Chapter - II

THE BLUEST EYE
AND THE PIANO TEACHER
An analysis of the function of woman or the role she plays within the patriarchal construct of the family ruthlessly promotes the ideology that considers man as the primary principle and woman as the other as she becomes the mere object of men’s wishes and desires. Needless to say, women have been socialized and conditioned to confirm to this code that exalts the patriarchal order, and any attempt to upset the status quo has been met with stiff resistance. For ages femininity means passivity, which further means receptivity and disabled resistance, softness means pregnability by something hard. Narcissism insures that woman identifies with that image of herself that man holds up. The signifying relation of sex to power, of sexual alienation to political oppression, is not the most stable, but precisely the most volatile of the social notes, under this pressure. Female sexuality has always been described as an absence, as a lack, incompleteness, deficiency, and envy with respect to the only sexuality in which value resides. It is clear that for a woman to be healthy she must ‘adjust’ to and accept the behavioural norms for her sex.

The gender norms that Toni Morrison and Elfriede Jelinek discuss in their novels *The Bluest Eye* and *The Piano Teacher* respectively are submissiveness and subjugation of female gender, the repressive forces such as hostile society and strictly patriarchal
family, and their use of physical forces to inflict the injuries like rape, domestic violence and mental assault. Unlike other forms of delinquent behaviour, domestic violence creates a dependency on the part of the victim towards the perpetrator and is designed to give the perpetrator power over the victim. Both novels strongly present the wounded psyche of females in any culture and condemn the doctrine of feminine dependency on male world for economic, social and familial survival. Rape is discussed as the patriarchy's most powerful weapon to subjugate women. The fear of sexual harassment or sexual violence against which women are defenseless further attenuates their peculiar position in an oppressive construct. Moreover, rape when contextualized within the matrix of the family is far more dangerous as it renders women powerless to define and limit their victimization.

What makes a writer memorable, wonderful storyteller, passionately in love with her characters and making them alive? The answer lies in the themes of Afro-American writer Toni Morrison and Austrian writer Elfriede Jelinek, whose overwhelming power as storytellers is wonderfully felt in each and every dialogue, their characters generate. Toni Morrison's works are deeply rooted in history and mythology and are a fantastic mixture of pain and pleasure, wonder and terror. Her novels are rich in the human values and characterization; as well as the signs and symbols sent by the nature. The Bluest Eye is about Political and cultural mutilation as well
as it is a book about sex and race hatred. Morrison's construction of the events in the novel is more than the essential truth itself. The rhythm and the frequency, with which the words are delivered and glide together, set the tone modalities for the structure of this story about Pecola Breedlove and her disasters. The nature element is the major structural element of the novel, for the book is divided into the seasons of the year reflecting the tragedy of Pecola Breedlove. Appropriately, the year does not begin in the January or in the spring, but in the fall when school starts according to the rhythm of a child's life. Autumn, too, makes the opening of the book because Pecola's story is not the usual one with three phases: life, death and rebirth, from planting to harvest to planting again. Her journey proceeds from pathos to tragedy and finally to madness.

The use of Claudia as a child narrator of Pecola's journey into madness seems to be one of the Morrison's best strokes. Obviously, Pecola does not have the necessary time and space to know what is happening to her. She cannot analyse her own sufferings rather than story in hindsight, for she goes mad. Claudia becomes the girl woman in the story with whom we can identify, for most of us are not the extreme, as Pecola is, and do not overtly go mad.

The main body of The Bluest Eye is divided into four chapters named for the seasons, a psychoanalytical platform we are prepared for by Claudia's introductory statement in which she relates the failure
for by Claudia’s introductory statement in which she relates the failure of the marigolds to sprout with the death of Pecola’s baby. “The seeds shriveled and died, her baby too.” Nature images are constant throughout the book and help to organise its structure. The physical and psychological events that lead to the rape of Pecola and to her disastrous pregnancy lie at the center of this nature construct. Pecola is the passive center of the novel, and the one to whom things happen and whose only action in the forms of her prayers for and in receipt of blue eyes, renders her tragic. Her tragic flaw is her birth as a black and a female in a pedantic patriarchal society.

It was as though some mysterious all knowing master had sad, “you are ugly people”, they had looked about themselves and saw nothing to contradict the statement; saw; in fact, support for him leaping at them from every billboard, every movie, every glance... and they look the ugliness in their hands, threw as a mantel over them and went about the world with it.  

The Bluest Eye is the Morison’s concern for the Black community. It is the story of a small black girl’s victimization named Pecola. Her self-hate causes scorn for her not only from her family but from the entire community as well. Pecola, the black innocence is obsessed with a myth of white physical beauty and this blind persuasion becomes fatal for her, as she is plunged into a world of
madness. Pecola, whose life is totally devoid of beauty and love, full of barbarism and ugliness has no sense of self and her life is a framework of pains. Her whole being cries for the due human recognition and compassion, but all is futile. Perhaps she was born to be destroyed only, as life took turns in the disastrous manners only.

But she has seen interest, disgust, even anger in grown male eyes. Yet this vacuum is not new to her. It has an edge; somewhere in the bottom lid is the distaste. She has seen it lurking in the eyes of all white people. So. The distaste must be for her, her blackness. ²

Morrison carves out the pathetic picture of Pecola’s life as the life smells bad to Pecola; the touch, the taste of it is painful. The life is tied with pain from birth and death is the only reliever from the pain. The pain, a part of life can be either destructive or productive; but the fate brings destruction in Pecola’s pain. The day Pecola Breedlove is born she is told that she is ugly. Her family consists of a brother Shammy, mother Pauline, father Cholly, ironically enough to their surname Breedlove, all they breed is self-hate and assassination of trust. Ugliness is all-pervasive in their lives and in their relations. It appears as if by a sheer mistake of god they all are messed up under a roof. They are destined to be with one another, just to nurture detest for every surviving relation. The ugly storefront in which Pecola lives
in, there the only living things are the coal stove, and where everyone feels ugly and fights with each other.

Cholly and Mrs. Breedlove fought each other with a darkly brutal formalism that was paralleled only by their lovemaking. Tacitly they had agreed not to kill each other. He fought her the way a coward fights a man—with feet, the palms of his hands, and teeth.³

At the core of this mystery are sensuality and sexuality, although problematic yet constant and real as instinctively perceived by young girls struggling from childhood into womanhood. This experience at this turning point quivers with possibilities: rape perhaps. Love, as sensual and spiritual, is what these young girls want; love, they intuit is possible for anyone. In contrast, the societal concept of beauty sets up a hierarchy of desirability that proclaims that love is deserved only by a few. Perhaps because grown ups are distorted by the pain of their lives; they deny their own capacity for love by tearing that capacity in others apart. Pecola consumes enormous quantities of milk so that she can attain the image of Shirley Temple, a white girl. She is obsessed with blue eyes. She is able to hide her emotions but she rarely can hide her ugliness that surrounds her everywhere, even at her home. Her home is filled with violence and obscenity. She wants to disappear, to leave and to be free from the physical sickness. She prays to god, "Please make me disappear." With terrific contraction
she finally feels that almost all the parts of her body fade except her eyes. "Almost done, almost. Only her tight, tight eyes were left. They were always left." She believes that her eyes transmit ugliness to her mind, since they perceive ugliness; they must in turn be ugly. If they were blue then were beautiful and people had treated her in a beautiful manner.

The Bluest Eye is Toni Morrison’s ‘the waste land’. She, in a limited sense, presents bleak, waste human conditions. She brings into focus a place that fosters an underground invisibility and barrenness, composed of an imaginary cultural dissolution and fraught with brutal discrimination that strains human comprehension and stuns our conscience. In The Bluest Eye black girlhood assumes tragic propensities when it borrows identity models from the mandates of white culture and from the malevolent parental mirrors as well.

Like many other contemporary Black women writers such as Maya Angelou, Gwendolyn Brooks and Paule Marshal, Morrison too believes in the anxiety, Black girls feel about what their mirrors tell them. Pecola too holds that the necessary condition to receive love in a society is an aesthetically pleasing image. With out beauty one cannot wish for security. Even in Literature, the treatment of women focuses upon their sexuality. Kate Millet writes in her Sexual Politics:

Literature has observed not only the truthful explicitness of pornography, but its anti-social characters as well.
since this tendency to hurt or insult has been given free expression, it has become far easier to access sexual antagonism in the male.\textsuperscript{5}

Although Pecola spends "long hours... looking in the mirror, trying to discover the secret of the ugliness, the ugliness that made her ignored or despised...."\textsuperscript{6} yet every time and everywhere, it is not merely the white beauty that she is looking for, but an existential harmony, which that beauty symbolizes.

Morrison’s tone sounds almost biblical when she describes the decree given to Breedlove and symbolically, all Blacks– that Black will be ugly and White, will be beautiful. Pauline accepts her standard of beauty as she has absorbed from Hollywood images. However, because she believes herself to be ugly– she is physically unable to attain those Hollywood standards– her children are taught that they are ugly too. The self-concept of Black people revolves around the idea of freedom that black men have but which black women do not possess. At this point the norm like docility for women comes in its spark. Pecola’s brother Shammy can run away from the family but Pecola must stay and somehow cope-up with the situation. Pecola’s father Cholly has been abandoned at the age of four days by his mother and orphaned at thirteen. His life up to the time till he meets Pauline is a series of broken ties with people and societies until he reaches the point where all his energies are directed at satisfying his
own appetites and desires. Being a male he grasps the right of
dangerous freedom automatically.

He was free to live his fantasies, and free even to die, the
how and when of which held no interest to him. In those
days Cholly was really free: abandoned in a junk heap by
his mother, rejected for a crap game by his father, there
was nothing more to lose. 7

Cholly is dangerously free because he has no restraints, no
obligation and no parameters for behaviours and emotions, while
Pauline on the other hand is sheltered and has led an isolated
existence from outside stimulation, except for the four brief years at
school. At fifteen, Pauline begins to awaken to her fast approaching
womanhood. Pauline expects things to happen to her: she expects
that she will be found by a perfect stranger, sexually gratified, loved
and led by the hand to the ‘Promised Land’.

When Pauline and Cholly arrive to Ohio, they find life quite
suffocating, as Pauline looks different from Northern women, she
decides that material things—viz. make-up, hairstyle, and clothes are
her keys to enter into the community. Money, clothes and make-up are
simplistic solutions to her complex problems, she tries to get a job, but
instead of answers she only finds new problems. Her life becomes
ritualistic—she goes to work every morning and comes home to argue
with Cholly every night.
The employment most readily available to Pauline is domestic work. She finds her white employers quite interfering yet she is able to do her job and handle the situation until the white woman asks her to make a choice between her and Cholly. It is insulting for Pauline even to hear such a request: She said to Pauline that she would let her stay if Pauline left him. Pauline thought about that. But later on it didn't seem wise for a black woman to leave a black man for a white woman and Pauline decided to stay with her man. To her, Cholly is beautiful and the white features are unappealing. She rejects the impracticality and undesirability of white norms for her black life style.

Morrison discovered the Black women as the corner stone of the community; they are described as 'umbrella figure' and the rotten element in the culture. In *The Bluest Eye*, this role of woman is given to Pauline who feels that she has responsibilities as a wife, a mother and a provider. The demands of her life force her to put dreams aside. She instinctively reorders her world in terms that make sense to her. She is not the backbone of her family, like the one busy providing support and encouragement to her husband and fostering her children; she is not the Cross- but the Martyr herself, who lives only to die for a holy cause- the cause of being a woman. Del Martin, a noted feminist analyst of wife beating, writes in *Battered Wives*:

> The historical roots of our patriarchal family models are ancient and deep... New norms for marriage and family
must be created, since the battering of wife grows naturally out of ancient and time-honoured traditions.\textsuperscript{8}

Cholly, in his weakness and sin, is the perfect foil to her holiness and perfection; however his reformation would have been devastating to her because she only discovers herself perfect in contrast to him. Pauline becomes a reflection of the powerful image that surrounds her—ugly in contrast to white women, and good in contrast to evil black men. These are her excuses for not making herself a whole, beautiful black woman. She does not spare her children from her exaggerated sacrifice of herself in a false martyrdom, for she assumes they are as evil as their father is and as ugly as she is.

The character thus far discussed is part of a Black community, which Morrison paints as the background in this novel. This community has its own standards of wrong and right, ugliness and beauty, and its own methods of healing the wounds. Claudia’s life reflects many of the norms of the larger community, while Breedloves reflect all that can go wrong. Cholly and Breedloves are outside of the community drives and norms: they have always been “outdoors”. The state of being “outdoor” highlights the Black, their powerlessness in the social system. The “brown girls” will become the wives, mothers and will adopt the white norms of respectability. It is a norm that has been adopted by a part of the Black community, which has moulded their daughters in its image. What they do not realize is that it is an image
resulting in fixed gender norm that has been created to destroy the life of the Black community.

Toni Morrison describes *The Bluest Eye* as a novel "about one's dependency on the world for identification, self value and feeling of worth." The voice of patriarchy shatters her realm, ruins the world of relationships and finally produces conditions of isolation, psychic derangement and silence in Pecola's life. The brutal patriarchal encounter removes Pecola from the sense that granted distinctions between self and other, between appropriativeness and the forbidden just as her father was removed in the early phase of his life. She remains as cultureless entity in the patriarchal society when she tries to achieve Oedipal love for her father. She is left to collect the garbage of life by seeking a pathetic regression to the previous generation.

Morrison mirrors the models of conformity that systems of capitalism inflict and create by reflections emanating from the passions of the non-conforming. Pecola is destroyed by being raped and impregnated by her father Cholly. This disaster shatters the cohesiveness of her self, violates her reflective image and transforms her existence in a big contaminated other. Cholly's sense of self is just a matter of light over darkness, power over powerless, male over female and the father over daughter.

Having explored the dominant chords of Pauline and Cholly Breedlove's lives, Morrison executes a marvelous leap of time from
past years into the spring of 1941. For in the pattern, that continues, as if they were circles, to dominate these parents' lives, lies the logic inherent in the rape of Pecola. Drunk, one day, Cholly Breedlove watches his daughter washing dishes and senses her love for him. Confronted by his own unworthiness, he hates her until she shifts her weight and repeats the same gesture that drew him to Pauline, her mother. The tornado of love and hatred paves the way for the pathetic fate of Pecola. Cholly rapes her tenderly, to somehow reconcile, the love hate within, towards Pecola, Pauline and himself.

Removing himself from her was so painful to him that he cut it short and snatched his genitals out of the dry harbors of vagina. She appeared to have fainted. Cholly stood up and could see only her grayish panties, so sad and limp around her ankles. Again the hatred mixed with tenderness. The hatred would not let him pick her up; the tenderness forced him to cover her.  

Choly's rape robs Pecola's existing sense of autonomy by forcing her to gaze at herself with detest. Pecola's birth, her nurturing with a sense of something missing out of her life, her longing for physical beauty, her sexual abuse form her father and self-hate causes psychic annihilation in Pecola's life and tragic entrapment becomes the only sign structure signifying Pecola's existence.
Toni Morrison's novel has examined the general socio-psychic interaction with reference to Black reality in America. Perhaps the strongest theme of Morrison's novel is the wounded psyche of women. Morrison shows us the way black people feel psychically injured and the way their psyche works on their behaviours in its various forms. The social history found in her novels is a history of daily inescapable assault by which a world denies minimum dignity to the Blacks. "White brutality and insensitivity are part of the environment the Black character must struggle with, but they are most often conditions, institutionalized and often anonymous, rather than events with ritualistic overtones." 

_Gone With The Wind_- both book and movie—leaves a memory of a most graphic image of rape. We have in this protofemenist novel, then, in this ideological microcosm, a symbolic economy in which both the meaning of rape and rape itself are insistently circulated. At the precise intersection of domination and sexuality is issue of rape 

As a Negro came running to the buggy, his black face twisted in a leering grim, she fired point black at him... The Negro was beside her, so close that she could smell the rank odor of him as he tried to drag her over buggy side. With her own free hand she fought madly, clawing at his face, and than she felt his big hand over her throat and, with a ripping noise, her Basque was torn open from
breast to waist. Then the black hand fumble between her waist, and terror and revulsion such as she had never known came over her and she screamed like an insane woman.¹²

To assume that sex signifies power in flat, unvarying relation of metaphor or synecdoche will always entail a blindness, not to the rhetorical and pyrotechnic but to such historical categories as class and race, before we can fully achieve and use our intuitive grasp of the leverage that sexual seems to offer on the relations of oppression, we need more-more different, more complicated, more diachronically apt, more off centered, more daring and prehensile application of our present understanding of what it may mean for one thing to signify other.

The Bluest Eye deals honestly and sensitively with the damaging influence of white standards and values on the lives of black people. Pecola, Cholly and Pauline – they all suffer from confused social directives. The novel barely picturises the victimization of a black girl with in the context of a racist social order. "Morrison's stunning insight reveals the disrupted emotions produced by living in a world where white standards and goals are presented to blacks as uniquely important and, at the same time, impossible for them to achieve."¹³

The novel brutally picturises Pecola as a worthless girl who is forced to long for the blue eyes so that she would be loved and
accepted by both whites and blacks, but when spoiled and humiliated by the reality of white society, she finally becomes mad. The sense of ugliness becomes the part of Pecola's personality. Claudia, the narrator of *The Bluest Eye* recognizes this situation.

Our astonishment was short-lived, for it gave way to a curious kind of defensive shame; we were embarrassed for Pecola, hurt for her, and finally we just felt sorry for her. And I believe that our sorrow was more intense because no body else seems to share it. They were disgusted, amused, shocked, outraged, or even exited by the story. But we listened for the one who would say, "Poor little girl," "Poor baby," but there was only head-wagging where those words would have been. We looked for eyes creased with concern, but saw only viels.  

The disrupted emotional condition is only responsible for Pecola's acknowledgement of her ugliness. Due to this major factor-ugliness, Pecola was ignored and despised at school, by teachers, by classmates and she madly craved for blue eyes. This mad longing is the initiation of her psychic disorder that she begins to prey for blue eyes.

The ensuing hyperbolic deviation of idiosyncrasies between Pecola and her surroundings make her conceive that she is not being fulfilled therein, and neither her cravings, so this congestion drives her
to terribly unfathomable demeanor and absolutely weird dispositions. Pecola's idiosyncrasy helps her ride and whip her horses as per will and thus tempts her assume that a spacious kitchen is a sure fix of eternity, that consuming liquor would keep her in a good shape, that devouring on enormous quantities of milk would make her look like her pristine ideal.

Smiling white face, Blonde hair in gentle disarray, blue eyes looking at her out of a world of clean comfort. The eyes are petulant, mischievous. To Pecola they are simply pretty. She eats candy, and its sweetness is good. To eat the candy is somehow to eat the eyes, eat Mary Jane, love Mary Jane, Be Mary Jane.15

Morrison, while telling Pecola's story relates it to a wider circumference and makes intense use of metaphors and piled-up similes. African linguistic characteristics are at the center of this book's truth as Morrison refuses to compose her characters' world in a linear order. By exploring the devastating effects that the western ideas of beauty and romantic love have on the black girl, Morrison weaves a fable about the relationship between the survival and creativity. The emblazoned exodus of all her privileged acumens on two precarious circumstances sabotages all her instinctive forecasts regarding her upcoming life. The account of these horrendous proceedings commences with the onset of menstrual cycles, and the other is the infliction of sexual violence of absolute measures on Pecola's virgin-
self. And from these two events we can derive the inference that whereas in the first case the apex of an ignorant coy-self is depicted; in the second case, plummeting of an entire feminine subsistence is portrayed. White standards corrupt her mind in such a way that she develops self-hate. Overall she has "a remarkable capacity for suffering and prevailing." 16

The first event is an outcome of the diverging polarities of Pecola and her inverted mother- wherein the protagonist is not prepared for her cycles, and the responsibility rests entirely on Pecola's mother. It's absolutely one pinnacle of euphemism that a negligent mother drives her child to guilt even though for no apparent reasons; that the poor kid is forced to take relevant counsel from the most immoral entities of feminine sex- that one better discerns as whores- and two of her minor friends who discern it to her that in order to cast her off springs, someone has to love you. Nothing quite wayward, but the knowledge received from such quarters is always a sure shot recipe for the most terrible sauce for one's dinner.

Pecola is rejected by all- her parents, teachers and schoolmates. She assigns her rejection by society to the lack of blue eyes. And this only desire for the blue eyes is evidence of Pecola's frustration with her identity, with her world and of her longing for herself. It is her unawareness of self that pushes her into a world of madness. Mrs. Breedlove's rejection of Pecola for the daughter of her master is as much an act of love-hate as Cholly's tragic action is.
"Love is never better than the lover. Wicked people love wickedly, violent people love violently, weak people love weakly, stupid people love stupidly, but the love of a free man is never safe." 17

All she experienced is repeated rejection and brutalization. The worst part is her parent's ignorance for love to their offsprings. Due to this lack of love Pecola could not create in herself a sense of worth and it all created a series pain and isolation in Pecola. Not only have the white standards inflicted injury to Pecola, own Black people also harass her. Pauline lavishes all her love and affection on her white employer's children, reserving her slaps and threats for her helpless daughter. The ultimate act of brutalization and betrayal for Pecola comes with her rape by her father. Even Cholly's brutal, irresponsible behaviour is also the result of white hegemony. His humiliation during her first sexual encounter burst out in this form of sickness. His rape of Pecola is the distortion of his love for Pecola. In a sick and power obsessed society, where there is every possibility for distortion and anarchy.

'and Cholly loved her. I'm sure he did. He, at any rate, was the one who loved her, envelop her, give something of himself to her. But his touch was fatal, and the something he gave her filled the matrix of her agony with death.' 18
What actually torpedoes all human ethics and sends Pecola’s subsistence is the ultimate sexual slaughter of her femininity by her father. This tragedy delivers momentum and impetus to the novel itself. Under no intelligible circumstances can this violence be ever justified by ethical human standards. It is the aftermath of this absolute route of Pecola’s obscure femininity that the reader, almost instantly, endears his/her bosom to the esteemed victim of this novel. This can also be perceived from an alternative stand point. Pecola is told to be dwelling in the transition period of European history that concerns itself with the Black Renaissance and this was due to this so-called transition between two mutually conflicting cultures that the oppression of the blacks was at its peak.

Since, no one can hold back his/her reasons under these traumatic experiences, Pecola lost her balance. “A little black girl who wanted to rise up out of the pit her blackness and see the world with blue eyes.” turned into dust for a good for nothing reason. Her maniac father blazes his thing through her chastity and thus mutilates, rather beheads Pecola’s virginity in just one go. All tears, Pecola is merely eleven years old when she is forcefully maltransformed to a woman; without any dramas of requisite reasons on her father’s part. Obviously, if a father rapes his daughter, then even the almighty can not devise ways acquit the sick soul of the culprit.
All her longings for a spacious kitchen, beautiful clothes, golden hair, fair skin, and above all – a pair of blue eyes are made to come to a screeching halt as she is now made to think about her pulverized femininity, her razed virginity, her psychopath father’s deluxe courtesies for her and the most pathetic- her pregnancy. Morrison has brilliantly summed up Pecola’s psychic state and the resultant behaviour.

The damage done was total she spent her days, her tendril, sap green days, walking up and down, her head jerking to the beat of a drummer so distant only she could hear. Elbows bend, hands on shoulder, she fails her arms like a bird in an external, grotesquely futile effort to fly. Beating the air, a winged but grounded bird, intent on the blue void it could not reach-could not even she-but which filled the valleys of the mind.20

The novel shows us the psychic state and the resultant behaviour of Pecola under the pressure of white dominance. Throughout the novel the gender norms described for female sex flash with full strength. Pauline and Pecola they both suffer under the umbrella of oppressive male domain and willingly or unwillingly, they surrender. They become subjugated as somewhere the submissiveness and fragile approach to fight against the repressive forces lead their fate for disasters.
Elfriede Jelinek adheres to psychosexual principles and reinstates them with passion and conviction in The Piano Teacher, which sets up an unusual triangular power struggle. In Jelinek’s work, patriarchal hierarchies define personal relationships, and individuals’ sexuality. Jelinek centres on the consequences of female autonomy, of independence from the inevitable norms socially approved for female gender. By portraying Erika in The Piano Teacher, Jelinek’s work extends beyond the depiction of a character’s inner, explosive self and it attempts to give a language for the sadomasochism she feels is inherent in the cultural capitalism and dictates public and private lives. Erika, tottering on the broken edges of a post World War II Austrian culture, is caught between the posturing exteriors of that “norm” and her own darkest desires. Quite differently from her other novels, The Piano Teacher shows the savagery of desires, even as it separates from the demands of society. It asks what would be unleashed if a woman confronts her illicit desires, escaping the repressive hold of society and family. What makes the novel extraordinary is that it does not provide any answer to the questions of power and violence. It works only to tell their truths. At the beginning of The Piano Teacher, Erika enters a nasty sex booth. Amidst men masturbating from booths next to Erika’s as they watch strippers, Jelinek writes of Erika:
All Erika wants to do is watch. Here, in this booth she becomes nothing. Nothing fits into Erika, but she, she fits exactly into this cell. Erika is a compact tool in human form. Nature seems to have no apertures in her. Erika feels solid wood in the place where the carpenter made a hole in any genuine female.\textsuperscript{21}

Jelinek has, pointed out Erika as a "human tool", as well as a "nothing". That is, both a phallic aggressive force and a female suffering annihilation, nothingness. It is in keeping with Jelinek's psychological fundamentalism that Erika's desires are innately inside her, and have assembled into a kind of explosive, unmanageable energy she can no longer contain. To show the devastating effects of forced gender norms Jelinek has boldly given the ownership of conflicts, of drives and even of disastrous disintegrations firmly in Erika's hands. Erika takes complete responsibility for being unable to prevent her feminine self from taking control of her person, her whole existence. She is, in other scenes, capable of self-mutilation, which is further the consequence of loss of control. She razes her flesh with a razor blade inside a bathtub after feeling an incontrollable desire for sex with a man. The novel hinges on such extremes, as well as the easily interchangeable positions of power. Jelinek clearly satirizes and exposes the clichés and stereotypes of gender roles, of society in general.
Despite dwindling energies, an ageing mother tries to keep her pianist daughter away from men, as her ambition has always been to squeeze maximum money out of her daughter's perfection. Erika, the piano teacher is in her late thirties who inwardly fights against the norms forced upon her, in fact upon the every being of her species. She, being a female is taught to follow the code of conduct as submission, tenderness, suppression of her sexual desires and maintenance of the most desired virtue of the female sex- her virginity. Belonging to the second category of the human species she has to pretend that she respects the norms designed for her sex but inwardly she longs to do everything which is prohibited for her gender. She dresses unsuitably in youthful outfits and stays out late after her lessons, perhaps to provoke her mother and cultivate the illusion of a freedom that she doesn't have truly. Into this stale scenario steps a young piano student, Walter Klemmer, determined to add his list of conquests.

The Piano Teacher is a repentant tale of two mutually conflicting philosophies and their habitual divergence. Curtailed liberty of spirits and reciprocally hyper-parabolic polarities of the respective idiosyncrasies of the protagonist and her tyrannical mother are the hallmarks of this scintilla of Elfriede Jelinek. She has very ardently brought out the congestion of ideologies between a mother and her kid; and also the tidal waves of unrest that punctually keep on rocking
the seabords of the ever tranquil ocean of never failing timidity of her prodigious kid, orthogonal christened as Erika Kohut. Payable to the never deterring courtesies of her mother, Erika and her festival spirits have undergone mutation- while Erika is more of a frostfish that is devoid of all drama of self-love; her mother is more of a counterpart of hers, say, a swordfish- who regularly devours on the suppleness of her daughter's soul. "Mother can't always prevent Erika from buying something, but she can dictate what Erika puts on. Mother is an absolute ruler." So ghastly is mother's repute that the reader is, almost instantaneously, magnetized to a polarity exactly contravening hers.

Time passes, and we pass the time. They are enclosed together in a bell jar: Erika, her protective hulls, her mama. The jar can be lifted only if an outsider grabs the glass knob on the top and pulls it up. Erika is an insect encased in amber, timeless, ageless. She has no history, and she doesn't seem to make a fuss. This insect has long since lost its ability to creep and crawl. Erika is baked inside the cake pan of eternity. She joyfully shares this eternity with her beloved composers, but she certainly can't hold a candle to them when it comes to being loved.
The novel follows Erika as she moves away from the entrapment of her monster mother and steps into her own metaphorical private room, replacing their bond by forming a new relationship with one of her young male students. She moves from the designation of a dogmatic, sadistic professor demanding immediate obedience from her student to a domain where her own erotic passions, hidden and sick desires to be submissive finally make her abused by the hands of same student. Jelinek wants to convey that Erika could have been flourished if she was given the due rights of her body and desires to nurture, but she was controlled and turned into waste. Simone de Beauvoir has written right in The Second Sex- “Males and females are two types of individuals within a species for the function of reproduction, they can be defined only correlative.”

Perhaps destiny has designed the similar fate for Erika and Pecola both. It is difficult to presume whether Erika like Pecola is such a crystal of a soul that she instantaneously dismisses all the wrong doings of her mother, or is it the ultimate timidity of hers that she fails to muster enough courage to sustain her stand, or worse, is she so meek that she has thoroughly submitted herself to her pessimistic and assuming mother? “She puts Erika against the wall, under interrogation -- inquisitor and executioner in one, unanimously recognized as Mother by the State and by the Family.”
Whatever the inference may be, one deduction is a sunrise on the mountain. This melodrama escalates into the most primal form of warfare the intelligent race of humans ever embraced- Erika gets hold of her mother’s beautified hair, and

she pulls it furiously. Her mother weeps. When Erika stops pulling, her hands are filled with tufts of hair. She gazes at them, dumbfounded... Erika doesn’t know what to do with the discolored dark blond tufts. She goes into the kitchen and throws them into the garbage can.26

As far as the author of all the wickedness is concerned, she now “with less hair on her head, stands crying in the living room...” This is evident quite shortly after the pronouncement of the cease-fire between the bull and the matador themselves- as she examines the spots on her mother’s head. But she is speechless and in a state of insanity thinking what to do with the tufts of hair. She makes remorse over the shabby act and sheds a few more tears, because Mother is old enough and won’t live forever.

In *The Piano Teacher* the tartness of the ambiance between the mother and her rosy darling is furthered by an agonizing pronouncement by the author of all the sufferings of Erika, as her idiosyncrasy is unveiled by the instigator Jelinek herself, when she philosophically remarks,
It is a mother’s duty to help a child make up her mind and to prevent wrong decisions. By not encouraging injuries, a mother avoids having to close wounds later on. Erika’s mother prefers inflicting injuries herself, then supervising the therapy.  

Mother is so overprotective for her only kid that she makes her feel gasping for breath every now and then; she rather has choked her kid’s prodigy and an otherwise extremely pleasant life for her personal convoluted phobias and unresolved apprehensions. All her weird anxieties can be put under one bracket, “because all things pass and few ever return.”, be it the abandonment of hers by her husband, shunning off hers by the immediate community, embracement of an identical doom by her only hope or even a natural phenomenon: “Erika’s youth is gone.”

Much of the melodrama that encapsulates this pinnacle of an illustration that concerns a submerged subsistence of a disastrous ascendancy of her personal resources by a teacher herself is what one better discerns as *The Piano Teacher*, the unveiling marvel of Austria’s most favoured pen chanter- Elfriede Jelinek. The celestial mysticism that has been the hallmark of all her literary exploits, commencing from this very magnum opus usually revolves around a subjugated and overwhelmed distinctiveness; usually it’s a fictional account of one of her compatriots.
The author is everywhere and nowhere, never quite standing behind her words, nor ever ceding to her literary figures in order to allow the illusion that they should exist outside her language. There is nothing but a stream of saturated sentences, seemingly welded together under high pressure and leaving no room for moments of relaxation.\(^{28}\)

In this oeuvre of hers, Jelinek has portrayed how an utterly acrid and symbiotic liaison of a kid with her fixatedly totalitarian mother results in the ultimate dehumanization of human values of the former. Even Sadomasochistic attitude becomes evident in the protagonist's sub-conscious as is pretty obvious in the atrocious manner she attempts to put herself to bleeding recurrently. For the first half of the novel Erika is successfully humiliated by her mother. However, scenario takes a turn with Walter Klemmer's, falling in lust/love with Erika. Walter is a handsome and talented athletic boy. Erika's sexual desires plan a dangerous game to put the young lad into a waste.

Erika takes hold of Klemmer's arm; this intimate gesture makes him tremble he can't be cold amid these healthy teenagers with their excellent circulation; these barbarians who have eaten their fill, in a country whose culture is ruled by barbarians.\(^{29}\)
Jelinek reveals deeper and more threatening movements toward rebellion. Erika has dark sexual urges. She visits a Turkish peep show beneath a bridge in a sluggish part of Vienna to catch a glance of live porn shows where she is the only non-doer around. Later she is seen in the hidden parts of town where she watches uncivilized sadomasochistic movies and spies the nude and dangerous world of lovers in the late night.

In fact she saw it twice. She won't go again, for she prefers a stronger diet when it comes to pornos. These gracefully formed exemplars of the human species in this downtown movie house act without pain and without any possibility of pain. 30

In particular, the novel has two scenes of great dramatic effect where actions and words work powerfully together. The first is in the school bathroom where the vigorous, Klemmer boldly kisses his ageing beauty into life; Erika cherishes a moment of emancipation, then transforms this opportunity for passion into a frustrating masturbation scene in which the man, as if being taught a lesson, is brought to orgasm, and then forced to recompose himself.

Some days later, back home, Erika barricades herself in her room with Klemmer and forces him to read a letter in which she begs him to mistreat her, beat her, tie her up, and so on. Such an account of the book suggests an unfamiliar kind of unhappy psychological
drama, but beyond doubts with this masterpiece Jelinek's prose has now abandoned the transparency of the conventional novel.

The conflict between the two mutates Erika's gentle self to a sadist, and this is illustrated by a few instances that Jelinek has depicted. Erika is now all prepared to make all the ridiculous and tyrannical fantasies of her despotic mother. She spends money on sleazy outfits that she won't wear; she nose-dives at phenomenal proposal of being an esteemed concert pianist, and so forth... this spiral train of sorry proceedings is furthered by the advent of a seventeen year old student Walter Klemmer, a young lad who is in his late teens- and is her best student. She tries first to emulate all her aspirations through him, but gradually her own apprehensions play a spoilsport in the business, as Erika's mother decides to further tighten her screws on her phenomenal kid, whom she has bewitched herself; thus "the child, whose talent is discussed for miles around, falls."^31

It is at this very divulging Y-junction that Erika decides to revenge her mother in her own weird manner. Strangled by a paroxysm of an alarming phenomenon called sado-masochism disorder, she discovers surfacing on her opaque and icy subconscious membranes. Then all the hells break loose, as Erika shuns off the garb of hers that was brutally manifested on her spirits to leave them parched.

For three long years, she tenaciously longs for her first pair of high-heeled shoes. She never forgoes and forgets.
She needs tenacity for her wish. Until she gets her wish and her shoes, she can apply her tenacity to Bach's solo sonatas, because Mother craftily promises her the shoes in exchange for mastering the Bach.32

This makes Erika even more cynical and makes her infer, "she'll never get the shoes." Usually feminine pinkest fantasies are correlated with posh attires, snobbish jewelry and all aristocratic paraphernalia with it. Her mother's fervor despotic disposition makes her kid's life a regular hell for all and sundry, not only for Erika alone. Erika's self-belief and confidence are all vaporized, because mother threatens her in the meanest way so much so that she fatally poisons her "mercurial thing" that she is inclined to assume that the only way she'll ever captivate anybody is with her knowledge and ability.

The Piano Teacher is an important vehicle for Elfriede Jelinek's bitter pessimism. She appears an equal opportunity hater, producing a mother who oppresses, daughter who looses her control over her lifer and the student who internalizes the male ideal of objectified love. Along the way she sharply slaps the patriarchal face of the society as well, especially the educational system. Most simply put, The Piano Teacher is the story of a musical prodigy, her sexual assaulter and her monstrously controlling mother. The two devils- mother and daughter are locked in a relationship so symbiotic that they have to sleep together and so oppressive that the frostfish daughter, Professor Erika
Kohut, punishes her autocratic mother even more severely than she governs her students. The novel is a framework of violent shocks, typically administered in confined spaces.

Toni Morrison's fiction, like that of Margaret Atwood, demonstrates a central interest in the issues of control, separation, existence and destruction. Her characters' psyche also appears to be wounded and imprisoned, not only due to their gender roles, but also by the racial and class division within American culture. The Bluest Eye is a novel, which is a testimony to Morrison's deep interest in black people, their lives and their sufferings. She outlines how a black woman is denied her femaleness in race issues and denies her blackness in sex issues. Through the gender norms defined for their characters like submission, fear of rape, docility and male control over power, Jelinek and Morrison depict that women have to operate in a world in which those who are powerful have no sense of belonging. If the powerful do possess the positive values of human life, such as love, trust, care and forgiveness; these values are used as instruments to achieve control. Erika's mother, for example, loves her but expects obedience in return. Pecola suffers because she trusted her father. Pauline is locked in an institutionalized prostitution in the form of her marriage, as there is no love anymore between Cholly and her, neither in the head nor in the heart. One more burning norm of gender discourse that Jelinek and Morrison discuss in their novels is the
concept of mothering. Why it is the duty of a mother only to nurture and take care of her children? Getting pregnant and delivering a child, is definitely the role assigned to a female by nature but mothering can be done by any of the gender. Then why males in any culture do not fulfill this responsibility? Erika's father disserted her mother and thus escaped from his responsibility of mothering his only child. But a mother, being heavily loaded with her gender norms could not spared herself from her responsibilities and mothered her daughter as a single parent. Pauline, after facing the truth that Cholly is not able to nurture and take care of his family, she moves outside her spheres and works under white dominance to mother her off springs. Being a male, Cholly can lose his control over his sexual desires and can commit a heinous crime of raping his daughter but can this offence be neglected on the part of Pauline? Whatever the comparative value of the two novels might be, Elfriede Jelinek possesses the tremendous rich ability to make human relations seem more hopeless and more disgusting than any other contemporary author I have ever gone through. She herself says, "When I write, I have always tried to be on the side of the weak. The side of the powerful is not literature's side." One may be left mesmerized and stunned for a while after reading Jelinek but certainly her works always construct a much more hopeful and caring world than that which she pictures as rather typical of human kind.
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