain culture. Because we identify person’s race through his language and from which religion he is belong. Suppose a person is flat shaped face, we assume he is from china. A person who has long nose, we assume he is from French. Person’s behavior, attire, culture are the tools of determining his race.

Social Scientists observe that,
“By race a human group defines itself and/or is defined other groups as different from other groups by virtue of innate and immutable physical characteristics. The physical characteristics are in turn believed to be intrinsically related to moral intellectual and other non-physical attributes or abilities”. (10)

The African American race was ghettoized, persecuted and viciously outlawed from all avenues of decency, hope, progress and livelihood. Black writers of both sexes have dealt with the theme of race and racism extensively, either directly or indirectly. Male writers such as Richard Wright, Ralph Ellison, James Baldwin and Paul Lawrence Dunbar, find in racism a major theme of their novels. Women writers like Nell Larsen, Ann Petry, Toni Morrison and Alice Walker also talk of the basic reality. The black woman faced the reality of double discrimination of both race and sex. Racism and sexism co-exist in a traumatic alliance within the life of the black woman. For the black woman, racial discrimination together with gender discrimination proves to be a deadly combination. Capitalism, racism, and sexism have critically affected the lives and conscience of African American women. They are like the system of societal and psychological restriction. Sex and race have been interrelated in the history of America and the black woman writers like Toni Morrison, Alice Walker, Paule Marshall. They have necessarily reflected the relationship in their novels. The impact of racism and sexism had been related by these writers in terms of their history and expression as black and female. Just as blacks, a group are relegated to an underclass in America by
virtue of their sext. But within that separate caste a standard of woman is designed in terms of class definition. In the contemporary period black women novelists have continued to analyze the relationship between class, race, and gender. All these three elements—class, race, and gender—present in all Black American writers. (Aba Singh - http://www.litinfo.ge/vol.5-iss-1/singh.htm)

According to the definitions and ideas of races discussed above, it is clear that the concepts are closely related to racism. The existence of races in a given society presupposes the presence of racism, for without racism physical characteristics are devoid of social significance. It is not the presence of objective physical differences as socially significant or relevant. Therefore it is necessary to study and understand the racism.

‘Racism’ consists of ideologies and practices that seek to justify, or cause, the unequal distribution of privileges, rights or goods among different racial groups. Modern variants are often based in social perceptions of biological differences between peoples. These can take the form of social actions, practices or beliefs, or political systems that consider different races to be ranked as inherently superior or inferior to each other, based on presumed shared inheritable traits, abilities, or qualities. It may also hold that members of different races should be treated differently. While race and ethnicity are considered to be separate phenomena in contemporary social science, the two terms have a long history of equivalence in popular usage and older social science literature. Racism and racial discrimination are often used
to describe discrimination on an ethnic or cultural basis, independent of whether these differences are described as racial. According to the United Nations convention, there is no distinction between the terms racial discrimination and ethnic discrimination, superiority based on racial differentiation is scientifically false, morally condemnable, socially unjust and dangerous, and there is no justification for racial discrimination, in theory or in practice, anywhere.

‘Racism’ is still a pertinent factor in South Africa. It is pertinent to the rise of colonialism, because the division of human society in this way is inextricable from the need of colonialist powers to establish dominance over subject powers and hence justifies the imperial enterprise. Racial subordination is a form of suppression. The whites look down upon the colonized and create in them a feeling of inferiority and uselessness. White imperialism and apartheid are chief menaces vitiating the social fabric of South Africa. Racial discrimination mentally affects the colored.

**Homi k. Bhabha** observes as follows:

“Skin, as the key signifier or cultural and racial differences in the stereotypes is the most visible of fetishes, recognize of as common knowledge in a range of cultural, political, historical, discourses and plays a public part in the racial drama that is enacted everyday in colonial societies”. (Dominic 2012:109)

The term racism has been bandied around in so much public discourse, particularly since the 1960, such a concept is derived from perceptions that
programmes ranging from affirmative action to multiculturalism in the public arena end up placing white people at a systematic disadvantage in the realms of education and employment especially. Racism is continually addressing ‘race’ per se and that there is really not a problem until activists and academics make a fuss about it.

“Racism is a pathological tendency to interject race into situations where it is not relevant, merely for Personal gain” (Garner 2010:05)

‘Racism’ tries to explain the social world by reference to the natural world. Nature as, we know is in permanent flux, yet in racist social narratives, bodies and cultures are fixed and unchallenging; everyone who with certain patterns of behavior. As a set of transmitted genes some for appearance and some for behavior. The range of these is fixed. We can never break free, would run the argument of our genes because we are programmed to behave in particular ways.

“Racism is a belief system or doctrine which Postulates a hierarchy among various human races or ethnic groups. It may be based on an assumption of inherent biological differences ethnic groups that purport to determine cultural or individual behavior. It may be described as a strong form of ethnocentrism, including traits such as xenophobia (fear and hate of foreigners’ views against interracial relationships, ethnic nationalism and ethnic stereotypes”. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Racism)

Europeans/whites belong to a superior race for they are physically and culturally more advanced than the other races lies at the heart of racism. The
white races also claim and use phrases that occur in the literature that they are the civilized lot and “pioneers of civilization”, and hence that it is their God ordained duty to establish a system where chaos reigns and to administer government among savage and senile peoples. Otherwise, they say “the world would relapse into barbarism and night”. Leaving aside what the non-whites feel about the whites’ belief in their racial supremacy, even white men, who claim to have understood the profound hypocrisy, inherent illogically and the ulterior motive in the ideology, through they are numerically small, still only denounce the racists as a symptom of immaturity, a lack of experience, or ‘intellectually poor individuality’. It is observed by Bernard Russell,

“Racism is a method of bolstering up self-esteem and lust for power by means of beliefs which have nothing in their favour except that they are flattering”. (Benedict 1983:72)

‘Racism’ is historically a recent phenomenon. It has emerged out the colonialist and imperialistic endeavors. It is an Albert Memmi points out ‘The con-substantial part’ of colonialism and the highest expression of colonial system. Racism is fashioned mainly out of the psychological needs and wants of the whites in the colonial context to make their daily survival in it an unperturbed one. However, racism is cumulative. As the ideology of colonialism began to take vigorous shape in the past it also took a harsh form. It has become a powerful political weapon in the hands of the colonialist to entrench and legitimatize colonialism. But now, racism has acquired an
autonomous existence and it continuous to haunt the world though colonialism has become by and large defunct.

One of the most significant aspects of racism is that it symbolizes the fundamental relationship between the colonizer and the colonized. The relationship is always one that of superior and inferior, oppressor and oppressed, privileged and deprived, and still worse, it is one between the human and the sub human. It is a relationship never realized on imperial and to remain unconscious of his illegitimate position.

Racism, racial discrimination and related intolerance still continue to be devil humanity throughout the world. There is indeed no country, which is free from racism and racist tendencies. The scourge of racial discrimination is not confined or concentrated in any one part of world but it is to be found in all parts of the world, Aided by the process of globalization, the contemporary international system is now characterized by economic centers of power. These industrialized centers attract trifling of women, cheap labour, and illegal migrants. Individuals within these groups suffer not only exploitation but also become the victims of racist resentment by nationals, long term residents and those who have benefited from past privileges in the economy. These conditions exist several parts of the world, including some of the developed countries.

We find that racism and racial discrimination are widely prevalent in Latin America where total discrimination against the indigenous groups and
total exploitation of the indigenous communities. The human rights committee had occasion to observe, while considering the report of Brazil, that the committee was concerned over the existence of racial and other discrimination against black and indigenous persons. The same situation prevails in other countries of Latin America. While considering the report of Chile, the human rights committee had occasion to point out that the committee was concerned by hydroelectric and other development projects that might affect the way of life and the rights of persons belonging to the Mapuche and other indigenous communities.

The third world conference is intended to be action oriented and positive measures have to be adopted by all states, low enforcement agencies, NGOs, civil society organizations, and other associations in order to eradicate racism, racial prejudice from the minds of the people. What is necessary is to change in the attitudes of men and women. They must be mad to realize that we are all part of one common humanity, whatever be the race to which we belong, whatever be the colour of our skin and whatever be the religion we practice. A new culture what is called the humanist culture, must be cultivated, and instilled in the minds of youth.

The above lines criticize the elements of what racism is: It is a phenomenon whose roots lie in the social meanings attributed to ostensible biological differences, and has an observable history. It is a set of ideas organized hierarchically, and at its most abstract level, an ongoing power relationship. Distinctions have been made between the individual and the
institution as sources, and between practices, attitudes and processes. There are five-part approaches to a subject that, it is an ideology, as everyday concepts can be critiqued using a social science analysis of racism. It should be flexibly defined so far to more the shifting emphases in meanings attached to it, and the constant importance in the political economy of migration. It emerges in practice, as inextricable but not reducible to class relations, gender relations and nationalism. The focus is indeed on the material contexts in which racism is enacted, and less on the cultural expressions that racist ideas may take. The overlapping of-isms may be dizzying for those seeking conceptual clarity, but it rewards the reader interested in the dynamics of inequalities.

There has been no satisfactory definition of ‘race’ yet offered. This is because it is a social rather than natural phenomenon. However, even though it has no basis in biology, the division of the human race into ‘races’ has very serious and measurable impacts on people. It is a multifaceted social phenomenon, with different levels and overlapping forms. It involves attitudes, actions, processes and unequal power relations. It is based on the interpretations of the idea of ‘race’, hierarchical social relations and the form of discrimination that flow from this. It is not confined to extreme cases, but is present in a whole continuum of social relations. Specific societies see and do ‘race’ differently, and are organized in different ways. Therefore, discussions of racism in the abstracts, without referring to particular conditions in particular places at particular times, are quite limited and rejected.
Race Tradition of African American Women Writers:

Women are defined not by the struggling development of their brain or their will or their spirit or by their inherent character traits and inner power. It is a little wonder that when a woman comes to the task of rendering experience they come out with a profound sense of their marginalization and distance from having meaningful impact, or self-defined role in the world. Historically they have been denied the opportunities. Connected to this lack of opportunity is the fact they have been denied judicious critical climate. Further the specter of male judgment along with the active discouragement and of her need by a culture controlled by males has created problems for women writers, problem of contact with herself, problem of language and style, problems of energy and survival.

The new generation of women writers write about woman’s feelings and their gender related problems. It is to be noted here that earlier women characters were shown as subservient and submissive who never raised a voice against the dominance of male in society. In other words women were shown as ideal wives. But in modern era, women disapprove the dominance of men in society. They have started demanding their human rights. They also fight against unjust norms and tradition. So the ideal image of woman that disappeared with the arrival of new modern spirited woman. This new woman shatters earlier ideal image of a woman.
‘Feminism’ as a concept is opposed to the idea of subordination of women both families as well as society. It challenges the domination of patriarchal which audaciously define woman for herself without any regard for her independence, integrity and identity. Feminism may appear in various forms such as radical, socialist, Marxist, lesbian and so on so forth, but at the root is basically a concept concerned with the question of identity. Traditionally, feminism was a mass movement in the sense that woman clamored for political equality, civil rights, job opportunities etc. Today the movement has assumed an individualistic nature where women demand human rights and personal independence dismissing the earth while socially defined roles. However, this does not imply that women today wish to disturb the existing social and economic parameters. Contemporary feminist thought is necessarily pro-women but not entirely anti-man. It is a concrete step towards better human relationship.

Social reality in terms of space and time form an integral part of a work of art and is transmuted in the process of giving it a creative expression. The spectrum of the oppression of women has always been central to the imagination of several women writers. The acts like suppression of women, domestic violence, female infanticide etc. provide a framework for fiction. The social institutions like marriage and family play an important role in the society. Family is a platform to experience and analyze the gendered practices. Thus family is a parameter to study the dynamics of gender perception in the society.
Women writers aim at probing deep into the causes of women inequality and social injustice and contend that inequality between the sexes is caused by the cultural constructions of gender differences. Women writers are constantly trying to transform the existing over-rigid division of gender as difference, searching new means of knowing themselves, and to establish a new order of values and meaning. Following African American women authors and scholars undertake the task of deconstructing the social construction of gender and the subsidiary cultural paradigms that support it. Taking it into consideration this concept, some writers have explored very these themes in their literary work. Some of them are as follows.

**Phillis Wheatley:** (1753-1784) was the first published African American poet. She was at the moment a piece of property awaiting the highest bidder. The publication of her *Poems on Various Subject, Religious and Moral* (1773) brought her fame both in England and the American colonies. In 1970 with the publication of a verse. She wrote in the memory of the Reverend George Whitefield, a famed Methodist evangelist. In 1768, she wrote a patriotic verse, “On the Arrival of the Ships of War, and Landing of the Troops”. Today her work is given the special honor it deserves.

**Sojourner Truth** (1797–1883) was an African-American abolitionist and women's rights activist. Her best-known speech on racial inequalities, "Ain't I a Woman?" was delivered extemporaneously in 1851 at the Ohio Women's Rights Convention. She delivered her large speeches to large crowds on the
subjects of slavery and human rights. She sought political equality for all women, and chastised the abolitionist community for failing to seek civil rights for black women as well as men. She openly expressed concern that the movement would fizzle after achieving victories for black men, leaving both white and black women without suffrage and other key political rights.

**Harriet Ann Jacobs** (1813–1897) Being escaped from slavery and was later freed. Harriet became an abolitionist speaker and reformer. She wrote an autobiographical novel, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, first serialized in a newspaper and published as a book in 1861 under the pseudonym Linda Brent. It was a reworking of the genres of slave narrative and sentimental novel, and was one of the first books to address the struggle for freedom by female slaves, and to explore their struggles with sexual harassment and abuse, and their effort to protect their roles as women and mothers.

**Frances Ellen Watkins Harper** (1825 –1911) was an African-American abolitionist, poet and author. Publishing her first book of poetry at age 20 and her widely praised *Iola Leroy*, at age 67. In 1850, she became the first woman to teach sewing at the Union Seminary. In 1851, alongside William Still, chairman of the Pennsylvania Abolition Society, she helped to escape slaves along the Underground Railroad on their way to Canada. She worked as a public speaker and political activist after joining the American Anti-Slavery Society in 1853. With the *Poems on Miscellaneous Subjects* (1854) became her biggest commercial success. Her *Sketches of Southern Life* in 1872. She gave
her detailed experience touring the South and meeting freed blacks. In these poems she described the harsh living conditions of many. She continued to fight for the rights of women, African Americans, and many other social causes.

**Ida Bell Wells-Barnett** (1862 –1931), Ida B. Wells, was a journalist, newspaper editor, suffragist, sociologist, Georgist, and an early leader in the Civil Rights Movement. She documented lynching in the United States, showing that it was often used as a way to control or punish blacks who competed with whites, rather than being based on criminal acts by blacks. She was active in women's rights and the women's suffrage movement, establishing several notable women's organizations. While writing her editorials under the pseudonym "Iola," she condemned violence against blacks, disfranchisement, poor schools, and the failure of black people to fight for their rights. She was fired from her teaching job and became a full-time journalist. Outraged, attacked the evils of lynching in her newspaper; she also encouraged the black residents of Memphis to leave town. Barnett’s many pamphlets exposed white violence and lynching. She defended black victims. In 1895 she married Ferdinand Barnett, a prominent Chicago attorney. The following year she helped organize the National Association of Colored Women. In 1909, she helped found the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. Wells-Barnett continued her fight for black civil and political rights and an end to lynching until shortly before she died.
**Jessie Redmon Fauset** (1882–1961) was an American editor, poet, essayist and novelist. She studied the teachings and beliefs of W.E.B Du Bois and considered him to be her mentor. Fauset was known as one of the most intelligent women novelists of the Harlem Renaissance. As a Literary Editor, Fauset fostered the careers of many of the most famous authors of the Harlem Renaissance, including Countee Cullen, Claude McKay, Jean Toomer, and Langston Hughes. Being the editor of magazine *The Crisis*, she contributed poems and short stories, as well as a novelette, translations from the French of writings by black authors from Europe and Africa, and a multitude of editorials.

**Zora Neale Hurston** Hurston was a preeminent Black female writer in the United States. She published her more than 50 novels, short stories, plays and essays, she wrote her most famous work *Their Eyes Were Watching God* in 1937. Unlike the style of contemporaries Richard Wright and Ralph Ellison, Hurston did not write explicitly about Black people in the context of white America. She focused on the culture and traditions of African Americans through the poetry of their speech. She experienced a few literary successes, including placing in short story and playwriting contests in *opportunity* magazines, including the Journal of American Folklore, she worked with Langston Huges on a play called *Mule Bone: A Comedy of Negro Life* and also wrote several other plays, including *The Great Day and From Sun to Sun.*
**Dorothy West** (1907 –1998) Dorothy, the only child of Rachel and Isac Christopher West, was born in Boston, Massachusetts, on June 1, 1907. Her father was a former slave who established a successful fruit and vegetable business that moved his family into Boston’s black upper-middle class. Dorothy West was educated at Girl’s Latin school and graduated in sixteen. She began writing short stories at age seven and had her stories published in the Boston Post by age fifteen. She and her cousin Helen Johnson, along with other young black spring writers, formed the Saturday Evening Quill Club in Boston. Dorothy won second prize from the Urban Legue Magazine, Opportunity for the short story *The Typewriter*. She moved to New York, where she became part of the Harlem Renaissance arts movement. She met literary figures such as Wallace Thurman, Langston Hughes and Countee Cullen. West published her short stories in New York Daily News. She began her own magazine, *Challenge*, a literary quarterly. She encouraged writers to submit stories that addressed the struggle of poor and working class people. Being the daughter of slave father, West’s upper-class upbringing served as background for her two novels, *The Living is Easy* (1948) and *The Wedding* (1995). West highlights the color and class differences in black families like the one she grew up in, and the pain it caused so many. She was a novelist and short story writer during the time of the Harlem Renaissance. She is best known for her novel *The Living Is Easy* (1948), as well as many other short stories and essays, about the life of an upper-class black family. *The Living is Easy*, using an ironic sense of humor, West portrayed the life of a young
southern girl in pursuit of the upper class lifestyle. The work explored racial, economic, and social tensions within the African-American community through the examination of one family. The main character, Cleo Judson, marries into money and asks her three sisters and their husbands to stay with her and her new husband. At the age of 85 West has written her second novel, entitled *The Wedding* (1995), which portrayed the message that while race may be a false distinction, love knows no bounds. West, for her work *The Wedding*, garnered praise from critics, who lauded the work's multigenerational look at class and racial issues regarding an affluent African-American family. The book also sparked a renewed interest in her other writings and led to the publication of the collection *The Richer, The Poorer: Stories, Sketches and Reminiscences* (1995) are also praiseworthy.

**Anne Petry** presented the range of black and White American experience in her novels, short stories, and other works. *The Street* (1946), her most famous novel, was of black urban life in the 1940s. She was supposed to be the most successful follower of the 1940s “Richard Wright school” of urban protest writing; and black feminists cite *The Street* as the first African-American novel in which motherhood is a major theme. Among her other works, *The Narrows* (1957), about a doomed interracial love affair. During these years Petry also wrote a children’s book, *The Drugstore Cat* (1949), and two historical novels, *Harriet Tubman: Conductor on the Underground Railroad* (1955) and *Tituba of Salem Village* (1963).
Margaret Walker (Margaret Abigail Walker Alexander) (1915–1998) Her notable works include the award-winning poem *For My People* (1942) and the novel *Jubilee* (1966), set in the South during the American Civil War. In 1942, Walker's poetry collection *For My People* won the Yale Series of Younger Poets Competition under the judgeship of editor Stephen Vincent Benet, thus making her the first black woman to receive a national writing prize. It is also considered the most important collection of poetry written by a participant in the Black Chicago Renaissance before Gwendolyn Brooks’s *A Street in Bronzeville*. The poems were written when world-wide pain, sorrow, and affliction were tangibly evident, and few could isolate the Black man's dilemma from humanity's dilemma during the depression years or during the war years. Margaret’s second novel, *Jubilee* (1966), is the story of a slave family during and after the Civil War, and is based on her great-grandmother's life. It took her thirty years to write. Roger Whitlow says. “It serves especially well as a response to white 'nostalgia' fiction about the antebellum and Reconstruction South. It is considered important in African-American literature by Margaret is an influential figure for younger authors”

Gwendolyn Brooks (1917–2000) Gwendolyn Brooks was a highly regarded, much-honored poet, with the distinction of being the first black author to win the Pulitzer Prize. She was poetry consultant to the Library of Congress- the first black woman to hold that position. Several of her poems reflect the civil rights activism of the period of 1960s. She has not only combined a strong commitment to racial identity and equality with a mastery of poetic
techniques, but she has also managed to bridge between the academic poets of her generation in the 1940s and the young black militants of the 1960s. Brook’s book of poetry, *Annie Allen* (1950) focused on the life and experiences of a young black girl as she grew into womanhood in the Brozeville neighborhood of Chicago. It was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for poetry.

**Maya Angelou** (1928–2014) She is widely acclaimed American poet, author and activist. Influenced by Black authors like Langston Hughes, W. E. B. Du Bois and Paul Lawrence Dunbar her love of language developed at the small age. Her words often depict Black beauty, the strength of woman and the human spirit, and the demand for social justice. Her first collection of poems *Just Give Me a Cool Drink of Water* was nominated for a Pulitzer Prize in 1972, the same year she became the first black woman to have a screenplay produced. Writing for adults and children, Angelou explored the Black female autobiographical tradition.

On her account Angelou has seven autobiographies, three books of essays, and several books of poetry, and was edited with a list of plays, movies and television shows spanning over 50 years. She was respected as a spokesperson for black people and women, and her works have been considered a defense of Black culture. Angelou’s major works have been labeled as autobiographical fiction. She made a deliberate attempt to challenge the common structure of autobiography by critiquing, changing, and exploring
the genre. Her work center on the themes such as racism, identity, family, and travel. Her books stretches over time and place, from Arkansas to Africa and back to the U. S., and takes place from the beginnings of World War II to the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr.

**Paule Marshall** (1929) is an American author, whose novels emphasize the need for black Americans to reclaim their African heritage. She published her first novel *Brown Girl, Brownstones* being published in 1959. *Soul Clap Hands and Sing*, (1960) a collection of four novellas. In 1965, she was chosen by Langston Hughes to accompany him on a State Department-sponsored world tour, on which they both read their work, which was a boon to her career. She subsequently published the novel *The Chosen Place, The Timeless People* (1969). She defended black people. In a debate she criticized white liberals who couldn’t accept civil disobedience, expressing a need to encourage the liberal to stop being a liberal and become an American radical. She was a critic of existentialism. She wrote a critical review of Richard Wright’s *The Outsider*.

**Toni Morrison**: Morrison’s novel, *The Bluest Eye* (1970), It tells the story of a young African American girl who believes her incredibly difficult life would be better if only she had blue eyes. Morrison explores the African American experience in its many forms and time periods in her work. In her work *Sula* (1973), she explores good and evil through the friendship of two women who grew up together. Morrison’s one of greatest masterpieces, *Beloved* (1987)
explores love and supernatural. The main character, a former slave, is haunted by her decision to kill her children rather than see them become slaves. Three of her children survived, but her infant daughter died at her hand. For this spellbinding work, Morrison won the Pulitzer Prize for fiction in 1998. Her novels are known for their epic themes, vivid dialogue and richly detailed black characters.

**Lucille Clifton** (1936-2010) Clifton was an American poet, writer, and educator. Frequent topics in her poetry include the celebration of her African-American heritage, women's experience, and the female body. Clifton’s family roots to the West African kingdom of Dahomey, now the Republic of Benin. Therefore her work reflects the themes from Africa. She cites as one of her ancestors the first black woman to be legally hanged for manslaughter in the state of Kentucky during time of slavery in the United States. Her children’s books are about a young black boy with 1970’s some of the Days of Everett Anderson. Everett Anderson, a recurring character in many of her books, spoke in authentic African American dialect and dealt with real life social problems. Her work features in anthologies such as *My Black Me: A beginning Book of Black Poetry*, *A poem of her own: voices of American Women Yesterday and Today*, *Black Stars: African American Women Writers*.

**Toni Cade Bambara** (1939–1995), was an African American author, social activist. She was active participant in the 1960s Black Arts Movement and the emergence of black feminism. There was the first feminist collection of
Bambara’s work included *The Black Woman* (1970), short stories, and essays by Nikki Giovanni, Paul Marshalle, Alice Walker, Audre Laurde etc. focus on African American women. *Tales and Stories for Black Folk* (1971) contained work by Langston Hughes, Ernest J Gains, Pearl Crayton and Alice Walker. *This bridge called My Back* (1981), it is another groundbreaking feminist anthology by women of colour, Bambara wrote the introduction for such work. She often ascribed as a feminist. She used to say, perhaps we need to let go of all notions of manhood and femininity and concentrate on Blackhood. Her novel, *Those Bones Are Not My Childe* (1999) deals with the disappearance and Murder of Forty Black Children in Atlanta between 1979 and 1981. Her work was mainly related with oppression and injustice in general with the African American Communities. Her work also informs the radical feminism and firmly placed inside African American culture, with its dialect, oral traditions and Jazz techniques.

**Yolande Cornelia "Nikki" Giovanni Jr.** (1943) one of the world’s most well-known African American poets. She covers topics ranging from race and social issues to children’s literature. Her poetry was collected in *Black Feeling, Black Talk* (1967), *Black Judgment* (1968) and *Re:creation* (1970). These all three reflect Giovanni’s voice for African Americans. Her work is described as conveying urgency in expressing the need for black awareness, unity and solidarity. Her writing has been heavily inspired by African American activists and artists. Issues of race, gender, sexuality, and the African American family also have influenced her work. Her poetry pertaining
the themes of gender and race. In the late 1960s and early 1970s it addresses black womanhood and black manhood.

**Ntozake Shange:** (1948) is an American playwright, and poet. As a self-proclaimed black feminist, she addresses issues relating to race and feminism in much of her work. Shange is best known for the Obie Award-winning play *for colored girls who have considered suicide / when the rainbow is enuf*. Her several novels including *Sassafrass, Cypress & Indigo, Liliane*, and *Betsey Brown*, a novel about an African-American girl who runs away from home. Her famous work, *choreopoem* chronicled the lives of women of colour in the United States, that explores the black experience. Shange is described as a post black artist. She is a part of the black aesthetic, and describes different styles of writing for different parts of the country.

**Terry McMillan** (1951) Her work is characterized by relatable female protagonists. Her novel, *Waiting to Exhale* (1992) contributed to a shift in Black popular culture consciousness and the visibility of a female Black middle class identity in popular culture. McMillan introduced the interior world of Black women professionals in their thirties who are successful, alone, available, and unhappy.

Pauline Hopkins (1859-1930) born in Portland, Main, in 1859 Hopkins, who grew up in Boston and was educated in the city’s public schools, began her artistic career as a playwright, actress, and performer, mainly with the Hopkins’s colored Traubadors, a theatrical troupe which included family
members, who gave concert throughout the Boston area. Hopkins entered the new phase of her career, which considered with an auspicious era in African-American literary production. The turn of the century witnessed an efflorescence of black literary talent- including Charles Chesnutt, Paul Lawrence Dunbar, Anna Julia Cooper, Sutton Griggs, to name only the most prominent who as RICHARD Yorborough notes, found more “outlets for publication open to them had been afforded to blacks at any time since the hight of the abolition movement”. Colored American Magazine was no longer a viable platform for the expression of Hopkins’s political ideas and literary ambitions.

Pauline Hopkins published short stories, essays, biographical sketches, feature articles and a history primer, all in the short five year span between 1900-1905 during past of which time she served as a literary editor of the Colored American Magazine. Hopkins and her original cohorts had hoped the Colored American Magazine would function as a forum for advancing the ‘interest of Blacks’ and promoting the development of Afro-American art and literature. Like most of her black contemporaries, she believed that literature, fiction especially had transformative social value and counter discursive power. As she put the matter in her preface to Contending Forces,

“Fiction is a great value to any people as preserver of manners and Customs- religious, political and social. It is a record of growth and development from generation to generation” (Pauline Hopkins 2004)
Writing her novel of *One Blood*, Hopkins can be said to have entered the lists of contest these cultural fictions concerning race and blood, the reinforcements, as it were, popping up the color line and maintaining white supremacy. Hopkins understood, of course, that the ‘color line’, the invisible but powerful social devide structured to ‘separate’ the races, was so fiercely guarded and so violently policed in turn of the twentieth century. U.S. even as the crossing it, had mainly proved the custom of the country. Otherwise, the need would never have arisen for the ‘one drop rule’ or any other fiction of ‘black’ blood, measured in quarters, eights, sixteenths, and such.

Hopkins was a prominent African American novelist. She is considered a pioneer in her use of the romantic novel to explore the social and racial themes. Her work reflects the influence of W.E.B. Du Bois. She explored the difficulties faced by African Americans amid the racist violence of post-civil war America in her first novel, *Contending Forces: A Romance Illustrative of Negro Life North and South* (1900). It is her best novel and her only work of fiction published in book form during her lifetime. Hopkins uses the conventions of the sentimental romance as she seeks to encourage social change. In its pages we encounter noble heroes and virtuous heroines, exotic settings, unsavory villains, melodramatic scenes, and a star crossed love affair. Both an extraordinary detailed examination of black life in nineteenth century America and a richly textured. Her another novel,
*Of One Blood or The Hidden Self* is the last of four novels. It tells the story of Reuel Briggs, a medical student who does not care about being black or appreciating African history but finds himself in Ethiopia on an archeological trip. His motive is to raid the country of lost treasures, which he does find. However, he discovers much more than he expected: the painful truth about blood, race and the half of his history that was never told. Hopkins wrote the novel intending, in her own words, “to raise the stigma of degradation from (the black) race”. The title, *Of One Blood*, refers to biological kinship of all human beings. Not only had a prolific writer for the journal, Pauline Hopkins also served as one of its powerful editorial forces. This volume of her Magazine Novels, which appeared serially in the journal between March 1901 and November 1903, reveals Hopkins’ commitment to fiction as a vehicle for social change. She weaves important political themes into the narrative formulas of nineteenth century dime-store novels and story papers, which emphasize suspense, action, complex plotting, multiple and false identities, and the use of disguise. Offering both instruction and entertainment, Hopkins’ novels also expose the limitations of popular American narrative forms when telling the stories of black characters.

**Alice Walker** (1944) Alice Malsenior Walker was born on February 9, in Eatonville, Georgia. Her parents, Minnie Lou Grant and Willie Lee Walker were share croppers. Sharecropper families tended forms in exchange for poor housing, basic food goods, and inadequate amounts of money. It was a system that generally kept black families in endless debt to white farmers. Walker
grew up where there were even the poorest people could find quite places of beauty to reflect in every season. Her literary talent grew up in her school time. While studying at spelman college, Walker became involved in the civil rights movement. Where she began writing her first book, Once, a collection of poetry that was published in 1968. It was followed by *The Third Life Grange Copeland* (1968), *The Life of Thomas Lodge* (1974), *The Temple of My Familiar* (1989), *Possesing the Secret of Joy* (1992).

An outspoken advocate for social and political change, Alice Walker consistently speaks out when she sees injustice. She was part of a civil rights protest at the White House at the age eighteen. Her lifelong commitment has been against to all humankind as well as nature, but her primary goal has been to uplift women. Having witnessed so much suffering among women she grew up, her writings constantly reflect their struggle. Walker has asked, “How can a family, a community, a race, a nation, a world be healthy and strong if one half dominates the other half through threats, intimidation, and actual acts of violence”?

She is one of the most admired African American writers working today. Living in the racially divided south, Walker attended segregated schools. She emerged as a prominent voice in the black feminist movement. *The Color Purple* (1982) set in the early 1900s. The novel emphasizes the female African American experience through the life and struggles of its narrator, Celie. Celie suffers terrible abuse at the hands of her father and later,
from her husband. Celie a young poor black girl raped repeatedly by her father, she loses two children and then is married to a man who treats her no better than a slave. She is separated from her sister Nettie and dreams of becoming like the glamorous Shug Avery, a singer and rebellious black woman who has taken charge of her own destiny. Gradually Celie discovers the support of women that enables her to leave the part behind and begin a new life.

_The Temple of My Familiar_ (1989) Walker’s another novel which is narrated by several characters and dominated by the Miss Lissie, who can remember all her previous lives. Through them the history can be traced: she was a slave, raped and mutilated; she lived in a harem, pleasuring an old man; she was burnt as a witch. The most inventive aspect of the novel is its contemplation of the past. Suwelo, a central character of novel is a prosperous black man who comes to stay in an inherited house in Baltimore. There he meets Lissie who is small and very black. She has an extraordinary gift by nature. Having passed through multiple generations of lives, she remembers them all. She embodies what suwelo would prefer to pass over: the unrecorded experiences of suffering which lie beneath the authorized versions of history.

Possessing the Secret of Joy (1992) is a story of black girl, Tashi who is from Africa. She comes from Olinka. She married with Adam Johnson & leaves Olinka because of the War. She is torn between two cultures, Olinkan and Western. She suffered emotionally and physically from the circumcision
which had done at her childhood. Due to it she goes under the trauma of her earlier experiences. Being a black African, she has survived “suffering and humiliation”. Receiving the mark of humiliation, Tashi is almost destroyed physically and emotionally. Adam, her husband rescues her, marries with her and liberates Tashi from such a painful situation. Present novel catalogues her descent into madness, her long fight to salvage and reconstruct her self, her return to Africa, her final liberation and her discovery that “resistance is the secret of joy”.

These are some prominent examples of women writers who have contributed their literary work regarding race tradition. Now we should also have to find some examples of African-American men writers who have contributed regarding race tradition.

**Race Tradition of African American Men Writers:**

Black authors who are poets, playwrights, novelists and scholars, and together they helped capture the voice of a nation. They have fearlessly explored racism, abuse and violence as well as love, beauty and music. While their names and styles have changed over the years, they have been the voices of their generations and helped inspire the generations that followed them. What follows is a list of prominent Black authors who have left a mark on the literary world forever.

**Frederick Douglass** (1818 –1895) Douglas was an African-American social reformer, abolitionist, orator, writer, and statesman. Being escaped from
slavery, he became a leader of the abolitionist movement. On his account there are several autobiographies. *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*, (1845), in which he has described his experiences as slave. After having an active complainer against slave he wrote his last autobiography known as, *Life and Times of Frederic Douglas* (1881) in which he covered the events through and after the Civil War. He has actively supported women’s suffrage and was a believer in the equality of all people, whether black, female, Native American, or recent immigrant. He used to say, “I would unite the anybody to do right and with nobody to do wrong”.

**William Edward Burghardt "W. E. B." Du Bois** (1868–1963) was an American sociologist, historian, civil rights activist, Pan-Africanist. He became the leader of the Niagara Movement, a group of African-American activists who wanted equal rights for blacks. Racism was the main target of Du Bois’s writings, and he strongly protested against lynching, Jim Crow Laws, and discrimination in education and employment. His collection of essays, *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903), was a seminal work in African American literature; and his 1935 magnum opus Black Reconstruction in America challenged the prevailing orthodoxy that blacks were responsible for the failures of reconstruction era. He believed that capitalism was a primary cause of racism, and he was sympathetic to socialist causes throughout his life. He studied black America and wrote some of the earliest scientific studies on Black communities, calling for an end to racism. Many of his essays from *Crisis* were published in book from under the title, The Emerging thought of
W. E. B. Du Bois: Essays and Editorials from “The Crisis”. He also focused on the Black race covering the topics of missegranation and economic disparities in the south.

**Ralph Waldo Ellison** (1914–1994) Elson is best known for his novel, *Invisible Man* (1953), it explores the theme of man’s search for his identity and place in society as seen from the perspective of an unnamed black man in the New York city of the 1930s. Through the protagonist, Ellison explores the contrasts between the Northern and Southern varieties of racism and their alienating effect. The narrator is invisible in a figurative sense, in that people refuse to see him, and also experiences a kind of dissociation. The novel would be regarded as a groundbreaking meditation on race and marginalized communities in America. He also published a collection of essays known as *Shadow and Act* (1964) and *Going to the Territory* (1986).

**James Arthur Baldwin**: (1924-1987) Baldwin is known for his reflections on his experiences as an openly gay black man in white America. His novels, essays and poetry make him a social critic who shared the pain and struggle of Black Americans. His essays as collected in Notes of a *Native Son* (1955), it explores racial, sexual and class distinctions in Western societies, more notably in mid 20th century America. His novels, *Another Country* and *Tell me How Long the Train’s been Gone* are experimental works dealing with black and white characters and with heterosexual, gay and bisexual characters. His essays never stop articulating the anger and frustration felt by real life black
Americans with more clarity and style than any other writer of his generation. His two novels, *If Beale Street Could Talk* and *Just Above my Head* written in the 1970, placed a strong emphasis on the importance of black family. Being emerged an activist; Baldwin was one of the leading voices in the Civil Rights Movement for his compelling work on race.

**August Wilson** (1945–2005) was an American playwright whose work included a series of ten plays, *The Pittsburgh Cycle*, for which he received two Pulitzer Prizes for Drama. Each is set in a different decade, depicting the comic and tragic aspects of the African-American experience in the 20th century. Wilson's best known plays are *Fences* (1985) (which won a Pulitzer Prize and a Tony Award), *The Piano Lesson* (1990) (a Pulitzer Prize and the New York Drama Critics' Circle Award), *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*, and *Joe Turner's Come and Gone*. Wilson's "Pittsburgh Cycle," also often referred to as his "Century Cycle," consists of ten plays—nine of which are set in Pittsburgh's Hill District (the other being set in Chicago), an African-American neighborhood that takes on a mythic literary significance like Thomas Hardy's Wessex, William Faulkner's Yoknapatawpha County, or Irish playwright Brian Friel's Ballybeg. The plays are each set in a different decade and aim to sketch the Black experience in the 20th century and ‘raise consciousness through theater’ and echo ‘the poetry in the everyday language of black America’. He was fascinated by the power of theater as a medium where a community at large could come together to bear witness to events and currents unfolding.
James Mercer Langston Hughes (1902–1967) was an American poet, social activist, novelist, and playwright. He is best known as a leader of the Harlem Renaissance. His most of poems published in the magazine, Crisis. His work is influential of his contemporaries, Zora Neal Hurston, Wallace Thurmer, Claude Mckay, Countee Cullen, Richard Bruce Nugent and Aaron Douglas. He tried to depict the lower life, the real lives of blacks in the lower economic strata. He criticized the divisions and prejudices based on skin colour within the black community. He wrote the manifesto of black people, The Negro Artist and The Racial Mountain. Published in The Nation in 1926. His poetry and fiction portrays the lives of the working class blacks in America. Lives he portrayed as full of struggle, joy, laughter and music. Remembering his work is pride in the African American identity and its diverse culture.

Richard Nathaniel Wright (1908–1960) was an American author of sometimes controversial novels, short stories, poems, and non-fiction. Much of his literature concerns racial themes, especially those involving the plight of African Americans during the late 19th to mid-20th centuries. Literary critics believe his work helped to change race relations in the United States in the mid-20th century. He wrote a novel, Native son (1940) which was supposed that it was the concentration on violence. He portrayed a black man in ways that seemed to conform white’s worst fears. Wright’s semi autobiographical novel, Black Boy (1945), describes his clashed with the seventh day-Adventist family, his trouble with white employers and social isolations.
Amiri Baraka (1934 –2014): He was a poet and political activist. He used his writing as weapon against racism. He explored the anger of Black Americans and advocated scientific socialism. Often focusing on Black liberation and White Racism, he spent most of his life fighting for the rights of African Americans. His representations of race and racism have made him an influential part of the Black Arts Movement along with Nikki Giovanni, Sonia Sanchez and Maya Angelou. In his work Baraka explored the violence, misogyny, homophobia and racism. Baraka’s play, *Dutchman* (1964) which addressed racial tensions and American Black’s repressed hostility towards whites.

Alex Haley (1921 –1992) Haley was an American writer whose work including *Roots* and *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*, centered on the struggle of African Americans. He was determined to trace his ancestor’s journey from Africa to America as slaves, and tell the story of their rise to freedom. His epic novel, *Roots: The Saga of an American Family* (1976) won the Pulitzer Prize. Haley’s writing on the struggle of African Americans inspired nationwide interest in genealogy and popularized Black history.

James Weldon Johnson (1871 –1938) was an American author, educator, lawyer, diplomat, songwriter, and civil rights activist. Johnson is best remembered for his leadership of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), where he started working in 1917. In 1920 he was the first black individual to be chosen as executive secretary of
the organization, effectively the operating officer. He served in that position from 1920 to 1930. Johnson established his reputation as a writer, and was known during the Harlem Renaissance for his poems, novels, and anthologies collecting both poems and spirituals of black culture.

In 1934 he became the first African-American professor to be hired at New York University. Later in life he was a professor of creative literature and writing at Fisk University. His anthology, *The Book of American Negro Poetry* (1922) with a preface that celebrated the power of black expressive culture. His poetry collection, *God's Trombones: Seven Negro Sermons in Verse* (1927) is considered most important. He demonstrated that black folk life could be the material of serious poetry. He also comments on the violence of racism in poems like "Fragment," which describes how slavery went against both God's love and God's law. In 1922, he published a landmark anthology *The Book of American Negro Poetry* with a "Preface" that celebrated the power of black expressive culture. He compiled and edited the anthology *The Book of American Negro Spirituals,* which was published in 1925.

He continued to publish his own poetry as well. His collection following the flourishing of the Harlem Renaissance in the 1920s, Johnson reissued his anthology of poetry by black writers, *The Book of American Negro Poetry,* in 1931, including many new poets. This established the African-American poetic tradition for a much wider audience and also
inspired younger poets. He also published his first poetry collection, *Fifty Years and Other Poems* (1917), which showed his increasing political stance and adoption of the black vernacular.

**Paul Laurence Dunbar** (1872–1906) was an American poet, novelist, and playwright of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Much of his more popular work in his lifetime was written in the Negro dialect associated with the antebellum South. He was associated with black leaders like, Frederic Douglas and Booker T. Washington. In 1890 Dunbar wrote and edited *The Tattler*, Drayton’s first weekly African American newspaper. His most famous collection of poems are *Oak and Ivy* (1893) and *Lyrics of Lowly Life*.

In short, the present chapter and having above discourse on race and racism, we clearly get the idea that African-American literary treasure is a literature of oppression, suppression, exploitation of colored people. It also contains African-Americans struggle for their own identity in their own country. African-Americans are always exploited and rejected and were unable to get their own rights of childhood, they had to struggle lot. Being black, they lost their identity of self. Therefore they have strong anger and revolt against present social system. Because of not involving them in social system, they were unable to raise their voice. Various authors and scholars discussed these issues in their literature. Hence, it became a very theme of their literary work. By and large we can sum up that ‘race’ and ‘racism’ is the major problem of the twenty first century. We find the roots of oppression of
black people in race and racism. Social justice and the identity of black people should be given to them who are racially oppressed and exploited.

In this regard it has been projected to do a close study of reflection of racial identity in the fourth coming three chapters. The next i.e. second chapter is entitled as Reflection of Racial Identity: *The Wedding, The Living is Easy*. Third chapter is elaborately analyses Racial Identity in two novels i.e. *Contending Forces, Of One Blood*. Fourth chapter is a close study of racial identity reflected in Alice Walker’s *The Color Purple and The Temple of My Familier*. 
References:


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• Ibid. P. 30

• Ibid. P. 234

• Ibid. P. 237


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