Chapter Three

Discourses on Racism

Race hate isn’t human nature; race hate is the abandonment of human nature.

- Orson Welles

Racism has affected the everyday life of the people. Race plays a prime factor in the employment, education, social, and economic grade of an individual. This study is going to investigate the issues of racism between different races. More specifically, it will be looking at the relationship between the Blacks and the Whites in the novels of Toni Morrison and Alice Walker. The way in which the colour of the skin affects the characters in these novels are to be examined. It will deal with the challenges their characters face and whether it was due to racial injustice. Taking the time period of these novels into consideration, the issues of slavery, sharecropping and segregation, which are problems that circle around racism, are predominantly explored.

The most painful age in Black history was during the stage of enslavement. Slavery progressed into a colour-based institution. Scholars have stated that a maximum of two hundred million and a minimum sixty million died as a result of it. Toni Morrison has dedicated the novel, Beloved to racial violence inflicted upon the Black race. The novel has two time sequences: a present (1873-74) and a past (1850-55). Thus Beloved is set before and immediately after emancipation.

On investigating the horrors of slavery in the article “Redeeming History: Toni Morrison’s Beloved,” Helene Moglen states, “Beloved’s story is a story of personal and collective loss: the deprivation of home, abandonment by an enslaved mother, the erasure of a disinherited father, the alienation of her body in rape and of her mind in the shattering of the mirror of identity” (23). Morrison has accurately documented
events in the life of one slave, Margaret Garner in this novel and the deeper levels of racial issues are addressed through her story.

In Alice Walker’s *The Third Life of Grange Copeland*, the life of the protagonist, Grange Copeland is exhibited in three stages. Grange Copeland lives a life full of degradation and oppression as a sharecropper. He takes it as a natural way of life in the first life. However due to some abnormal changes in his life and out of his free will, he is able to escape the routine of a socially and personally accepted oppression. He tries to enhance the condition of his life by migrating to the North in the second life. He returns to rural Georgia after transforming into a new man in the third life. Along the course of the novel, Walker’s flow of thoughts is shown through the evolution of Grange’s thoughts and deeds. Alice Walker declares that Grange is distinctive in creating an extreme change in his life, lifting himself out of the racial constraint.

In Toni Morrison’s *Beloved*, the issue of slavery is seen in the flashbacks of the slaves of the plantation called Sweet Home. The extent to which this history has affected the lives of the people living at 124, Bluestone house, is got through the questions of the ghost, Beloved. Some of the story is got through narrations of Sethe, Paul D and Denver. In “Ghosts of Liberalism: Morrison’s *Beloved* and the Moynihan Report” James Berger states:

> The accounts in the novel of life at Sweet Home and of Sethe’s and Paul D’s escapes from slavery lead unswervingly toward Beloved’s death; likewise, the events the follow the murder remain charged with its horror and cannot be interpreted apart from it. (409)

Toni Morrison maintains the horror due to trauma of enslavement throughout her novel, especially in *Beloved*. As James Berger says, “*Beloved*’s narrative spirals
around, is ordered by, a traumatic event whose model is historical” (409). The horror of the aftermath of slavery is also seen in Alice Walker’s *The Third Life of Grange Copeland* in the life of Grange and Brownfield. The first life of Grange begins in Baker country, in rural Georgia during the 1920s. Grange Copeland is a Black sharecropper living in impoverishment with his wife Margaret and his son Brownfield. Grange had to work hard, the more he works; the more money he has to pay his master because his house rent is simultaneously increased. Eventually when life becomes wasteful for him, he runs away from his debts to the North, to start a new life, leaving his family behind. The same tradition is followed by Brownfield in future, who leads to the North following the footsteps of his father after declining a loan from a White land owner. Grange acts like a socially inferior man in front of his employer, Mr. Shipley. In Alice Walker’s *The Third Life of Grange Copeland*, the cousins of Brownfield says that “his father worked for a cracker and that the cracker owned him” (4). Walker indicates that Grange is a commodity to his master. This also shows the racial tension that the people like Grange had towards their boss.

The superior outlook that was shown by Shipley made the Blacks to fear and freeze in front of him, which develops into anger upon themselves. Even as a small boy Brownfield could sense the difference between his father and Shipley, “the man was a man, but entirely different from his own father” (9). This feeling of inferiority, inability, inadequacy of Grange turns into a rage over his family. Grange dominates his wife Margaret and son Brownfield, who are forced to play submissive roles. They become repository for the lack of manliness of Grange in front of Shipley and other Whites.

The novel *A Mercy*, of Toni Morrison which is set in the 1680s during the early periods of the Atlantic slave trade also speaks about the horrors of slavery. “They ship
in more. Like firewood, what burns to ash is refuelled . . . there are births . . . mulattoes, creoles, zambos, mestizos, lobos, chinos, coyotes” (28), shows that large quantities of slaves of various mixed races in addition to the African slaves were available for the sugar plantations in the North. In America the religious and class subdivisions were widespread, providing the productive soil for slavery and racism. Jacob is an Anglo-Dutch trader and adventurer, despite his distaste for slavery he accepts a small slave girl, Florens for a bad debt from a plantation owner. The thoughts of his past orphaned upbringing and the condition of the young slaves are expressed as, “Even if they mattered less than a milk cow . . . without an adult . . . more likely to freeze to death on stone steps, float facedown in canals, or wash up on banks and shoals” (30).

The novel gives the life of Lina, Rebekka, Sorrow, and Florens’s mother. The men and women in this novel try to invent themselves in the woods. “It was there I learned how I was not a person from my country, nor from my families. I was negrita. Everything. Language, dress, gods... all of it cooked together in the color of my skin” (163) show the pains of slavery and being Black. But at its core it is the disturbing story of a mother who leaves behind her daughter to save her from the clutches of slavery and a daughter who may never get rid of that abandonment. There are lots of such incidents in the novels of Toni Morrison and of Alice Walker to explain this horror of being a Black.

The culture and identity of the Black family is also destroyed by the institution of slavery. In *The Negro Family in the United States* (1939), Edward Franklin Frazier has also described the history of the Black family life as a series of shifting and in the end, a total removal from African culture: “Probably never before in history has a people been so nearly completely stripped of its social heritage as the
Negroes who were brought to America” (15). Lacking culture, the slaves were forced to adapt to the culture imposed by their masters or the dominant culture. After this cultural adaptation, the emancipation arrived as a second great cultural break. Edward Franklin Frazier, in this context, says:

. . . a crisis in the life of the Negro that tended to destroy all his traditional ways of thinking and acting. To some slaves who saw the old order collapse and heard the announcement that they were free men, emancipation appeared “like notin” but de judgment day. (73)

The third major disruption in their cultural life started with the great migrations to northern cities. Edward Franklin Frazier tells the condition of the rural Blacks as, “uprooted from the soil, lost their roots in a communal life and [broke] all social ties” (224). As per Frazier, these overarching cultural traumas had specific results, “. . . destructive to black family life, illegitimate births, the abandonment of families by men, households headed by single women, and thus a family structure” (412). The above quote presents a good starting point for analyzing issues of racism in the life of African Americans.

In Alice Walker’s *The Third Life of Grange Copeland*, Grange faces similar cultural disruptions when he faces his three lives, one in rural South, then in North in search of prosperity and finally back to rural Georgia in order to regain his life. He attempts to make up for the past mistakes by changing his priorities and begins to evolve in his third life. “His only duty in the World was to prepare Ruth for some great and herculean task, some magnificent and deadly struggle, some harsh and foreboding reality” (255). In this part of his life Grange also doubts his philosophy of hate over the Whites due to racial oppression. Grange speaks to Ruth “I know the danger of putting all the blame on somebody else for the mess you make out of your life. I
fell into the trap myself!” (263) Here Alice Walker subtly says that the Whites cannot be blamed for all the wrong done to the African Americans. The Whites may be behind every wrong, making the Blacks to think that they are some demi Gods. Walker also adds about African Americans that “Nobody’s as powerful as we make them out to be. We got our own souls, don’t we?” (263) A naive man like Grange is turned into an aggressive man and then a collective, radical person in the end.

Alice Walker talks about the inferiority, feeling of internal degradation and guilt, due to racism as the root cause of the suffering of the African American families. In the third life, the free-thinking Grange becomes selfless, brave and fully conscious of what he is doing. He kills his son, Brownfield, to stop him hurting his granddaughter, Ruth. Alice Walker is trying to say that in the first part of life Grange was willingly subjected to oppression both on his part and on the part of others. In the second part of life under extraordinary circumstances and great will power, Grange resists the oppression after the central park incident. In the third part of life, with an unselfish desire to safeguard Ruth from all these pains of life, he takes love as a tool, leaves away hatred and changes into a matured person. All these years racism was intermingled inseparably in their lives. Thus the three personalities of Grange which come from a single individual at different junctures of life show the adaptability needed by the African Americans to change the present situation. Alice Walker wants all the African Americans to develop the will power to change like Grange and succeed like him in lifting themselves out of the depth of racial oppression.

In “Ghosts of Liberalism: Morrison’s Beloved and the Moynihan Report,” James Berger quotes that:

Sethe is a single mother working at a low-paying job. She suffers a mental breakdown and loses her job, and the community must support
her. Her sons leave home, never to be seen again. One of her daughters is incapable of leaving home, and Sethe murders the other one. Sethe’s family is certainly dysfunctional, if not . . . pathological. (411)

Morrison creates the character of Sethe in this vision to address the racial issue present in the United States. By showing the character this way, she is acknowledging the fact that most White Americans believe, that all Black families are like that of Sethe and her family. It is the common belief of the Whites of this era that most Black families have single mothers, males who abandon the family, and have one or more illegitimate children. The single mother is manifested in Sethe. The male abandonment in this Black family happens when Howard and Buglar leave the home. The notion of illegitimate child in a Black family is shown in Beloved. The segregation starts because of beliefs like these. Further the White parents are still in a sort of fear of the intermingling of the Black race into their future generations.

Toni Morrison also discusses this oppressive issue of White superiority and their idea of ownership. Helene Moglen expresses this as, “Schoolteacher, the slave-master who inherits Sweet Home along with Sethe, Paul D, and Halle, beats one of his blacks . . . to show him that definitions belong to the definers, not to the defined” (19). A similar segregation is also pictured in Alice Walker’s The Third Life of Grange Copeland. In the second life of Grange, in the North he is overcome a little by his previous rage hoping for a good life in the Promised Land, “He had come north expecting those streets paved with that gold . . .” (191). But to his disappointment they were not golden streets anymore. He gets a rude awakening that the South looked at him contemptuously or disrespectfully, but the North “. . . to the people that he met and passed daily he was not even in existence!” (192). He is dehumanised and North had put him into solitary imprisonment. He had to do things that he had never dreamt
of, he sold bootleg whiskey, drugs, stolen goods, and sold Black women to White men; begged for money to keep himself survive starvation.

Once Grange was begging in central park in a dull winter day during the third year in New York, he comes upon a White pregnant woman. She was later joined by a soldier, her love. They speak, and exchange innocent kisses. Their love was now visible to Grange. The second life had taught him to visualise love. This act of human intimacy touches him. This woman kindles a kind of unselfish, pure and high emotions in Grange, who used to berate woman, particularly his wife Margret in the first life. Later the soldier sacks the women because of the reason that he is already married. He gives her some money and a ring as compensation. The frustrated lady drops both and walks to the pond. “Grange had watched the scene deteriorate from the peak of happiness to the bottom of despair. It was the first honestly human episode he had witnessed between white folks . . .” (195). Grange develops sympathy for that white lady and wants to give away three hundred out of the total seven hundred dollars and the ring to that lady which he had taken. To his astonishment the lady who had refused to take the money and ring, started to demand all of it. “You aint’t going to have any of it; before I let you sneak off with it I’ll throw it all into the pond!” (199). She throws a twenty dollar into the pond, when Grange bends unsuccessfully to retrieve it from the ice. She comments and laughs “Look at the big burly-head” (199).

Grange’s entire hate over the white race resumes, a woman, pregnant, “having learned nothing from her own pain, helpless except before someone more weak than herself, enjoying a revenge that severed all possible bonds of sympathy between them” (199). A little later she drowns in the pond, refusing to accept the helping hands of Grange. She grabbed Grange’s hand at first and let it go after feeling that it was the hand of a Black, also uttering “nigger” (200) with her last disgusted voice.
The central park incident created an awakening in Grange’s mind, made him to revaluate his life and his wife Margret. He comes out of the misconception that Whites were demi Gods. The hatred for the Whites caused a sudden eye-opener in the mind of Grange. This discovery causes a change in his life. Both the pregnant women and Grange behaved in a way the mistreated powerless people usually behave, when they themselves are powerless due to any oppression. Grange was oppressed by his White master and the White lady was oppressed by her deceit lover. The death of the lady also symbolised the death of inferiority feeling, fear, and contempt of Grange over others, in particular the death of his worthlessness. Thus the White superiority and the segregation of the Blacks are seen in the writings of both the authors.

In *The Third Life of Grange Copeland*, Alice Walker says that the second life of Grange is modified into fearlessness for Whites. He picks up any fight with the Whites, “Every white face he cracked, he cracked in his sweet wife’s name” (205). The racism had taught him a new religion. “‘Teach them to hate ’em!’” (203). He shouted up and down the Harlem streets, his eyes glazed with his new religion. Grange shouted these words in churches disrupting the service, wanting to balance hatred of Whites with his own hate. “We loves’em now. And by god it killing us! It already done killed you” (203). Grange cries with frustration after having loved the White neighbours has got him nothing but broken heads and disapproving children. Grange understands that he had no love for himself but only anger for his children because of the frustration due to racism of the Whites. With this new found philosophy he returns home to Georgia. Alice Walker has also created the character of Grange in this same light for the mere reason to address the continuing racial issues in the United States even after the period of emancipation.
Toni Morrison addresses this racial issue through the technique of rememory in *Beloved*, when talking about Schoolteacher and the Sheriff’s arrival in Baby Shug’s yard. Schoolteacher joins with the Sheriff, like the knowledge with power or the legal ownership with legal force, to enter the property of a free Black woman in a Free State. Morrison discloses or unveils this scene by saying that “they came in her yard anyway” (247). This trespass means that no African American, slave or free, can genuinely own a property or live as an individual subject in that society.

In the article “Ghosts of Liberalism: Morrison’s *Beloved* and the Moynihan Report,” James Berger supports this view as, “Even in a free state and after slavery, the former owners, under the auspices of law and science, can still regard the African American as object, property, and specimen” (410). Although this condition might not be understood by us completely, we are left to think that such trespassing was natural in that era. Today, we do not spend much time in understanding the core things of the racial issues. So Morrison tries to illustrate this issue through the recurring appearance of the baby ghost throughout the story which instigates the rememory in almost all the characters in the novel. James Berger quotes, “The repeated returns of the murdered child’s ghost in the North during Reconstruction suggest that racial violence will inevitably return at any time and in any place as long as the systemic nature of racism is not addressed” (411). James Berger’s quote explains that if we do not speak repeatedly about racism, nothing is ever going to change. We may try to sweep the racial issues under the carpet and deny the presence of racial prejudice. If we do not take efforts to understand the problem of racism nothing will change from the depth.

In the essay, “What Does Coming to Terms with the Past Mean?” of the book *Bitburg in Moral and Political Perspective*, Theodor, W. Adorno says, “We will not have come to terms with the past until the causes of what happened then are no longer
active. Only because these causes live on, does the spell of the past remain, to this very day, unbroken” (129). So to remember the past one has to rememorise the insulting events rather than trying to forget them. A similar technique of rememory is given by Walker in a different manner to understand racism. Grange speaks to his granddaughter Ruth, about his past life, his vision about the society, racism, his mistakes, his fear and how he overcame the fear over the Whites. Through the words of Grange, Walker enlightens his granddaughter at the same time she also enlightens the readers to understand about racism in depth.

Toni Morrison also speaks about this rememory in the novel, Home. She gives a deep narration on the African American history with a twentieth-century tale of emancipation as the core issue. It is a story about one man’s desperate search for himself in a world shattered by the wars. Frank Money is an angry, self-hating veteran of the Korean War who settles back in racist America after traumatic war experiences. He seems to be alienated even in his home and crippled due to boredom. He takes his medically abused younger sister back to Georgia where they had previously come from. Moreover he hates this place all through his life. Frank revisits his memories from childhood to attain a sense of self and gain an intense courage which he had never possessed. The lines, “Frank had not been brave before. He had simply done what he was told . . . even felt nervous after a kill. Now he was reckless . . . dodging the scattered parts of men . . . he was brave, whatever that meant” (98) proves these concept. Frank takes full responsibility of his sister Cee Ycidra and for her recovery from illness. He feels great pleasure in guarding her out of that situation. Frank’s thoughts are, “In my little-boy heart I felt heroic and I knew that if they found us or touched her I would kill” (104).
In Frank’s thought about the status of the Black women and their oppressed males:

\[\ldots\text{ that the beat-up man on the train to Chicago would turn around when they got home and whip the wife who tried to help him. Not true}\]

\[\ldots\text{ I thought was that he was proud of her but didn’t want to show how proud he was to other men on the train. (69)}\]

Thus Morrison shows the maturity in the Black males to love and consider their sisters and their wives as their strength, at the same time they cannot expose the feeling in front of other males. It is a deeply touching novel about a seemingly defeated man who finds his manhood and his homeland by rememorising his past.

The rememorising of the past is also seen in Morrison’s *Song of Solomon* in a different way by searching one’s own past. Macon Dead III (Milkman) in set on a trip to Pennsylvania in order to find the gold. Milkman is greatly disappointed when he finds the cave that he explores to be empty. But he comes across some of his grandfather Macon Dead I’s old friends. It is revealed that Milkman’s great-grandfather was the legendary Solomon, who flew back to Africa in order to escape the slavery of the plantation life. Solomon leaves behind his wife Ryna and their twenty one children. Solomon’s son, Jake is raised by Heddy, an Indian woman who also has a daughter by the name of Singing Bird. Once grown, Jake and Singing Bird run away to North on a wagon full of free slaves. Milkman comes to know that his grandfather’s real name was Jake, and that his grandmother was an Indian woman by the name of Singing Bird. Milkman attempts to go further to Shalimar, Virginia in mission of knowing his family history than the mission finding gold. Morrison attempts to give this venture, as a similar conception of rememory, to know about one’s own heritage or family lineage. This rememory gives a better understanding
about the problems of today. In *Song of Solomon*, Toni Morrison says that Milkman, in his quest to know about his lineage acquires a new sense of selfhood. Morrison says:

Four days at Reverend Cooper’s house as his guest . . . long visits from every old man in the town who remembered his father or his grandfather . . . spoke about his grand-father with such awe and affection, Milkman began to miss him too. . . that his father loved him, trusted him, and found him worthy of working “right alongside” him.

(234)

Thus the rememory or the rediscovery of one’s history is the starting point of one’s search of his mind.

The discussion of the women as racial victims is seen in the novels of both the authors. In Toni Morrison’s *Beloved*, Baby Suggs, the Black matriarch of the novel has lived as a slave for sixty years and free for ten years, but the lesson she has gained from such life is that “Those white things have taken all I had or dreamed . . . There is no bad luck in the world but whitefolks” (104-5). In fact, both female and male Blacks are victimised on the racial level. The Black men have been usually restricted to menial services and women to housekeeping. Morrison says that education is found “. . . unnecessary if not illegal” (120) for Black people. The main reason is that Blacks are not considered human beings, actually for Schoolteacher, the Blacks are a combination of “human characteristics” and “animal ones” (228). Mrs Gamer also calls her brother-in-law, Schoolteacher to run the farm, not believing her husband’s four Sweet Home men (the slaves) because “people said she shouldn’t be alone out there with nothing but Negroes” (232) because the Black men and women were not
considered humans. Once Schoolteacher comes to Sweet Home, “He had come to put the place aright” (267). He does not any more admit what Mr Gamer allowed in this living place: to have guns, to voice their mind and settles down to re educate them. This makes Paul D to doubt the appropriateness in calling them ‘men’. The slavery had stripped off their manhood. This has been the same story in almost all the Black communities oppressed by racism. Morrison also has made it clear that Paul D has suffered a lot from racial victimisation through a powerful imagery through the cock ‘Mister’. The slaves assume and consider a tree as their brother which symbolises the absence of another human being to communicate. They needed the women not only for sexual needs but also psychologically as complements for themselves, in other words, as loving and attentive companions. They sexually abuse the cows in the absence of female companion. Paul D’s manhood is made more absurd by the rooster ‘Mister’. When Paul D is taken away, chained, to be sold, he is sure that Mister is smiling:

My head was full of what I’d seen of Halle a while back . . . Just Halle and before him Sixo, but when I saw Mister I knew it was me too. Not just them, me too. One crazy, one sold, one missing, one burnt and me licking iron with my hands crossed behind me. The last of Sweet Home men. (85-86)

Paul D has saved Mister from death because it could not get out of the egg shell as it was abandoned by the hen. Mister is allowed to live as an animal and as a male, with freedom. But, Paul D cannot be as independent as Mister. Even if you cooked the rooster it would be called as Mister but Paul D has no identity of his own. So he is degraded by Schoolteacher to a lesser level than a bird. According to Trudier Harris, Mister is what Paul D can never become. Although the Black males have
always suffered from victimhood of racism, the female oppression and their responses 
to it are also central in the novels of both the authors.

In *Beloved*, Toni Morrison gives the female victimhood of racism which is 
seen through Sethe’s mother. She has delivered numerous times but she has thrown 
them all away because those children were born due to the rape by the crew or the 
Whites during the middle passage. Sethe is the only one she has kept with her because 
she is the child of the Black man whom she liked, “She put her arms around him. The 
others she did not put her arms around. Never. Never” (74). She prefers to kill her 
other children because if they had grown, they would continuously remind her of the 
rapes. Sethe is at least fortunate than her mother to have Halle as the biological father 
for all her children out of the so called marriage. Once they decide themselves on 
marrying, she enthusiastically asks Mrs Garner about the wedding ceremony, at least 
“Dancing maybe. A little sweet William in my hair” (70). Right then, Sethe does not 
understand that as slaves, they have to just settle down with someone in the name of 
marriage and increase their owner’s wealth by reproducing new slaves without any 
ceremonies to mark this event. Sethe recalls this later to her daughters:

> Nothing. I thought there should be something-something to say it was 
> right and true . . . just me bringing my night bucket into his cabin. I 
> thought there should be some ceremony . . . . But it wasn’t going to be 
> nothing. They said it was all right for us to be husband and wife and 
> that was it. All of it. (70)

The wedding without any ceremony, preacher or dancing makes the fourteen year old 
girl to feel bad. She fails to understand that it was enough for Blacks and that 
Garner’s slaves. They are well treated slaves because Garner does not stud his slaves 
or bring them to the slave women’s cabin with instructions to lay down with them or
rent their slaves for sex to other farm owners. This shows the limited privileges and exploitation faced by the male and the female slaves in the plantations.

In *Beloved*, Toni Morrison says that Garner orders his slaves not to leave Sweet Home without his company because of the fear of letting them loose may lead to problems. Morrison says that Paul D cannot throw out a helpless coloured girl Beloved, in territory infected by the Ku Klux Klan because of safety reasons. They were thirsty for black blood, without which they cannot live. An erring black woman caught by the Ku Klux Klan’s members was submitted to the worst tortures. In fact, the security of the Blacks was made uncertain since the Fugitive Slave Law was adopted in 1850. It legalised the kidnapping and enslavement of any Black person anywhere in the United States. The abolition of slavery that resulted from the victory of the North during the Civil War hardly changed anything:

Eighteen seventy-four and white folks were still on the loose. Wholetown wiped clean of Negroes; eighty-seven lynchings in one year alone in Kentucky; four colored schools burned to the ground; grown men whipped like children; children whipped like adults; black women raped by the crew; property taken, necks broken.

Thus both the males and more of the females are equally subjected to racial tortures in the novel *Beloved*.

The next concept to be discussed is that of Internal Racism. In *The Bluest Eye* of Toni Morrison, the tragic girl Pecola believes that if her eyes were blue she would be pretty, virtuous, and be loved by everyone around her. Friends would play with her, teachers would treat her better and even her parents might stop their constant fights because, in her heart of hearts, no one would want to “. . . do bad things in front of those pretty eyes” (34). The issues of internalised racism have been prevalent even
in the other contemporary American children, young adults and are frequently seen in
the literatures. Sharon Flake, Sapphire, Jaqueline Woodson, Walter Dean Myers,
Maya Angelou are the few writers who have widely explored this issue apart from
Toni Morrison and Alice Walker. The difficulties of the marginalised individuals who
have suffered from it are seen in the novels of both the authors. Pecola Breedlove is
such an individual who is socially and psychologically programmed to perceive
herself as being ‘lower’ and often wished to look, more like the dominant group.
Sadly, this female character equates ‘black’ with inferiority and ‘white’ with beauty
and superiority. The effects of internalised racism on the marginalised female
characters, the role of patriarchal ideology, intersectionality and the way to claim their
identity are in *The Bluest Eye*.

In *The Bluest Eye*, Toni Morrison indicates how the careless adoption of the
dominant group’s values can be detrimental for African Americans. The
neighbourhood boys in *The Bluest Eye* berate Pecola Breedlove for the darkness of
her skin, calling her a Black e’mo. In describing this episode, Claudia, the narrator
remarks that, “It was their contempt for their own blackness that gave the first insult
its teeth” (50). Barbara Christian, the author of the acclaimed book *Black Women
Novelists: The Development of a Tradition, 1892-1976*, demonstrates “how these
ideas can invert the natural order of an entire culture, creating a group of people who
feel an awful contempt for the colour of their own skin and, by implication, their own
culture” (152).

In *The Bluest Eye* Toni Morrison says that victims of internalised racism
generally feel inferior to Whites, and often wish they were white or looked whiter.
Pecola Breedlove constantly looks for the approval of others and seeks love from
them. She asks Claudia “how do you get somebody to love you?” (23) As Pecola,
African Americans support the repressive efforts of the dominant culture by burying their self-identities and follow an unhealthy path of self-hatred by supporting a false standard of beauty. The girl equates beauty with happiness, and it is difficult to find fault with this young girl for the misperception, because both Black and White communities support the same idea. Internalised racism may also result in intra-racial racism, which refers to discrimination within the Black community by those of lighter coloured skins against those with darker skin and more African features. Claudia’s resentment towards light colour skinned Maureen Peal is apparent in *The Bluest Eye*,

We were lesser. Nicer, brighter, but still lesser. Dolls we could destroy, but we could not destroy the honey voices of parents and aunts, the obedience in the eyes of our peers, the slippery light in the eyes of our teachers when they encountered the Maureen Peals of the world. (57)

These multiple forms of racism with which African Americans went through were first described in *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903), by W. E. B Dubois as double consciousness or double vision. This is the awareness of belonging to two conflicting cultures: the African culture, which grew from African roots and which was transformed by its own unique history on American soil, and the European culture imposed on them by White America. For many Black Americans this means having one cultural self at home and another cultural self in White dominated public space, such as the workplace and the school. W. E. B. Dubois ends up saying that this double consciousness involves speaking two languages, Black Vernacular English at home and White English at the work place.

A universal characteristic of Morrison and other African American novelists has been their depictions of both male and female protagonists, either failing or succeeding on their difficult journey to selfhood. In the article “Black Naturalism and
Toni Morrison: The Journey Away from Self-Love in *The Bluest Eye,*” Patrice Cormier Hamilton, says in particular about Morrison, that she steadfastly concentrates on the importance of the past. For her:

... self-realization for African Americans can only be achieved through an active acknowledgement of one’s cultural past. Only by understanding and accepting the past, can African Americans achieve psychological wholeness in the present and strengthen their power as a race in the future. (115)

In order to gain a better understanding of the complex psychological struggles the minorities experience as they attempt to resist influences from a racially dominant society, it might prove useful to consider Elaine Showalter’s discussion of the three phases that the subordinate cultures go through in their search for independence and cultural identity. In the chapter “The Female Tradition” of *The Critical Tradition: Classic Texts and Contemporary Trends,* Elaine Showalter describes “the first phase a subculture or minority experiences as an extended period of ‘imitation’ of the prevailing modes of the dominant tradition, and ‘internalization’ of its standards or art and its views on social roles” (1108). Elaine Showalter further says:

As a subculture values the unique characteristics of its identity and gains a better sense of its power, it progresses collectively into a second phase that includes a ‘protest’ against these standards and values, and advocacy of minority rights. (1108)

Elaine Showalter describes a third phase as a period of ‘self-discovery’, “a turning inward freed from some of the dependency of opposition, a search for identity” (1108). Although Showalter’s three phases that subcultures go through in their search for independence and cultural identity might prove very helpful, one does not
necessarily go through all the phases according to the order suggested. For some, ‘protest’ might be the starting point of their life narrative, as in the case of Claudia from *The Bluest Eye*, she resists and protests against the idea of Western beauty imposed on her since the outset of the story, and she remains true to that phase till the end. It is also possible to skip phases and it is also possible to experience two phases at the same time. Whatever the case, self-discovery is the ultimate goal that we all aim for these female characters to achieve. Approaching these novels through Showalter’s three phases, regardless of the order, a clear distinction between children’s literature and adult literature can be noticeably observed.

Pecola is innocent but tragic. There is no break or lifeline for Pecola. She is sexually abused by her father, shunned by her mother, ignored by her peers, unacknowledged by her teachers, simply victimised by both White and Black communities. She is socially programmed to believe that she is ugly and worthless, because she does not symbolise Western culture’s idea of beauty. She is also an easy victim, responding with tears rather than swearing at people who insult her like Claudia. She has also absorbed the values of the dominant culture present in all the media. In studying Pecola from a psychological perspective, one can say that she is trapped in Showalter’s first phase which is, “imitation of the existing modes of the dominant tradition, and internalization of its standards of art and its views on social roles” (1108).

In *The Bluest Eye*, Morrison also demonstrates the forces in the White society that eat away at Pecola’s self-esteem and sense of self-worth with her encounter with Mr. Yacobowski, a fifty-two-year-old White immigrant storekeeper in her town. Although Pecola is a paying customer, Mr. Yacobowski looks at her as a nonexistent human and does not want to touch her hand to take the money. Pecola leaves the
store, perceiving herself as ugly and meaningless as a weed peeping through a crack in the sidewalk. She has no one to care for her or lean on. Claudia’s reflection at the end of the book on the inability of some seeds to grow and bear fruit in the soil of her community really suggests how hostile both Black and White communities have been toward Pecola Breedlove. Elaine Showalter says:

I even think now that the land of the entire country was hostile to marigolds that year. This soil is bad for certain kinds of flowers. Certain seeds it will not nurture, certain fruit it will not bear, and when the land kills of its own volition, we acquiesce and say the victim had no right to live. (164)

When the society fails to nurture flowers like Pecola Breedlove, when nourishment of this soul is denied and the fruit of self-love is never realised. In that situation, Pecola Breedlove is driven to insanity and her ultimate destination is the garbage heaps on the outskirts of town. Elaine Showalter shows the “. . . internalization of its standards of art and its views on social roles” (1108).

In *The Bluest Eye*, Morrison also gives a classic mid twentieth century stereotype of a perfect, happy white family home that neatly contains two parents, a boy and a girl. They live in a peaceful house: “It is green and white. It has a red door. It is very pretty” (1) with a kitten, a dog and a friend as additional factors. In the article “*The Bluest Eye*: Notes on History, Community, and Black Female Subjectivity,” Jane Kuenz talks about these characters of contemporary life, the iconic ‘Dick and Jane’ who stand “as the only visible model for happiness and thus implicitly accuses those, whose lives do not match up” (422). This nursery-rhyme mantra begins in an ordinary way, then suddenly the repeated text loses all punctuation and the line spacing becomes narrower. Thus the previously regular
rhythm develops into an erratic rush as the mother seems to hysterically keep on laughing and the father maniacally smiling. In the meanwhile time the adamant words demand that the little girl will play. The final repetition descends into a mad jumble of words all forced into as small a space as possible. The tighter text suggests enclosure and pressure and the symbolic weight of the words represent the burden of perfection. In “The Language Must Not Sweat”: A Conversation with Toni Morrison by Le Clair Thomas, Morrison has commented that she had “used the primer, with its picture of a happy family, as a frame acknowledging the outer civilization. The primer with white children was the way life was presented to black people” (28-29). Furthermore, in the article “The Bluest Eye: Notes on History, Community, and Black Female Subjectivity” Jane Kuenz states that ‘Dick and Jane’ books and its widespread use made learning a “. . . commodified life dangerously synonymous with learning itself” (422).

In the life of Frieda and Claudia MacTeer, the initial tone is one of childlike aggression that is directed toward another girl due to some problem of skin colour, who, “taunts . . . suggest a familiar world of childish power struggles and retributions that seems to depend more at this point in the narrative on class and wealth than on race,” (40) says Jill Matus in “Shame and Anger in The Bluest Eye.” This is followed by a contrasting description of the family and home of Blacks given by Toni Morrison in The Bluest Eye that by no means represents that of the nursery-rhyme: Claudia says “Our house is old, cold, and green. At night a kerosene lamp lights one large room. The others are braced in darkness, peopled by roaches and mice . . .” (5) which shows that girl’s reality is split into two, the ideal and the real. Moreover the parents do not talk to them. But they give instructions and orders without any explanation. In the article “Seeds in Hard Ground: Black Girlhood in The Bluest Eye,” Ruth
Rosenberg argues “the children are forced to rely on each other . . . since adults make themselves so inaccessible” (437). In short, the children appear to be more burdensome than of value with Claudia’s mother seemingly showing little sympathy when her daughter is ill: “My mother’s anger humiliates me; her words chafe my cheeks, and I am crying. I do not know that she is not angry at me, but at my sickness” (7). Claudia’s later introspection about this moment is interestingly followed by her questions: “But was it really like that? As painful as I remember? Only mildly” (7). Thus in *The Bluest Eye*, Morrison gives the childhood notion of the effects of racism. It is possible that what happens to the child is relatively more agonising and severe because of his or her inability to re-evaluate the same in an adult way.

Rosenberg contends that “parents express their concern through the strict annihilation of any vestige of impropriety, through lashing out . . . [therefore] an act of translation is required to read the love latent in it” (437). In an interview with Robert B. Stepto, in the book *Chant of Saints: A Gathering of Afro-American Literature, Art, and Scholarship*, Morrison confirms this need to re-read past events in *The Bluest Eye*, with regard to Claudia understands that deep down, “they cared” for their children (214).

Claudia would be described by child psychologists as being intellectually in the ‘concrete-logical’ stage. But for Frieda, Claudia and Pecola, like many African American children in similar narratives, the concept of house and home is complex. Young daughters listen silently to their mothers, learning and understanding the world through their adult eyes. However, the daughters remain emotionally distant from mothers who have known enough adversity with hardened perceptions from this new,
generation. In *The Child as Thinker: The Development and Acquisition of Cognition in Childhood* Sara Medows says that the “thrust of their emotions” (122) due to racism is clear to Frieda and Claudia, despite not understanding the “meanings of their words” (122) but Pecola never understands this tone. Thus the effects of racism on the children are seen as complex emotions.

The arrival of Pecola into MacTeer’s family is due to economic reasons because Cholly Breedlove purposefully makes his family homeless. Pecola’s father violates her trust and her body, and her mother fails to supply her daughter with the correct emotional support because she has none to offer. Just as Brownfield, in *The Third Life of Grange Copeland* perpetuated the sins of his father, so Pauline Breedlove propagates her personal issues of isolation and distorted sense of beauty through her daughter. In the article “Black Naturalism and Toni Morrison: The Journey Away from Self-Love in *The Bluest Eye*,” Patrice Cormier Hamilton contends, “it is difficult to fault a young girl for her mother’s misperception of beauty; certainly both white and black communities in her world seem to support the idea” (115). In “Dick and Jane and the Shirley Temple Sensibility in *The Bluest Eye*,” Phyllis R. Klotman further adds up this argument, “only Claudia, of the three girls, rejects these fraudulent images of ‘Dick and Jane’ and Shirley Temple” (124). Thus Morrison has offered this novel to her potential Black female readers to fill the gap that she had felt on the issues of internal racism.

In *The Third Life of Grange Copeland* also, Walker introduces young Brownfield as he waves goodbye to relatives while standing close to his mother. She shows a clear picture of fragmented family through the words of Brownfield’s cousins. “They told him that their own daddy . . . had gone to Philadelphia to be his
own boss. They told him that his mother wanted to leave his father . . . . His cousins told Brownfield this and much more. They bewildered, excited and hurt him” (4-5).

The hidden meaning in this narrative is a sense of a tense father and son relationship and a broken family due to racism. When Brownfield asks his desire to live in the North to Grange, it is met with, a flat “Well, we don’t” (5). Brownfield is more shocked by his father’s verbal response: “His father almost never spoke to him unless they had company. Even then he acted as if talking to his son was a strain, a burdensome requirement” (5). The silence which develops in the family has a more threatening quality. These verbal gaps and the emotionally blank situation show the racial oppression and internal racism of Grange.

The silence spreads throughout Brownfield’s childhood. His isolation is further increased through the noiseless environment that he inhabits. This textual impression shows the absolute suppression and a basic inability for the Black population in the South, to escape the spreading oppression of their voices. Margaret is forced to leave Brownfield at home at six, when he is not old enough to work in the generally silent cotton fields, due to economic imperatives. In *The Third Life of Grange Copeland* Alice Walker says, through tiredness and habit, the adults whisper intermittently to each other: “The buzz of their conversations became part of the silence . . . .” (8). In the article, “Speech, after Silence: Alice Walker’s The Third Life of Grange Copeland,” Harold Hellenbrand also suggests that “this noiseless situation emotionally weighs down the Copeland and their fellow pickers” (114). Therefore the children learn from the adults, that speech is of minimal necessity for self-identity. The lack of such communication and lack of intimate connection also increase Brownfield’s fear of his father. Brownfield also develops as an individual devoid of any emotion. However, this deficient verbal contact results from a life without spirit,
by the lifeless harsh working and living environments. This silence, this embarrassed
desperation to survive becomes ingrained naturally in the behaviour of the next
acquired (Grange’s) cold nervousness around him of his own” (10) in the presence of
white skin. Furthermore in ‘Effects of Poverty and Maternal Depression on Early
Child Development,’ Stephen M. Peterson and Alison Burke Albers say that, as a
result of Margaret’s suppression and ensuing depression, “Brownfield will always
bear the marks of a host of adverse outcomes in infancy, such as language and
cognitive problems . . . insecure attachment . . . social interactive difficulties . . . and
behavioural problems” (1795). Walker seems to give a deeper look into the child
psychology and development which is influenced by their parent’s mind which is
further shaped up by the racist society. She points towards racism as social evil for the
tyannical behaviour of her Black males towards their family.

Brownfield as both victim and witness to Grange’s physical and verbal
atrocities follows the same drunken, violent, and gloomy cycle in leading his own
family. As Hogue compares “the father-son relation is constituted in a language of
violence and domination that reflects the master-servant relation between Grange and
the white landowner” (48). In the article, “History, the Feminist Discourse, and Alice
Walker’s *The Third Life of Grange Copeland,*” W. Lawrence Hogue adds up, “As
Brownfield enters adolescence with both parents caught up in relations that render
them powerless to act in a positive manner, Brownfield is totally alone” (49). This is
an emotional deficit which later contributed to his disruptive behaviour. Thus, in the
article, “Making a Way Out of No Way: The Open Journey in Alice Walker’s *The
Third Life of Grange Copeland,*” Robert James Butler suggests that “Brownfield’s
narrative can be considered as concentrating all that is negative about Southern
culture” (196). This general statement considers that racism is also a socio-political experience of childhood and reason for all their evils.

At a young age, Brownfield also learns that sex can be used as a tool of oppression and as an instrument of emotional abuse. Grange’s affair with Josie makes Margaret feel rejected both as a life partner and as a sexual woman. In *The Third Life of Grange Copeland*, Alice Walker says that Brownfield has difficulty in recalling the time when he loved Margaret as a mother, and for which he blames his father. “What Brownfield could not forgive was that in the drama of their lives his father and mother forgot they were not alone” (20). In her article “Shelter in a Time of Storm: Parenting in Poor Rural African American Communities,” of *Family Relations*, Wiley R. Angela concludes this situation saying that “parents who are busy dealing with major life stressors may experience attentional fatigue and not have the attentional resources . . . to engage with their children” (270).

Alice Walker says that this isolation from both parents becomes more poignant on one night when Brownfield awakens to find his mother absent and his father, “. . . bend over him to inspect his (son’s) head and face” (25). When Brownfield saw “. . . his father’s hand draw back, without touching him . . . he knew . . . his father would never be back, that he hated him for everything and always would” (25). This touching incident in *The Third Life of Grange Copeland* shows the frustration of Grange despite his deep love for his son which he was unable to express. The fragmentation of this family stresses its inability to sustain a variety of racial pressures. The subsequent psychological stress leads to the disintegration of communication between husband and wife. In *Walking Proud: Black Men Living Beyond the Stereotypes*, George Edmund Smith adds that:
Grange represents a black fatherhood and masculinity that cannot cope with resulting anger and loss of self-esteem in not being able to provide for his family, turning to alcohol, gambling and prostitutes in an effort to obliterate reality: Many men simply gave up on themselves and left their homes, never to return and likely believing their families were better off without them. (90)

Even though Grange’s doubtful parenting skills cause the conflict and create the obstacles in his son’s young life, at least his presence creates some impression of a unified family unit. But life without a father is a depressing one. Brownfield who is shown as an ordinary boy at the beginning of the novel becomes the most degraded character who degenerates into a killer and the person who poisons innocent life of animals. Both the familial background and childhood perceptions of adult as role models do play some considerable role in shaping their future behaviour.

The children are inclined to imitate their parents. The Black male child naturally aspires to be like his father, develops disrespect for women when he sees his father do so. As Smith says, “Black males can express their sexuality to their children not only by being physically indiscreet, but by their actions and words as well” (100). Alice Walker says that within weeks of Grange’s departure, Brownfield finds his dead mother in the clearing near their shack “. . . curled up in a lonely sort of way, away from her child, as if she had spent the last moments on her knees” (26). The situation leaves Brownfield emotionally struck with stunted development. Thus both the authors give a similar picture about the childhood environment in a Black family and the effects of oppression which lies underneath all these childhood psychological traumas. Brownfield or Pecola, a male child or a female child experience the same amount of trauma from their parent’s life. The racial oppressions met by the parents
are in turn pent up as frustrations over their children. The voiceless parents are seen in both the author’s novels. The voiceless parents in turn try to silence their children. They instil their sense of fear and insecurity into their children.

In Toni Morrison’s *The Bluest Eye*, when Pecola moves in with the MacTeers, Frieda and Claudia attempt to make her feel welcomed, by bringing her food and “. . . some milk in a blue-and-white Shirley Temple cup” (12). Frieda and Pecola agree on “. . . how cu-ute Shirley Temple was” (13), however, Claudia “hated Shirley . . . reminiscing about old squint-eyed Shirley” (13). The issue is one of the White’s pre-pubescent perfection that is outwardly admired by the two Black girls. Claudia, the youngest Black child in that group inwardly dislikes the apparent white flawlessness. In the article “Dick and Jane and the Shirley Temple Sensibility in *The Bluest Eye*” of *Black American Literature Forum*, Phyllis R. Klotman argues that “Morrison draws a distinction between Pecola and Shirley Temple just as she does between the black families and ‘Dick and Jane’ so as to underscore the irony of black experience” (124). He further says that the difference between White culture and Black childhood experience that Morrison gives is, “the issue of growth and development . . . points to the commonality of human experience” (125). However, Toni Morrison says that Claudia is an exception, and for her one of the worst situations is receiving a big, blue-eyed Baby Doll for Christmas that the adults believed was her “fondest wish” (13). Claudia has no idea as to do what with the doll as she has no ethnic or emotional connection with the compliant, cold white limbs that fail to reflect her own black physique.

In *The Bluest Eye*, Toni Morrison says that her parents believe Claudia wants the Christmas doll, but Claudia dreams of something much less expensive, the experience of listening to her father “play his violin for me [her] alone” in “the
security and warmth” (15) of her mother’s kitchen, shows the sensory images that invoke complete familial harmony in the child’s mind. So Claudia “destroyed white baby dolls”, and her hatred is suitably transferred “to little white girls” (15). In “Dick and Jane and the Shirley Temple Sensibility in The Bluest Eye,” of Black American Literature Forum, Phyllis R. Klotman says that Claudia is fortunate not to learn “acceptability from the formal symbols, educational experience or from cultural symbols which leads to self-hatred” (125).

Playing a mother to these white dolls is thus judged by Claudia as an unnecessary experience. In The Child as Thinker: The Development and Acquisition of Cognition in Childhood, Sara Meadows says that the mothering that Claudia has received can therefore be taken into consideration because the growth of such social and emotional understanding stems from the “child’s interest in and responsiveness to the behaviour and feelings of others” (139). Claudia’s desire for familial satisfaction and her social understanding is shown in her concern in the context of family relationships. In The Bluest Eye, Toni Morrison says, as the black adults “Awww” (15) over pretty little white girls as they continue to buy white baby dolls, Claudia learns to adjust her attitudes saying “but not for me?” (15) In the article “Transgression as Poesis in The Bluest Eye” of Callallo, Shelly Wong says that the novel The Bluest Eye “launches a critique of received norms of beauty and morality” (473). Ruth Rosenberg argues in the article, “Seeds in Hard Ground: Black Girlhood in The Bluest Eye” of Black American Literature Forum that this criticism through a child’s perspective, differentiates this novel from other “novella representations of little black girls because of Claudia’s radical repudiation of ‘colorism’” (439). Thus Morrison idealises Claudia as the little black girl who is to be followed by the other girls of the Black community.
The Blacks experience the concepts of female beauty and the issues of motherhood. The perfect nuclear family are destabilised through the characters of Pauline Breedlove, Pecola and the three prostitutes. Shirley A. Hill in Black Intimacies: A Gender Perspective on Families and Relationships “In Search of the Village: Black Motherhood in Transition” says:

Poor women of color . . . have few sources of hope or fulfilment in their lives, but the oppression they experience . . . does not deprive them of . . . procreative abilities . . . [which] are profoundly powerful . . . motherhood is a . . . marker of womanhood . . . a respectable social identity . . . a sense of control, and self-expression. (120)

This statement expresses the views of motherhood and its effects on controlling the internal racism and other racial oppression in their daughters.

Alice Walker’s The Third Life of Grange Copeland depicts the possibility of a positive aspect of mothering through Mem. Her murder halts the scope of maternal involvement and Grange takes on the role of mother for his grand-daughter Ruth. But the motherless prostitutes in The Bluest Eye, although unrespectable, formulate a far superior sense of control and self-expression. In Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment, Patricia H. Collins does refer to the work of raising children, but it is with regard to motherhood as a “site where black women express and learn the power of self-direction . . . and a belief in Black women’s empowerment” (118) against both the racial and sexual oppression.

Domestic help and raising the employer’s white children are the common work for many Black women. Mem in The Third Life of Grange Copeland, Pauline Breedlove in The Bluest Eye all work for White families. However, this aspect of their lives creates complicated issues of mothering for economic necessity. Claudia’s
mother may take Pecola into home. However, she soon expresses her burden of bringing up Pecola. For all the women who are mentioned in nurturing a child that is not their own takes on an outward appearance of respectability and individual sacrifice. However, the reality that Toni Morrison says in *The Bluest Eye* is often one of bitterness, of feeling exploited, and of private “fussing soliloquies” (16) that heaped insults onto those children concerned. Thus the motherhood or the female beauty of the Black women or children is also decided by the majority ethos of the Whites. Girls like Claudia and Frieda escape from this oppressive culture due to their family support but girls like Pecola succumb to the racist oppression due to lack of support from her failed Black family and her mother. The MacTeers provide their daughters with some degree of protection and insulate them a little bit from the external dangers.

In Alice Walker’s *The Third Life of Grange Copeland*, the second part of Grange’s life, reveals the fact that when Brownfield returns to Josie, he learns of her long-standing relationship with Grange. Walker says that “He had waited to know this part of his father’s life” (81). As the years pass, Grange becomes a distant memory. However, his return means that Josie “hastily pushed Brownfield away; pushed him away as if he were as odious as a toad, as inconsequential as some kind of harmless lizard” (83). The oxymoron odious and harmless is used to describe an often impotent Brownfield. His suffered black masculinity expresses his emotional, physically violent and sexualised behaviour towards Mem. In the article “African American Intergender Relationships: A Theoretical Exploration of Roles, Patriarchy, and Love” of the *Journal of Black Studies*, Webb Lawrence, Littlefield and Okundaye say, “Her prominent role in sustaining her family is seen as counterproductive to her relationship with Brownfield because it undermines his masculinity” (626).
Brownfield has been predominantly enveloped in and involved with women in his life. From Margaret to Josie and finally to Mem and their three daughters, there has been no male influence for him. Despite Mem’s constructive attempts, Brownfield does not change because he has lived as boy and man within a totally female environment. Often women alone have to take the trouble of providing a stable financial support and a loving household, due to socioeconomic stress. Often a boy in a female-dominated household becomes confused about his role as a boy.

In Walking Proud: Black Men Living Beyond the Stereotypes. George Edmund Smith explains the “Early feelings of powerlessness and dependency may develop into disrespect for his mother . . . Later . . . to black women in adult relationships” (101). This briefly describes Brownfield’s past, his confused feelings of love and dislike towards his mother, his present dilemma being further complicated by the dramatic re-entry of the father, Grange. Despite his empty threats, Alice Walker says that Brownfield “realized immediately, and it made him sob, that he was still afraid of him. He might still have been a child from the fear he felt” (84). Confusion and powerlessness further invade a soul already immeasurably scarred from fear and hatred. To exacerbate these emotions, Brownfield learns that “In two weeks Grange and Josie were married” (85). Thus the deranged Brownfield becomes a remote victim of fear and inferiority complex due to his oppressive father, who in turn is further oppressed racially.

The Third Life of Grange Copeland by Alice Walker connects the return of Grange with the birth of the third grandchild, Ruth who will allow Grange a third chance to access Walker’s ‘phenomenon of survival whole’. Grange’s reappearance causes a new social formation, as W. Lawrence Hogue in “History, the Feminist Discourse, and Alice Walker’s The Third Life of Grange Copeland” describes it as, “a
new ideologeme emerges” (53). Now Grange is on the edge of replacing his hatred for White people with the love for Ruth and he no longer needs to oppress women and abuse children. Simultaneously, Brownfield’s guilt for being drunk and irresponsible, when Mem gives birth, becomes further more by Grange’s presence. This moment highlights their parenting issues. It also raises future complications regarding relationships between grandparents and grandchildren, as Grange assumes the role of an authoritative caretaker.

Only after his return does Grange understand the depth of his son’s bitterness, resentment and further acknowledges his guilt. This is reflected when Grange considers Mem’s emaciated and old appearance due to Brownfield’s inability to act as a decent husband and father. Images of past and present transparently overlap, thus highlighting the stark similarities between the life of father and son. W. Lawrence Hogue argues “Brownfield is incapable of loving his daughters and that this brutal kind of relationship is passed from one generation to another” (59). The suggestion is that the young Grange suffered a racial oppression and yet, by skipping a generation of his son, he manages to break the vicious circle of oppression and hate his granddaughter. Grange shows unconditional love towards Ruth. When hate that was nurtured due to racial oppression and the inferiority complex that developed due to internal racism leaves a person, he or she is able to view the real love present in them.

Life for the family continues with its harshness, Brownfield still verbally and physically abusing Mem, with the three daughters silent as witnesses to his actions. Mem, wants to find a new family home, subsequently raising the hopes of her older daughters. In Black Feminist Criticism: Perspectives on Black Writers, Barbara Christian describes “Mem’s desire to have a house as the major conflict in the battle between the Copelands” (189). Mem endeavours to change her children’s lives for the
betterment. She wants to break the progression of White ownership and their life in a falling shack. However, in the article “Alice Walker’s Vision of the South in The Third Life of Grange Copeland,” Robert James Butler indicates, “Brownfield becomes a pathological figure intent on destroying his wife and children when they display any signs of rejecting the static roles which Southern society imposes on them” (71), the long time, already used to be slave of the White does not want to come out of his oppression. In The Third Life of Grange Copeland, Alice Walker says that Brownfield goes to an extreme end, forces his already physically downtrodden wife into further submission by adamantly moving them to yet another White man’s property like in slavery times and says, “We moving exactly when and where I say we moving” (115). Butler explains this, “. . . Brownfield not only interprets Mem’s drive for movement and freedom as an indictment of his own depleted life” (71) and is determined to reposition his family within the same oppressive situation.

In The Third Life of Grange Copeland Daphne and Ornette, sisters of Ruth, remain scared of their father while Mem becomes incorporated in a cloud of hatred that drives her quest to find a home, without her husband’s help. Trapped between a newly empowered wife and a White master, Brownfield is left with no pride or positive sense of masculinity. His only form of control is to brutally ruin Mem’s dreams of a future for her daughters. Mem says, “Me and these children got a right to live in a house where it don’t rain and there’s no holes in the floor” (110). In “Alice Walker’s The Third Life of Grange Copeland: The Dynamics of Enclosure,” Theodore O. Mason Jr. points out, “the homes that Brownfield has found have the same kind of effect on all of them, but particularly on Mem” (300). Again, this makes the issue more gender biased and psychological struggle than an economic struggle. In Black Women Novelists: The Development of a Tradition, 1892-1976, Barbara
Christian says as the violence escalates, “Mem threatens her husband with a gun and tears his defences apart” (183). Barbara Christian further says that Mem’s desperation in her struggle for security and stability demonstrates that “women are willing to confront their men and if necessary move them out of their way; however, this inescapably attacks the men’s definition of themselves as men” (190). This new-found sense of empowerment of Mem added with Grange’s involvement with the family increases the insecurity of Brownfield.

*The Third Life of Grange Copeland* shows that from the day of Ruth’s birth, both Grange and Mem have tried a journey of self-discovery, searching inwards for their individual psychological strength for the survival. However, for Mem in particular, her biological body was ultimately a reason for her down-fall: Walker says that, “Brownfield lay in wait for the return of Mem’s weakness. The cycles of her months and years brought it” (133). Brownfield’s degradation becomes a profound dislike and desire to crush Mem’s spirit as two failed pregnancies physically destroy what was left of her good health, confidence and hope of a brighter future in her new home. In “History, the Feminist Discourse, and Alice Walker’s *The Third Life of Grange Copeland,*” W. Lawrence Hogue gives a repetition of history “oppressed and abused by the white man, Grange abuses and mistreats his wife and son, submission, oppression and neglect being repeated facts” (49). Mem further removes herself physically and emotionally from the family. Alice Walker says that “She (Mem) was ill; the two pregnancies he forced on her in the new house, although they did not bear live fruit . . . completely destroyed . . . her health” (137).

In Alice Walker’s *The Third Life of Grange Copeland,* the three girls are subjected to verbal and physical abuse, Ornette and Ruth started seeing Brownfield in a more distant, unfriendly way than Daphne was of more forgiving nature than
Ornette. Walker skilfully discloses the trauma of the dreadful night of Mem’s murder through Ruth’s unfolding memory:

Brownfield began to curse and came and stood on the steps until Mem got within the circle of the light. Then he aimed the gun with drunken accuracy right into her face and fired. What Ruth remembered now with nausea and a feeling of cold dying, was Mem lying faceless . . . (161).

Finally the ultimate form of violence due to racism has penetrated into the families of the Blacks.

In the novel *The Third Life of Grange Copeland*, Walker has shown the three generations, the destructive social relations imposed by a corroding racial system upon the sensibilities of men such as Grange and Brownfield. Walker examines these forces that stimulate the psychological deterioration in a male protagonist such as Brownfield to act in such a brutal way, thus demonstrating the personal pain that has systematically deformed his judgement. Brownfield’s frustrated masculinity denies his wife’s and daughter’s declaration of self-worth. So, despite Mem attempting to raise the family’s standard of living, Brownfield meticulously destroys her health and her spirit. Finally, he effaces her identity and renders her silent. Walker intends to depict the scene as an affirmation of the universality of female cultural effacement by the oppressed male. The name Mem, symbolically suggests the French *la même*, meaning ‘the same,’ meaning the same situation prevails for all the women of the world. Thus it becomes clear why Alice Walker in her essay, “Beyond the Peacock,” *In Search of Our Mother’s Gardens* believes that “the truth about any subject only comes when all sides of the story are put together, and all their different meanings make one new one” (49).
A family, a community, a race, a nation, a world, cannot be healthy and strong if one half dominates the other half through threats, intimidation and actual acts of violence. The point to be stressed is that the violence drains the strength and creativity of the entire population, affecting both victim and aggressor. The oppression of one Black woman becomes the oppression of her children which in turn becomes the oppression of a race. Mem’s life is at least, given some form of meaning by means of her daughter Ruth’s attainment of self worth and survival.

The oppression of Mem by Brownfield and Pauline by Cholly Breedlove resembles one another in many ways. The struggle of the females to come up economically in the lives, their struggle to perfection due the influence of the majority race is curtailed by their husbands. The husbands behave in an irresponsible way due to their frustration and insults met by them because of the racial dominance of the White master.

In *The Afro-American Novel and Its Tradition*, Bernard W. Bell argues that *The Bluest Eye* is a novel “about growing up poor, black, and female in a male-dominated, white middle-class society” (272). Furthermore, in “The Emerging Self: Young-Adult and Classic Novels of the Black Experience,” Ann O. Gebhard suggests that Morrison’s narrative in *The Bluest Eye* challenges previous novels. It shows that the deformed young adult’s mentality for “the last two decades,” is “a taboo-constrained, white upper-middle-class enclave” (50). Morrison puts forward the Breedlove family as an example of “poor and black” influenced greatly by the White ideals. In *The Bluest Eye*, Toni Morrison combines the political and the psychological implications of this intra racial discrimination, by highlighting that they remained in their dirty home because “they believed they were ugly” (28). Ugliness becomes a diverse concept that includes the literal, social, cultural, aesthetic, and familial life.
This family of four wore its blanket of ugliness “although it did not belong to them . . . it came from conviction, their conviction” (28). Ugliness slowly permeates into the family’s behaviour, with Pecola in particular is well accustomed to the parental fights. Such physical fights are exactly mirroring those of Grange and Margaret or Brownfield and Mem of *The Third Life of Grange Copeland*.

In Toni Morrison’s *The Bluest Eye*, Cholly Breedlove’s anger and contempt originate from the episode when two white men caught him having sex with a young Black girl when he was a teenager. Their racial mocking effectively emasculated him, leaving Cholly to hate the girl at last and not the Whites. This past humiliation effectively moulds the older Cholly and rationalises this reality in a negative way.

Cholly’s attitudes toward love, sex, hate and physical aggression become inevitable, and the children become constant witnesses to their parents’ never ending ugly battle of willpowers due to the complex sexually and racially degrading experience. Sammy Breedlove manages to escape the unpleasantness of the home, whereas his sister Pecola endures it and prays, “Please, God . . . Please make me disappear” (33) because she is a girl. Morrison says that her desire to become invisible intensifies, however, “Try as she might, she could never get her eyes to disappear” (33). Pecola’s eyes are the entrance to the pain inflicted on her psyche and they represent the collective memories and thoughts of a child who believes she herself is responsible for her ‘ugliness’ and absurd situation: “. . . if those eyes of hers were different, that is to say, beautiful, she herself would be different” (34).

Bell says that it becomes understandable how painful it is “for little Black girls,” such as Pecola, “to grow into healthy womanhood with a positive self-image when the general desire was for blue eyes and yellow hair” (273). Rosenberg also argues that it is this issue that “the novel explores . . . a world that permits the
foreclosure of childhood” (442). In *Intergenerational Transmission in Children At Risk: An Evaluation of Factors Contributing to Child Abuse and Neglect*, Roy C. Herrenkohl furthers this concept of intergenerational transmission of parental abuse by asking, “Is the potential for being abusive passed from generation to generation?” (101) Herrenkohl does conclude that evidence “suggests that some parents who are abused as children become abusive as parents” (101) but states that this is not true in all cases. Regarding Cholly, there may be evidence of parental neglect, yet his Aunt Jimmy gave him the much needed security to his life, so his ‘abuse’ was to be considered as purely racial.

In *Mothers and Daughters in Nineteenth Century America*, Nancy M. Theriot, speaks about the relationship between Pauline and Pecola. The intergenerational transmission of cultural knowledge among the mother and daughter does not happen here, although the mother is traditionally seen as the “‘first cause’ of gender and the cultural transmitter . . . throughout childhood” (11). Therefore, in *The Bluest Eye*, Pauline destroys the reasoning that the mother’s role is crucial in the socialisation process especially of their daughters. Pauline’s inability to positively educate her daughter can be interpreted through Pecola’s continual desire for the blue eyes which Morrison reinforces with in a course of time. Pecola’s fervent prayers for blue eyes last for a year.

According to Peter Alexander in *Racism, Resistance and Revolution*, this indifferent attitude of Pauline’s adoption of White society beliefs that “leads her to leave behind those persons, including her family members, whom she feels fail to measure up to her standards” (295). Furthermore, in “Dick and Jane and the Shirley Temple Sensibility in *The Bluest Eye*,” Phyllis R. Klotman suggests, as a domestic worker for a White family, Pauline sees “her own daughter through the acquired
astigmatism of the Fisher’s world”; therefore, “Pecola learns that she is ugly, unacceptable, and especially unloved” (124). Morrison in *The Bluest Eye* reveals this lack of familial care for Pecola makes her to befriend with peripheral characters, the three prostitutes who live above the Breedloves. Miss Marie, Miss China and Miss Poland do not fit into classic stereotypes of the novella prostitute. Their teasing and speeches destroy the traditional notions of femininity and womanhood. These women are not unlucky, generous, humble or “sugar-coated whores” (43). Morrison says “... these women hated men, all men, without shame, apology, or discrimination” (42-43).

In the article “*The Bluest Eye*: Notes on History, Community, and Black Female Subjectivity,” Jane Kuenz contends that “white socio-cultural standards do not allow alternate images” thus making “standards of beauty and femininity for white women . . . unattainable for black women” (424). Peter Alexander also argues that, “they (the prostitutes) also act as an alternative to Pauline, showing Pecola that their lives, no matter how much they are despised by others, have meaning because the women define themselves rather than relying on the judgments of others” (301). Pecola has little life experience to realise that blue eyes will not change her depressing existence, and will make her a socially odd person. Thus the prostitutes also fail to transmit the information that could instil Pecola with a sense of positive identity. The effect of internalised racism blinds everybody in this novel, even the most practical cannot save Pecola from disintegrating.

Morrison also introduces the reader to Maureen Peal in *The Bluest Eye* as a, “A high-yellow dream child with long brown hair . . .” (47). Claudia compares this new arrival with the local, rich white girls purely on the basis of her appearance and dress, the other children also basically accept the difference: “Black boys didn’t trip her . . . white boys didn’t stone her . . . the white girls didn’t suck their teeth when she
was assigned to be their work partners; black girls stepped aside . . . ” (48). In The Color Complex: The Politics of Skin Color Among African Americans, Kathy Russell says, although, traditionally the mulattos have also been socially isolated because ‘she’ does not neatly fit into a specific colour coded category, the socio-cultural assumptions tend to consider “light-skinned Black women . . . more feminine and beautiful” (166). One of the historical realities after the Civil War were self segregation of the mulatto population to preserve their elite status. According to Russell, this process means, the elite actively, “discriminated against their darker-skinned brethren,” (24) leading to a clear intra racial racism. Thus, Morrison demolishes the conventional ideas of colour prejudice by locating Maureen within the land of children with many shades of black and brown, to explain intra racial racism. Thus Morrison says that the interaction of Claudia, Frieda, Pecola and Maureen turns into a racial issue of grades of blackness. Once when the secluded Maureen screams at them “I am cute! And you ugly! Black and ugly black e mos. I am cute!” (56) Claudia’s young mind understands this outburst:

We were sinking under the wisdom, accuracy, and relevance of Maureen’s last words. If she was cute-and if anything could be believed, she was-then we were not. And what did that mean? We were lesser. Nicer, brighter, but still lesser . . . . What did we lack? Why was it important? And so what? (57)

These words show that even a logical mind of Claudia is confused with the facts of internal racism and seems to accept the pressures of intra racial racism. Kuenz considers this as a learning curve whereby these girls come to understand “the fact of their own lack, variously identified as ugliness or ‘unworthiness’” (423). Claudia’s question at the end “And so what?” (57) seems to shatter this type of
discrimination. This is a typical response where by Claudia protects the girls from further uncomfortable insults. Their disapproval for Maureen stems from childish envy and not necessarily from a desire to be of the same colour. For Frieda and Claudia, their sibling unity comes as protection from girls such as Maureen. Therefore, in their rejection of Maureen, the sisters repeat Alice Walker’s assertion in the essay “If the Present Looks Like the Past” “Colorism . . . is a form of self-hatred in celebrations over the birth of a ‘golden child’ rather than the joyful acceptance of our ‘rusty black’ joy” (311). Thus the Breedlove’s family ultimately becomes a scale against which the Black neighbourhood measures their ugliness due to intra racial racism.

To the contrary Toni Morrison gives a contradictory concept of internal racism in the novel, *Tar Baby*. Morrison creates a well educated, Paris model, supposed to be a very beautiful Black girl called Jadine. Morrison shows the empowerment of the Black girls in the progressive years as:

One of the happiest days of her life . . . such a good news she decided to throw a party . . . had just been chosen for the cover of *Elle*, and there were three gorgeous and raucous men to telephone . . . . Under such benevolent circumstances, knowing she was intelligent and lucky . . . (44)

Morison has made her girls to evolve into confident, intelligent, and enterprising human, despite having their same old black skins. A Black girl is chosen for the cover of a fashion magazine in the evolving society. In one occasion, Jadine is insulted by a spitting woman, although Jadine feels the insult, she has the rage to “mumble ‘bitch’” (46) towards with a new level of confidence. Jadine also has a love affair with an escaped criminal, a poor and uneducated North Florida Black. Jadine and her lover,
‘Son’ passionately and violently debate in the course of the novel on the best way for
Blacks to be independent in the White man’s world. Although, their arguments are
lengthy and become monotonous, they vividly expose the novel’s racial tensions.

In Morrison’s *Sula*, Helene and her daughter Nel travel to New Orleans to visit
a relative who is on her last legs. The racial insults of the segregated and
discriminatory South are experienced by them, while travelling in a train. When they
enter the compartment populated by Whites in a hurry and traverse through that to
enter into the adjacent compartment for coloured people. Morrison says:

> The conductor let his eyes travel over the pale yellow women . . .
> ‘What you think you doin’, gal?’ . . . All the old vulnerabilities, all
> the old fears of being somehow flawed gathered in her stomach and
> made her hands tremble . . . . eagerness to please and an apology for
> living met in her voice . . . . ‘We made mistake, sir’ . . . . ‘We don’t
> ’low no mistakes on this train. Now git your butt on in there. (20-21)

After this moment of embarrassment, Helene smiled dazzlingly, “Like a street
pup that wags its tail at the very doorjamb of the butcher shop he has been kicked
away from only moments before . . .” (21). This shows the complex situation that
Helene had to face suppressing her fear, embarrassment, anger and all the mixed
emotions at the same time had only way of expression that is an irrelevant smile. The
racial tensions during the Segregation period are well pictured in this scene. Then
Helene and Nel meet Helene’s mother in New Orleans, who did not raise Helene on
her own because she was a prostitute. When the two return Helene is glad to be
detached from her shameful past. The past always looms in our memories the harder
we suppress it the faster they return. This is also an example of suppressing one’s own
bad memories.
In Alice Walker’s *The Temple of My Familiar*, the characters Celie and Shug from *The Color Purple* delicately shadow the lives of many characters, who are dealing with the African experience in America. The characters in this novel range from a recent African immigrant, to a woman of the mixed-race rainforest communities of South America, to Celie’s own granddaughter living in today’s San Francisco. All of them come to an understanding of the brutal stories of racism of their ancestors to understand their own troubles. Walker weaves a new mythology from old fables and history through these astonishing characters. It is a profoundly spiritual explanation for centuries of shared African-American experience. The book is about the racial insults and ethничal discrimination that was brought upon the Black community.

When Carlotta takes her love Arveyda to meet her mother Zede, he visualises a photograph of the mother and daughter taken just after they had arrived in San Francisco.

Zede’s drawn face, seemingly frightened even of the photographer . . .

Carlotta, her face moonlike . . . leaned out of her mother’s arms, as if eager to embrace this new land. In both their faces he recognized the stress of oppression, dispossession, flight. (18)

This single description of Walker gives the main issues of deep rooted fear in the minds of the Blacks even in the post slavery period of Black empowerment. Alice Walker also delivers *The Temple of My Familiar* through her personal experiences rather than from the age of activism. Almost all the characters in this novel go through a transition from pre-colonial African times to a post slavery phase in North Carolina. The story also tells all the aspects of modern prejudice of the Whites against the people of colour.
In his third life back in South, Grange Copeland comforts Ruth after her mother’s death which shows a strong and positive stance against racism. This act is the one that ultimately connects him with his inner self and with humanity. His initial departure was symbolic of his hopelessness for family life and security. But Grange’s reappearance in Brownfield’s life is similarly symbolic of his willingness to a wholesome survival. On a simpler level, he also arrives to Georgia with the ability to organise his son. The morning after Mem’s murder, Ruth clings to Grange’s body for emotional assistance. As the novel moves from this point, Elliott Butler Evans says in her writing, *Race, Gender, and Desire: Narrative Strategies in the Fiction of Toni Cade Bambara, Toni Morrison, and Alice Walker*, that:

Grange will realise that his original lack of care for his family and his departure were indications of how severely he had allowed himself to be dehumanised and emasculated, of how his negative sense of self meant he was incapable of accepting his responsibility for his own thoughts, behaviour and actions. (73)

The effect of racism had spread its deep roots even into the psyche of a realistic human like Grange.

After the returning from North, there is a dramatic change in Grange’s character, he becomes a loving surrogate father for Ruth. In “The Social Context of Child Maltreatment,” Diana Baumrind adds up, “For Ruth, despite suffering mistreatment, a particularly good relationship with . . . even a close parent surrogate, can mitigate but not eliminate the effect of marital turmoil” (363). This relationship with Ruth will equip Grange to acknowledge his failings as a father and a man. From a psychological perspective, the bridging of the generations is the only way to heal the
emotional trauma and familial rift created by Grange and Brownfield. In *Black Women Writers at Work*, Claudia Tate tells that, “Walker has described *Grange Copeland* as a novel that is chronological in structure, or one devoted, more or less, to rigorous realism” (176). The underlying principle is demeaned by the narration of competing history of the multiple characters who are involved. Despite the title of the novel, Grange is not the principal focus of the narrative. He is a medium through which the broader racial experience is narrated. This is then displaced by previous subsidiary narratives that centre distinctively on the emotional experiences of Black women and their children. Besides highlighting the relationship between Grange and Brownfield, the novel commits itself to the stories of Mem, Margaret, Josie and Ruth, whose stories serve important ideological functions. Their voices may have been socially silenced, misused and abused.

Moreover, the close bond between Grange and Ruth, stresses the matters of both revolt and liberation. Their relationship has bloomed from Grange’s selfish and racially motivated necessity to leave his family and the sharecropping job to this enlightened situation. In *Exorcising Blackness*, Trudier Harris tells “Grange exemplifies how black men have been psychologically, socially, and politically emasculated because of the sharecropping system under which they initially live and work” (36). Trudier Harris adds up that, “... a structure that depletes the life energy from men who must see reflected in the eyes of those for whom they work, the evaluation that they are less than human. That evaluation combines with their own knowledge that they can do very little to improve their situations” (36). Ruth will never have the knowledge of an ancestral Black mother, a mother who is part of a wider female tradition. Ruth, along with the other female characters in *The Third Life*
of Grange Copeland offers something in order to comprehend silence, anger, pain, sacrifice, love, and honour in the background of racism.

A positive reinforcement of certain forms of behaviour will create a positive psychological and racial view for Ruth, so her emotional healing can occur. In “Speech, after Silence: Alice Walker’s The Third Life of Grange Copeland,” Harold Hellenbrand says that “subtle dialectic” is implied “in which Ruth . . . recovers her” mother’s identity (124). In The Third Life of Grange Copeland, Grange also teaches Ruth an:

. . . untaught history through his dance; She glimpsed a homeland she had never known and felt the pattering of the drums. Dancing was a warm electricity that stretched, connecting them with other dancers moving across the seas. Through her grandfather’s old and beautifully supple limbs she learned how marvellous was the grace with which she moved. (176)

This movement liberates Ruth from a discriminating society and gives her all the empowerment needed. It will also ensure that she creates her own self conscience. A familial connection and social foundation are formulated upon which Ruth can build her future life. The violence and hatred of the past appears to have no place in her world and is equally incomprehensible to her. However, Ruth and Grange individually feed each other emotional survival. Thus Ruth survives because of her grandfather’s support, who guides her due to lack of understanding of life. Initially she is not able to form her ‘self’ and seeks solace in her early developmental stage. But later Ruth is able to form an individual identity of her own. She is able to comprehend the issues of racism and form her sense of self. But Pecola in The Bluest
Eye is driven into insanity of acquiring the Blue Eyes. Pecola becomes a failure because of her unsupportive family, the unsupportive Black society and the inability to form the self.

Alice Walker’s novels speak the survival of the race and the ‘womanist’ ideology due to her active participation in the Civil Rights Movement. Elliott Butler-Evans on Walker’s narratives also says, “Walker’s narrative tackles the social, personal and political concerns of families in a predominantly white governed America” (127). Alice Walker, in the essay “From an Interview,” In Search of Our Mother’s Gardens, concisely declared her situation:

I am committed to exploring the oppressions, the insanities, the loyalties, and the triumphs of black women . . . black women are the most fascinating in the world . . . Next to them, I place the old people - male and female - who persist in their beauty in spite of everything. How do they do this, knowing what they do? Having lived what they have lived? . . . it lures me into their lives. (250-251)

Both the authors have lot of similarities in their attitudes, in dealing with the themes of racism and their choice of the audience to whom they address their writings. These discourses help to arrive at a result that, the only way to break this curse of racism would be to address issues of race more openly in schools. It is a safe way to expose children to racism at a young age and help them understand the problems that come along with that way of thinking. If we are able to eradicate the problem at a young age, it is more probable that we can eliminate a good majority of racist thinking within a single generation. If more people put the effort into doing
something like that, we would weed of the racial oppression that we experience in the modern world.

Having discussed the racism and its various manifestations in the novels of Toni Morrison and Alice Walker, the next chapter is going to discuss feminism and its various implications. The following chapter explores the feministic views in the novels of both the authors, in a deeper context. The patriarchal domination over the Black females, the father-daughter relationship, the rape of the daughter by her father or stepfather, rape of the Black women by both White males and Black males as a tool for physical domination of the female, aspects of motherhood, paternal support in shaping the character of the daughter, attainment of selfhood by oneself etc., are some of the issues that are to be explored in the following chapter. The gender inequality, the patriarchal overpowering of the Black Women by both the White and the Black men, are further discussed as double marginalisation. The Black female children are triple marginalised by the White men, Black men and women, or the adults in general. The psychological perspectives of the suppression, of the women and their daughters are also to be discussed in detail in the following chapter.