

## Chapter Two

### Literary Background of Racism and Feminism

Salvation for a race, nation or class must come from within.

– A. Philip Randolph

The expressions racialism, racism, institutionalised racism can be explored first to understand the doctrine concerning race and identity. Racialism indicates the belief in racial superiority, inferiority, and spotlessness. This is based on the belief that moral and intellectual characteristics distinguish the races like the physical characteristics. But racism indicates the unequal power relations that grow from the socio-political domination of one race by another ensuing in organised discriminatory practices. Therefore, in order to be a racist, one has to be a member of the politically dominant group which seizes the power. In the United States of America it often means that one must be a White. In other words, the racist can get away with it because the group to which they belong controls most of the positions of power in the political, judicial, and law-enforcement systems.

The systematic practice of racial discrimination can occur only when racism has become institutionalised. Institutionalised racism indicates the incorporation of racist policies and practices in a society, in the institutions like education, government, corporate, law, health care, etc. Internalised racism refers to the psychological brainwashing that a racist society spreads to indoctrinate people of colour with the belief in White superiority. Victims of internalised racism feel less attractive, less worthwhile and less capable. They generally feel inferior to Whites and often wish they were white or looked whiter. While institutionalised racism might manifest itself more in economic hardship and social marginalisation, internalised racism devastates the marginalised individuals more psychologically.

Racism has prevailed throughout the history of mankind. It may be defined as the hatred of one person to another or the belief that another person is less than human because of skin color, language, customs, and place of birth or any other basic nature of that person. Racism has influenced wars, slavery, the formation of nations, and legal codes.

In the past five to ten centuries, the racism followed by Western powers towards non-Westerners has more significant impact on history than any other form of racism like the racism among Western groups, Eastern groups such as Asians, Africans, and others. The most notorious example of racism by the West has been slavery, particularly the enslavement of Africans in the New World. But this enslavement itself dates back to thousands of years. This enslavement was accomplished because of the racist belief that Black Africans and their progeny were less human than White Europeans and their lineage.

Originally Africans were not regarded as inferior. When Portuguese sailors first came across Africa in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, they came upon advanced empires and cities as their own. They regarded Africans to be serious competitors. But in due course of time, as African civilizations failed to match the technological advances of Europe, the major European powers began to plunder the continent and forcibly took out its people to work as slave labourers in new colonies across the Atlantic Ocean. Africans were looked as a group of men with sub human nature or as beasts. To some extent, this view was necessary to justify the slave trade at that time when Western culture had begun to promote individual rights and human equality in their home countries.

The willingness of some Africans to sell other Africans to European slave merchants also paved way to development of slavery. The Africans were still

immersed on the false belief that the dark people were all kinsmen, all part of one society, as opposed to the world scenario in which the nations were in wars for broadening their boundaries.

One important feature of racism is the common attitudes in the New World regarding slaves and slavery especially toward Blacks and immigrant groups. Jews are usually looked by the racists as superhuman, as wicked, cunning, skilled, and powerful. Blacks and others are seen by racists as merely subhuman, like beasts. If the focus of anti-Semitism is to spread evil upon the Jews, the focus of racism is to spread inferiority upon the Blacks. The victims of twentieth century racism are also considered as morally degraded.

During the second half of the nineteenth century, the growth of Darwinism, the decline of Christian belief, and growing immigration were all perceived by many Westerners as a threat to their cultural control. European and American scientists and philosophers invented a false racial science to prove the supremacy of non-Jewish Whites. The scientific efforts to elevate one race over another by the scientists and social scientists have continued throughout the twentieth century to find some inborn errors of certain races, particularly Blacks. Some public figures in the American Black community have equally defended the supremacy of their own race and the inferiority of Whites by using the identical language of White racists. All these arguments were based upon a false understanding of race. Actually modern-day scientists have not agreed to the classification of people based on race. The factors that may seem to be significant racial differences to some like the skin color, nature of hair, shape of facial bones are not of much significance scientifically. In reality, the genetic differences within a race may be greater than those between races.

It is generally understood that racism is as old as human society itself. As long as human beings have inhabited this earth, they have always hated or feared people of a different nation or skin color. In other words, racism is a part of basic human nature. In Forrest G. Wood's *Black Scare*, Representative John L. Dawson, a member of Congress after the Civil War, insisted that racial prejudice was "implanted by Providence for wise purposes" (2). Senator James Doolittle of Wisconsin, a contemporary of Dawson, also alleged that racial prejudice was an "instinct of our nature" (2). These concepts encourage us to sort people into racial categories and to recognise the natural supremacy of Whites when compared to people with darker skins. If modern-day racists seek the explanation of science to justify their prejudices, they are highly mistaken as their nineteenth century ancestors.

If racism is part of basic human nature, then socialists have to face a real challenge in overcoming the racial divisions and to fight for a society free of racial inequality. But fortunately, racism does not seem to be a part of human nature. The best evidence for this statement is the fact that racism has not always prevailed in the early civilizations.

Racism is a specific form of oppression that arises from discrimination of a group of people based on some inherited characteristics, like the skin colour which makes them inferior to their oppressors. Yet the idea of race and racism are modern inventions. They arose and became part of the society in the background of the African slave trade only at the dawn of capitalism during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Karl Marx has described the processes that created modern racism. He has attributed the rise of capitalism, the African slave trade and the European killing of

indigenous people in America to colonialism. In *Capital*, Karl Marx has pointed the relationship between slavery and capitalism as:

The discovery of gold and silver in America, the extirpation, enslavement, and entombment in mines of the indigenous population of the continent, the beginnings of the conquest and plunder of India and the conversion of Africa into a preserve for the commercial hunting of black skins are all things that characterise the dawn of the era of capitalist production. (915)

Marx linked the role of slave trade during the rise of capitalism to the racism against Africans. Karl Marx in *Wage Labour and Capital* explains:

What is a Negro slave? A man of the black race. The one explanation is as good as the other. A Negro is a Negro. He only becomes a slave in certain relations. A cotton spinning jenny is a machine for spinning cotton. It only becomes capital in certain relations. Torn away from these conditions, it is as little capital as gold by itself is money, or as sugar is the price of sugar. (28)

In this passage, Marx shows how the economic and social relations of emerging capitalism thrust Blacks into slavery. The line “He only becomes a slave in certain relations,” (28) expresses the dominant ideology that associates Africans to be slaves.

These parts of Marx’s writing give us a good beginning in understanding about the Marxist explanation of the origins of racism. The Trinidadian historian of slavery Eric Williams puts it in *Capitalism and Slavery* that “Slavery was not born of racism: rather, racism was the consequence of slavery” (7). We should accept that the consequence of modern slavery is due to the dawn of capitalism. While slavery had

existed in our economic system thousands of years before the conquest of America, racism did not exist in the olden days.

The old empires of Greece and Rome were based on slave labour. But ancient enslavement was not looked in terms of racism. Slaves were most often prisoners of wars or conquered people. If we value White people as originating in what is today's Europe, then most slaves in ancient Greece and Rome were Whites. In *The Making of New World Slavery: from the baroque to the modern, 1492-1800*, Robin Blackburn says that the Roman law made slaves as the property of their owners, while maintaining a "formal lack of interest in the slave's ethnic or racial provenance" (35). Over the years, the freedom given to the slaves produced a mixed population of slaves and free men in Roman-ruled areas in which all of them were called as 'Romans'.

The Greeks drew a sharper line of difference between Greeks and barbarians who were subject to slavery. But even this was not viewed in racial or ethnic terms. In Peter Alexander's *Racism, Resistance and Revolution* the socialist historian of the Haitian Revolution, C. L. R. James, explains:

Historically it is pretty well proved now that the ancient Greeks and Romans knew nothing about race. They had another standard . . . civilized and barbarian . . . and you could have white skin and be a barbarian, and you could be black and civilized. (5)

Moreover the encounters in the ancient world between Mediterranean people and Africans did not produce an increase of racism against the Africans. In *Before Color Prejudice: The Ancient View of Blacks*, Howard University Professor, Snowden, Frank M. had documented innumerable accounts of interaction between the Greco-Roman, Egyptian civilizations and the Kush, Nubian, and Ethiopian kingdoms of Africa. He found ample evidence of incorporation of Black Africans in all the

occupations of the ancient Mediterranean empires and Black-White intermarriage. Black and mixed race Gods appeared in Mediterranean art. One of the Roman emperors was an African called as Septimius Severus. Thus Snowden Frank concluded:

There is little doubt that many blacks were physically assimilated into the predominantly White population of the Mediterranean world, in which there were no institutional barriers or social pressures against black-white unions. In antiquity, then, black-white sexual relations were never the cause of great emotional crises. The ancient pattern, similar in some respects to the Mahgrebian and the Latin American attitude toward racial mixture, probably contributed to the absence of a pronounced colour prejudice in antiquity. (97)

The chief source of slaves in Western Europe was from Eastern Europe, in those times between tenth and sixteenth centuries. In *The Making of New World Slavery: from the baroque to the modern, 1492-1800*, Robin Blackburn says:

In fact, the word “slave” comes from the word “Slav,” the people of Eastern Europe. In the middle Ages, most people sold into slavery in Europe came from Eastern Europe, the Slavic countries. In Eastern Europe, Russia stood out as the major area where slaveholders and slaves were of the same ethnicity. Of course, by modern-day racial descriptions the Slavs and Russian slaves were white. (54)

This outline does not mean to suggest a pre-capitalistic Golden Age of racial tolerance, in the slave societies of Rome. Empires viewed themselves as centres of the universe and looked on outsiders as inferiors. The ancient Greece and Rome fought wars of conquest against people who were recognised to be less advanced.

The Hebrew Bible's 'curse of Ham' from the story of Noah, condemns Africans to enslavement. Cultural and religious associations of the colour white, with light and angels and the colour black, with darkness and evil prevailed even then. But none of these intellectual or psychological factors explain the rise of New World slavery or modern racism.

The slave trade lasted for more than four hundred years, from the mid fourteen hundreds when the Portuguese made their first voyages down the African coast, until the abolition of slavery in Brazil in 1888. In *The Making of New World Slavery: from the baroque to the modern, 1492-1800*, according to Robin Blackburn says:

Slave traders took as many as 12 million Africans by force to work on the plantations in South America, the Caribbean, and North America. About 13 percent of slaves approximately 1.5 million died during the Middle Passage . . . the trip by boat from Africa to the New World. The African slave trade . . . involving African slave merchants, European slavers, and New World planters in the traffic in human cargo . . . represented the greatest forced population transfer-ever. (3)

In *Illiberal Education*, Dinesh D'Souza accuses that Stanford's multicultural curriculum whitewashes the African role in the slave trade with the charge that Africans sold their own people into slavery has become a standard myth against "politically correct" (77) history that condemns the European role in the African slave trade. The first business confrontation of the Spanish, Portuguese, and the English with African kingdoms circled around trade in goods alone. Only after the establishment of New World plantations requiring huge labour groups the slave trade began. Indeed African kings and chiefs did sell prisoners in wars or members of other communities into slavery. Sometimes they accomplished alliances with Europeans to

support them in wars, with prisoners from their enemies being handed over to the Europeans as loot. The labour demands of the plantation economies pushed the demand for slaves. The existing supply did not create its own demand. Thus European slave owners or merchants cannot escape by blaming their African partners for all the crime related to slavery.

As African historian Davidson Basil also admits the involvement of many African chiefs in the slave trade. On the ship, Africans were controlled in their movements so that they would not come together to mutiny on the ship. In many slave ships, slaves were chained down, piled like firewood with a space of less than a foot between them. This is accounted by the historian Basil Davidson in *The African Slave Trade*:

The space was so low and they sat between each other's legs, and stowed so close together, that there was no possibility of lying down, or at all changing their position, by night or by day. As they belonged to, and were shipped on account of different individuals, they were all branded like sheep, with their owner's marks of different forms. (13)

On the plantations, slaves were subjected to a daily regimen of eighteen hours work. All the members of the slave families were also set to work. Since the tobacco and sugar plantations of the New World functioned nearly like factories, men, women, and children were allotted everyday jobs from the fields to the processing mills. Slaves were left without any rights. Throughout the colonies in the Caribbean to North America, laws were passed authorizing a variety of common practices. Slaves were forbidden to carry weapons, they could marry only with the owner's permission, and their families could be broken up at the disposition of the owner. They were forbidden to own property. Masters allowed slaves to cultivate vegetables and

chickens so the master would not have to attend to their food needs. But they were forbidden to sell the products of their own gardens for profit. Some owners supported religious teachings among slaves, but all of them made it apparent that a slave's conversion to Christianity did not change their category as slaves. Some other owners opposed religious teaching, especially when the planters realised that the church gatherings were one of the circumstances when slaves planned treachery and mutiny. It goes without saying that the slaves had no political or civil rights, with no right to education, no right to serve on juries, no right to vote, or to run for government office.

The planters used brutal methods of suppression to prevent any slave mutiny. Slave catchers used hunter dogs to hunt down any slave who tried to escape from the plantation. The punishments for any form of slave resistance were excessive and lethal. In *The Making of New World Slavery: from the baroque to the modern, 1492-1800*, Robin Blackburn gives a description of the punishments that the slaves faced in Barbados. It informs that rebellious slaves would be punished by "nailing them down on the ground with crooked sticks on every Limb, and then applying the Fire by degrees from Feet and Hands, burning them gradually up to the Head, whereby their pains are extravagant" (345). Barbados planters could collect compensation from the government, of twenty five pounds per slave thus executed.

The African slave trade helped in formation of various societies from modern Argentina to Canada. These countries differed in their exploitation of slaves, the severity of the rule imposed on slaves, and the degree of mixing of the races. In *Red, White and Black*, Gary B. Nash compares the different attitudes due to racial intermixture in English North America and Spanish South America says, "But none of these became as virulently racist . . . insisting on racial separation and a strict color bar as the English North American colonies that became the United States" (285).

Despite these horrible conditions it is important to underline that when European powers began etching up for the New World between them, African slaves were not part of their calculations. When we think of enslavement today, we think of it primarily from the point of view of its relationship to racism. But planters in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries looked at slavery chiefly as a means to produce profits for them. So slavery was a method of organizing labour to produce sugar, tobacco, cotton and it was not a system for producing White supremacy. In the following paragraphs, the researcher has discussed how the slavery in the United States of America and the rest of the New World became the ground for propagation of racism.

In the first hundred years of colonisation in places which became the United States in the future, the majority of slaves and other unfree labourers were Whites. The term unfree cites the distinction between slavery, servitude and free wage labour. One of the advantages of capitalism for workers is that workers are free to sell their working ability to whichever employer gives them the best deal. But this kind of freedom is limited to the maximum. Unless they are independently wealthy, workers are not free to decide whether or not to work. They are either free to work or to starve. Once they complete the working term, they can quit one employer and go to work for another. But the hallmark of systems like slavery and indentured servitude was that slaves or servants were attached to a particular employer for a period of time or for life in the case of slaves. The decision to work for another master was not that of slave's or the servant's but was the master's. He could sell slaves for money or other exchange commodities like livestock, lumber, or machinery.

The North American colonies started predominantly as private business undertakings in the early sixteen hundreds. The conquests of Mexico and Peru in the

1500s produced fabulous gold and silver for Spain but for settlers in places that became Maryland, Rhode Island, and Virginia, made money only through agriculture. On top of all these modes of income, the survival was important. The chief aim of the settlers was to obtain a labour force that could produce large amounts of indigo, tobacco, sugar, and other crops that could be sold back to England. From 1607-85, when Jamestown was founded in Virginia, the primary source of agricultural labour in English North America came from White indentured servants.

The colonists first attempted to compel the indigenous population into labour. But the Indians declined to become servants to the English. Indians showed resistance on forcing to work, escaped into the surrounding area, which they were more familiar with than the Europeans. The English colonies gradually adopted a policy of driving out the Indians. Then they started to appoint White servants. Indentured servants were predominantly young White men, usually English or Irish who were anticipated to work for a planter for a fixed term of four to seven years. They received room and food on the plantation but no pay. They could not quit and work for another planter before the end of the tenure. After serving their tenure, they might be able to obtain some land for themselves and start a farm. In *The Origins of American Slavery*, Betty Wood has given the information:

Some were prisoners, convicted of petty crimes in Britain, or convicted of being troublemakers in Britain's first colony, Ireland. Many were kidnapped off the streets of Liverpool or Manchester and put on ships to the New World. Some voluntarily became servants, hoping to start farms after they fulfilled their obligations to their masters. (75)

In the entire 1600s, the planters tried to get along with a predominantly White, but a multiracial workforce. But at the end of the seventeenth century the colonial

leaders became increasingly frustrated with the White servants. The first reason was that, they faced the problem of constantly recruiting labour as the terms of servants expired. The second reason was that, after servants finished their contracts and decided to lay down their farms, they were prospective competitors to their former masters. And finally, the planters did not like the disrespect of the servants. The middle of 1600s was a time of revolution in England, when the idea of individual freedom was challenging the old order based on royal family lineage. The colonial planters tended to be royalists, but their servants tended to assert their rights as Englishmen, to better food, clothing, and time offs. Most labourers in the colonies supported the servants. As the years progressed, the costs of servant labour increased. So the planters appealed to the colonial boards and assemblies to allow the extensive importation of African slaves.

Black slaves worked on plantations in small numbers all over the seventeenth century. But until then, it cost planters more to buy slaves than to buy White servants. Blacks lived in a variety of grades, some were free, some were slaves, and some were servants. The law in Virginia did not establish the condition of lifetime or continuous slavery at that juncture. Even it did differentiate African servants from White servants until 1661. Blacks could work on juries, own property, and perform other civil rights. Northampton County, Virginia, recognised interracial marriages. In one case, it gave the rights for a free Black couple to act as foster parents for an abandoned White child. There were even a few examples of Black freemen who owned White servants. On Black voting rights in North Carolina, Alexander Keyssar, in his book *The Right to Vote* says, "Free Blacks in North Carolina had voting rights" (6).

There is convincing evidence dating from the 1620-80s that the European lineage in the Chesapeake of Eastern Virginia were happy to identify and cooperate

with people of African lineage showing multiracial character. Betty Wood says, “On many plantations Europeans and West Africans laboured side by side in the tobacco fields, performing exactly the same types and amounts of work; they lived and ate together in shared housing; they socialized together; and sometimes they slept together” (82). The racism was not implanted in the minds of the labourers at that time.

The economics played a part in the decision to move towards full-blown slave labour. By the end of the seventeenth century, the cost of White indentured servants was more than the cost of African slaves. A planter could procure an African slave for life for the same cost that he could buy a White servant for ten years. In *Capitalism and Slavery*, Eric Williams has explained:

Here, then, is the origin of Negro slavery. The reason was economic, not racial; it had to do not with the colour of the labourer, but the cheapness of the labour. The planter would have gone to the moon, if necessary, for labour. Africa was nearer than the moon, nearer too than the more populous countries of India and China. But their turn would soon come. (19-20)

The panic of the planter upon a multiracial rebellion also forced them to implement racial slavery. In the seventeenth century many treasons involving Black slaves, servants, and White indentured servants were found out and blocked. The cooperation among Blacks and White servants are seen through the court records. In *Myne Owne Ground: Race & Freedom on Virginia's Eastern Shore, 1640-1676*, historians T. H. Breen and Stephen Innes points out:

These cases reveal only extreme actions, desperate attempts to escape, but for every group of runaways who came before the courts there

were doubtless many more poor Whites and Blacks who cooperated in smaller, less daring ways on the plantation. (30)

In 1676, the largest of these treasons developed into a rebellion that cast alarm into the hearts of the Virginia Tidewater planters called the Bacon's Rebellion. Several hundreds of farmers, servants, and slaves started a protest to drive the colonial government to grab Indian land for fair distribution. The clash grew into demands for tax relief and dislike of the Jamestown establishment. On discussing its interracial class content, in *A People's History of the United States*, political scientist Howard Zinn says, "Planter Nathaniel Bacon helped organize an army of Whites and Blacks that sacked Jamestown and forced the governor to flee. The rebel army was held out for eight months before the Crown managed to defeat and disarm it" (39).

After the revolution ended, the Tidewater planters made two resolutions. The first resolution offered allowances to the White freemen, lifting taxes and extending them the voting rights and second resolution moved them to full-blown racial form of enslavement. Fifteen years earlier, the plantation owners had recognised the need for slavery for life and placed Africans in a different grouping to White servants. But the law had practical effect and there was no need for a systematic slave code until slavery became organised. Slavery did not become usual until the cost of an African slave for life was twice as much as an English servant for five-year tenure. Both of those conditions changed immediately after Bacon's Rebellion. In the whole seventeenth century, the plantation owners imported about twenty thousand African slaves. The majority of them were brought into North American colonies within twenty four years after Bacon's Rebellion.

In 1664, the Maryland legislature approved a law determining slaves' status on the basis of whether their fathers were slave or free. However, certifying paternity was

difficult, but that certifying a person's mother was definite. So the planters changed the law to ascertain slave status on the basis of the mothers' circumstances. Now White slaveholders who fathered offsprings by slave women would be definite that their progeny were slaves. And the law included punishments for non slave women who slept with slaves. But what is most fascinating about this is even this law does not really speak about racism. It conserves the property rights of slaveholders and ascertains barriers between slaves and free which were to become toughened into racial divisions over the next few years. Taking the Maryland law as an example, in an article in the journal *New left Review*, "Slavery, Race and Ideology in the United States of America," Barbara Jeanne Fields has made this important point:

Historians can actually observe colonial Americans in the act of preparing the ground for race without foreknowledge of what would later arise on the foundation they were laying. The purpose of the experiment is clear: to prevent the erosion of slave owner's property rights that would result if the offspring of free white women impregnated by slave men were entitled to freedom. The language of the preamble to the law makes clear that the point was not yet race. Race does not explain the law. Rather, the law shows society in the act of inventing race. (107)

After setting up the condition that African slaves would nurture major cash crops of the North American colonies, the planters then moved to set up the institutions that would encourage White supremacy. Slowly most unfree labour changed into Black labour. Laws and ideas anticipated emphasizing the subhuman category of Black people, the thought of racism and White supremacy emerged full-scale over the next generation. Some of the greatest thinkers of the day such as

Scottish philosopher David Hume and Thomas Jefferson, the man who wrote the *Declaration of Independence*, wrote thesis charging Black inferiority. The ideology of White supremacy was based on the natural inferiority of Blacks, even allegations that Blacks were less human enhanced throughout the eighteenth century. The leading scholars of the time were prepared to accept the principles of the 1776 American Revolution with the pitfalls of slavery by the side. The American Revolution of 1776 and later the French Revolution of 1789 popularised the thoughts of liberty and the equal rights of all human beings. The Declaration of Independence declared all the men created in this world to be equal and they possess certain inborn rights like the life, liberty, and the quest of happiness which cannot be taken away.

The American Revolution which was the first major middleclass revolution, wanted to set up the rights of the new capitalist class against the old type of monarchy. It started with the dislike of the American merchant class that wanted to break away from British monarchy's restrictions on its trading. But their challenge to British tyranny also gave way to a whole range of thoughts that extended the concept of liberty from the trade to that of human rights, democracy, and civil liberation. It legalised an attack on slavery and considered it as an offense to liberty. Some of the foremost American revolutionaries, such as Thomas Paine and Benjamin Franklin, authorised abolition of slavery.

The American Revolution established the capitalistic rule in America. Many of the capitalists and planters made a lot of money from slavery. So the revolution compromised with slavery. The Declaration originally contained a condemnation of King George for permitting the slave trade, but Jefferson declined it following disapproval from representatives from Georgia and the Carolinas. Naturally most of the founding fathers of the United States who owned slaves themselves could not

combine together the principles of liberty coexisting with the slavery, a system that represented the exact contradiction of liberty.

The principle of White supremacy was comfortably accepted in the bill. We can easily make out today that the term 'all men' did not include women, Indians, or most Blacks. But to rule out the benefits of liberty to the Black slaves, the leaders of the time argued that Blacks were not really human, they were a lower order of a human being. Jefferson's *Notes from Virginia* which is supposed to be a scientific document of the flora and fauna of Virginia, started arguments that forecast the scientific racism of the 1800s and 1900s. No major institutions such as the universities, the churches, or the newspapers of the time except few, raised disapproval of White supremacy or of slavery. To the contrary these institutions helped to establish religious and academic justifications for slavery and Black inferiority. As C. L. R. James put it in Peter Alexander's *Racism, Resistance and Revolution*:

The conception of dividing people by race begins with the slave trade. This thing was so shocking, so opposed to all the conceptions of society which religion and philosophers had, that the only justification by which humanity could face it was to divide people into races and decide that the Africans were an inferior race. (6)

White supremacy was not only used to defend slavery but also used to keep the two-thirds of Southern Whites who were not slaveholders under one roof. Blacks represented a minority in the South, contrasting to the French colony of St. Domingue or the British colony of Barbados, where Blacks outnumbered the Whites. A small minority of slave-owning Whites, who controlled the governments and economies of the Deep South states, ruled over a population that was about two-thirds White

farmers and workers and one-third Black slaves. The slave-owners principle of racism and White supremacy helped them to divide the working population, aligning the poor Whites to the slaveholders. Slavery gave poor White farmers what Barbara Jeanne Fields called a 'social space' whereby they preserved deceptive 'independence' based on debt and subsistence farming while the rich planters continued to dominate Southern politics and society. "A caste system as well as a form of labour," (6) developed as James M. McPherson wrote in Peter Alexander's *Racism, Resistance and Revolution*. He also added that "slavery elevated all Whites to the ruling caste and thereby reduced the potential for class conflict" (6).

The great abolitionist Frederick Douglass who understood this dynamic is quoted in *International Socialism Journal* in the article of Ahmed Shawki's "Black Liberation and Socialism in the United States" describes:

The hostility between the Whites and Blacks of the South is easily explained. It has its root and sap in the relation of slavery, and was incited on both sides by the poor Whites and the Blacks by putting enmity between them. They divided both to conquer each. Slaveholders denounced emancipation as tending to put the white working man on an equality with Blacks, and by this means, they succeed in drawing off the minds of the poor Whites from the real fact, that by the rich slave-master, they are already regarded as but a single remove from equality with the slave. (5)

Enslavement in the colonies helped to produce an explosion in the eighteenth century economy established a launching pad for the industrial revolution in Europe. From the commencement, colonial slavery and capitalism were connected. While it is not correct to say that slavery created capitalism, it is correct to say that slavery

provided one of the chief resources for the early amassment of wealth that helped to boost capitalism further in Europe and North America.

All over the seventeen hundreds, the triangular trade progressed between the colonies, European mother countries particularly England and the West African coast. Ships carrying slave-produced sugar, indigo, tobacco, or rice set forth from the colonies to England, where they were traded for manufactured goods. Ships carrying manufactured goods, fabrics, guns, and other finished products travelled from England to Africa where their cargoes were transacted for slaves. Then the ships carrying slaves set forth to the colonies, where they were sold for cargo of colonial produce to be taken back to England and the cycle went on all over again.

In 1750, almost all the trading town in the colonies or in England was inside this triangular trade. The profits that were forced out of the triangular trade formed the principal money that led to the economic explosion that made Britain the first major capitalist power. The triangular trade encouraged the growth of many new industries in England like the rum distillation, sugar refining, cotton manufacturing, and metallurgy, for producing guns. The income from these industries, as well as from slave trading, helped it to finance some of the biggest names in British capitalism. In *Capitalism and Slavery*, Eric Williams says:

Two slave traders, David and Alexander Barclay, used their profits to establish Barclay's Bank. Lloyds of London started as a coffee import house dependent on the slave trade. It later became one of the biggest insurance conglomerates in the world. The well-known sugar-refining corporation Tate & Lyle, made its first profits from slavery. Profits from the slave trade also helped to finance James Watt's invention of the steam engine. (98)

The best example of the connection between plantation slavery and the rise of industrial capitalism in the United States was the triangular connection between the cotton South, Britain and the Northern industrial states. Thus we can see the direct connection between slavery in the U.S.A and the development of the most advanced capitalistic world. To meet the economic explosion in the 1840-50s, the planters became even more brutal. On the one hand, they tried to expand slavery into the West and Central America. The fight over the expansion of slavery into these territories eventually triggered the Civil War in 1861. On the other hand, they compelled slaves to sell more cotton and they also sought to buy more slaves just to keep up the business. During the Civil War, the South was demanding to remove the ban on the importation of slaves that had existed officially since 1808. In *Capital*, Karl Marx clearly explains the connection between plantation slavery in the cotton grown South and the development of capitalism in England as:

While the cotton industry introduced child-slavery into England, in the United States it gave the impulse for the transformation of the more or less patriarchal slavery into a system of commercial exploitation. In fact, the veiled slavery of the wage-laborers in Europe needed the unqualified slavery of the New World as its pedestal. Capital was dripping from head to toe, from every pore, with blood and dirt. (925)

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries representatives of some of the biggest industrial capitalists like England called for an end to slave trade and even abolition of slavery. This was not because industrial capitalists opposed slavery, but because they did not like the flourishing planters who won government policies in their favour. In *Capitalism and Slavery*, Eric Williams says that “. . . in 1807 and 1833, the British Parliament passed laws outlawing slavery” (154). In the United

States, the Civil War abolished slavery and struck a great blow to racism. But racism itself was not abolished. On the contrary, just as racism was created to justify slavery, now racism was principle wise remodeled. It was no longer used for the enslavement of Blacks, but it warranted second-class category for Blacks as wage labourers and sharecroppers.

Racist thought was also remodeled to legalise imperialist conquest at the turn of the last century. Racism still remained as a convenient validation for a handful of rival world powers that compete to slice up the globe into colonies for cheap raw materials and labour. The vast majority of the world's population was now represented as inferior races, incapable of determining their own future. Slavery had disappeared, but racism persisted as a means to justify the enslavement of millions of people by the United States, various European powers, and later Japan during world wars.

Thus racism is not part of some fixed human nature. It was literally invented, so it can be broken down. Then despite the great power of White supremacy, the majority of the people such as slaves and White anti-racists always resisted racism. Appreciating racism in this way gives us the approach that we can use to fight racism. Racism and capitalism have been intertwined since the beginning of capitalism. Capitalism cannot survive without racism. Therefore, the final triumph over racism will come only when we abolish the source of racism which is the capitalism. Racism can be avoided by building a new socialistic society.

The term feminism came into English from the French word 'feminisme' which was coined by the socialist Charles Fourier and first used in the 1880s by Hubertine Auclert of women's political rights. She was the founder of the first Woman Suffrage society in France. Among the various definitions, this one is in

*Historical Perspectives: The Equal Rights Amendments Conflict in the 1920s* by Nancy F. Cott represents the comprehensive sense of this thought:

(Feminism) is a complete social revolution: freedom for all forms of women. An active expression, elimination of all structural and psychological handicaps to women's economic independence, an end to the double standard of sexual morality, release from constraining sexual stereotypes and opportunity to shine in every civic professional capacity. (15)

Although many political turning points occurred in the twentieth century regarding feminism, the principle of feminism had originated from earlier periods. It took its doctrine from various sources. The latter part of the seventeenth century and the beginning of the eighteenth witnessed progress in all fields, particularly in literature known as the Enlightenment. A literary movement developed during this period and rationalism, would nourish the feminist theories later with their ideas of equal rights and liberties for all human beings. In addition, in the nineteenth century feminist theorists were encouraged by Christian Protestantism which, in the religious field, claimed the moral superiority of women. On the basis of such an affirmation, they undervalued womanhood. Finally inequity in the capitalist societies and growing socialist ideology, made feminists to accuse the capitalist system, for its competitive and individualist principles, which were basically oppressive for women.

Mary Wollstonecraft and Simone De Beauvoir were among the most famous, writers who later on defended women's rights in claiming that sex hierarchy was due to social causes. Consequently, such declarations resulted in the rise of various feminist literary theories. In *The New Feminist Criticism: Essays on Women, Literature, Theory*, Elaine Showalter has told that the French feminists for example

have looked at the “ways that the ‘feminine’ has been defined, represented, or repressed in the symbolic system of language, metaphysics, psychoanalysis, and art” (9). Indeed, feminists have first concentrated on disapproving misogyny of the classic and popular male literature. The stereotyped images of women either as good or evil in such texts were opposed. Then, they have revealed a female aesthetics in the literary field which has totally been left out by patriarchal norms. Finally, in *The New Feminist Criticism: Essays on Women, Literature, Theory*, Elaine Showalter has added that the women are not only required to recognition of their writing but also a “radical rethinking of the conceptual grounds of literary study, a revision of the accepted theoretical assumptions about reading and writing . . . based on male literary experience” (8).

Radical French feminist theorists have urged female writers to identify with whatever is underrated in society by tradition. In *The Laugh of the Medusa*, Helen Cixous considers a woman’s writing as a revolutionary, powerful force which “when the repressed of their culture and their society, returns, it is an explosive, utterly destructive, staggering return, with a force never yet unleashed” (256). Cixous, along with Julia Kristeva, Luce Irigaray and Monique Wittig agree on fighting against Western culture’s phallogentric oppression. They have also fiercely resisted man’s self-identification as the positive pole of the world and the rest in opposition with him as the ‘Other’. And they have concluded that language in general has been used by man as a means to objectify those under his direct authority, especially women. They have declared ‘jouissance’, the pleasure given to women by writing and which may be sexual, as a form of resistance, to the Law of the Father, the God. Kristeva and Cixous have gone further to state that a detailed historical study reveals that women have only performed the role of sexual objects for men until now and their sexual self-

expression has been cleaned out. But apart from their common concurrence on the enemy, the French theorists have elaborated different strategies to overcome them.

Julia Kristeva says that, women should not invent a totally new discourse to liberate themselves. Instead they have to challenge those which already exist and have devalued them. Elaine Showalter in, *The New Feminist Criticism: Essays on Women, Literature, Theory*, mentions that Kristeva confirms that womanhood is not biological but an attitude one takes to resist conventions and it may be experienced by some men:

A feminist practice can only be . . . at odds with what already exists so that we may say ‘that’s not it’ and ‘that’s still not it’. By ‘woman’ I mean that which cannot be represented . . . what is not said, what remains above and beyond nomenclatures and ideologies. There are certain ‘men’ who are familiar with this phenomenon. (363)

Indeed, Kristeva has considered the classical French male writers like Joyce, Bataille, Artaud, Mallarme and Laureamont as writing ‘in the feminine’. Elaine Showalter says that for Kristeva, “Ecriture feminine is not necessarily writing by women, it is an avant-garde writing style” (9). She has concluded from her interpretation of the male in classic writer’s texts, that they have not escaped their oedipal fantasies and still continues their incestuous relations with their mothers subconsciously in their writings. Hence, “Ecriture feminine” challenges the basic moral rules of the traditional system.

Draga-Alexandru and Maria-Sabina in their article “Exiles from Power” in *The European Journal of Women’s Studies* say that, in a typical female trait, motherhood, is in her work “a central concept, manifested in bonds that are stronger than gendered love and that determine identity formation especially in the female

case, where motherhood is perceived cyclically” (356). As Cixous, they have been committed to ‘rethinking the maternal’ on language and writing, trying to give to motherhood the importance it deserves in tradition.

Unlike Kristeva, Luce Irigaray accepts the specificity peculiar to women and which is not relevant to men. She disapproves Plato’s and Freud’s notion of woman as a castrated, imperfect man and assigns that her ignorance is greatly due to her growth in a male dominated world. She advocates that women should first acquire self-consciousness about their body and sexual pleasure as these are altered in the phallogocentric discourse. She observes that the whole body of a woman is made of many erotic parts and she is completely ‘other’ in herself. It explains her highly multitalented nature. In her language, ‘she’ goes off in all directions where ‘he’ is unable to determine any lucid meaning. Any contradictory words seem crazy without the logic of reason and inaudible for him who listens to it with a prefixed idea. However she accepts that a consciousness about sexuality cannot automatically resolve the phallogocentric oppression. But if women have to fight the sexual oppression, they must first gain their own sexuality.

In “Writing the Body: Toward an Understanding of *“L’Ecriture feminine”* of Showalter by Ann Rosalind Jones, the French radical theorist Monique Wittig insists that “the theory and practice of ‘femininite’ must be focused on women among themselves, rather than on their divergence from men or from men’s views of them” (368). She is one among the theorists who believe that female victimization should be suppressed by just one way. This is achieved by including women themselves in the study of their victimization. Ann Rosalind Jones also adds that Monique Wittig is joined by another theorist who accepts that we must move outside the male-centered binary logic:

We need to ask not how woman is different from man . . . We need to know how women have come to be who they are through his my, which is the history of their oppression by men and male-designed institutions. (369)

The major concern of the French theorists has been to analyze the situation of the ‘feminine’ in language and traditional conventions. In *Historical Perspectives: The Equal Rights Amendments Conflict in the 1920s* according to Nancy F. Cott the English feminist theorists have mainly focused on the historical oppression of women as readers and writers. In addition, they have analysed the connections between gender and class. White middle-class women initiated a feminist movement which spectacularly bloomed in the twentieth century in the different fields: political, literary, etc. On the whole, Nancy F. Cott says that feminism has been a “social awakening of the women of the entire world” (12). The social, cultural, economic, ideological, and political differences of the various scholars generally give rise to some problems in defining feminism.

Fundamentally time has changed much for the women in relation to the social sphere. It is unfortunate that these changes have not equally profited all the women. Women of European descent have made significant progress. Their progress is more than that of all the other women. As these women have come up well above the past obstructions, which have blocked their progress, they have joined together to defend their new place in society. The roots of feminism are therefore tracked to the gradual changes that occurred throughout the world. The comparatively lesser amount of success by women of colour, as compared to the progress made by European-descended women, has created a requirement to reexamine the current models of feminism.

To explain the origin of feminism it is important that one notes the factors that affected the development of the female within the social sphere. The social roles of the past still remain subconsciously implanted within our modern world for both men and women. In today's social context, men are considered to be responsible for certain things while women are found suitable for certain other things.

Historians offer evidence that women, when compared with men were not second class in the past. In Estelle B. Freedman's book *No Turning Back: The History of Feminism and the Future of Women*, her discussion of feminism by noting historical accounts of women working outside the outdated female standards. For instance, Estelle B. Freedman relates how in pre-colonial Africa women took part in more than the upkeep of the home. Women worked in the land alongside men. The ability of women to assist in the production of food always "represented a form of wealth" (26). Although the social makeup did not look like that of our modern society, this proves that there was a sense of shared responsibility and power among men and women within old societies. Women in many olden cultures could own property, run businesses, work as clergy, manage farms and take charge of the home. This power structure was not universally the same across the globe.

By examining women in old Asian cultures, women in China were like many others in Asia who found themselves bound to somebody from birth. Even though the women were not even universally bound together, they find themselves universally stripped off power and designated as second class citizens. One may place the blame on the rise of imperialism and the spread of European ideals throughout the world. The women who were in power found they were lacking in equal rights of the men. On the other hand women who had no power, found themselves in captivity.

Estelle B. Freedman in *No Turning Back: the History of Feminism and the Future of Women* explains that “The world before feminism offers ample evidence that men had more power than women . . . listen to folk wisdom or read sacred texts, we learn about the virtues of sons and the lesser values of daughters” (18). A closer examination further shines light on the need for feminism. There are numerous old proverbs and colloquial sayings that negatively refer to women. Estelle B. Freedman gives a Zulu quote which goes like, “A girl is merely a weed” (19). While in a Dutch proverb, Estelle B. Freedman records “a house full of daughters is like a cellar full of sour beer” (19). Upon examining Asian culture, one may find many quotes about women including this one referenced by Estelle B. Freedman like, “a girl lets you down twice, once at birth and the second time when she marries” (19). Such ideological references which placed the women below the male strangely coincide with religious perceptions also.

The scientist and evolutionist Darwin added to the stripping off the females’ persona as he sought to use science to prove the superiority of the male over the female, extending his research even to animals. Thus women had to accept their marginalisation and used feeble effort to break down the previously established barriers.

Estelle B. Freedman explains that one of the consequences of imperialism was the availability of education. As colonialism may be tracked back to Europe, one may trace the roots of the free-thinking female to Europe. Pioneers like Mary Astell and Mary Wollstonecraft empowered a new generation of women called feminists. In this situation the new feminists made progressive steps in declaring the rights of other women like them. These women acquired equal access to education, political power and financial stability while deconstructing the definition of womanhood.

The privileges given to European descended women were not extended to other women. To some extent, less privileged women were excluded and the women of colour were usually not included within these new feminist models. The famous words of pioneering feminist Sojourner Truth in her famous speech, “Ain’t I a woman?” is indicative of a shift in time and the promising changes occurring for women. Women were making significant changes, yet these changes did not readily apply to women of colour who found again that they were different. This time they were simply different by the same genetic differences that made them racially inferior. Thus the above question of Sojourner Truth is exactly right.

The modern culture survives on its ability to provide multiple options. One will find that there is a surplus of choices when one is searching for a particular type of movie, genre of music, or apparel. Similarly within the world of literature also there are multiple genres as well as multiple methods of study and multiple methods of criticism. The writings by women are usually aligned together in constantly fighting the dominant ideals in the established male literary canon. So these works by women must stand up the assault of traditionally male canons who act as surgeons, dissecting the bodies of work created by women. If the work of the female follows the large patriarchal system of the literary canon, it finds acceptance. The application of the established feminist theories to unaccepted works gives a second opportunity for their works. In many cases the works may find acceptance after this second valuation. But such theories have been mostly protective for White female writers alone.

The women of color and Black women are left without a second opinion. Their works are usually dismissed or excluded because they represent the realities of Black women, which may not match with the experience of Whites. Neville and Hamer, in their article “We Make Freedom: An Exploration of Revolutionary Black

Feminism” explain the need to develop a new place within feminism or feministic literary criticism which is inclusive to Black women as well as all women of colour. Their ‘Revolutionary Black Feminism’ theory helps to bring into line the works that were excluded from the protection provided by feminism. The women note that their purpose “is to address the gaps in the literature” (437). The gaps, mentioned here are likely the result of a lack of true development in the areas associated with the development of Black feminism. This means that the current models of feminism fail to support their work, even those which include Black women.

The introduction of “Revolutionary Black Feminism” by Neville and Hamer circles around the following belief that the revolutionary vision is a dynamic, racially, gender wise and sexually oppressive which is reconfigured within periods of capitalist restructuring. The oppression consists of both structural and ideological components. The first belief of dynamism is the definite principle and that the change is inevitable. Thus, as things inevitably change, the perceptions within any ideology should also change. Therefore, Revolutionary Black Feminism, as proposed by Neville and Hamer, will grow and change with its different audience. This may allow the writings not to fit to any mould. As an example, Neville and Hamer state that the sexual abuse initiated by White slave owners, remains to be a trend even in modern society as they note that “the overwhelming majority of sexual assaults in the United States are interracial” (437).

Neville and Hamer’s second ideology begins profoundly by stating that “Black women’s experiences are, in part, shaped by a myriad of interlocking systems of oppressions that are framed within the context of the political economy of a given society” (439). Thus there is no doubt that Black women are affected on dual levels. The first level is directly by Whites and the second by Black males. Moreover, Black

children are affected even more due to their placement at the bottom of the global capitalistic scale. The characters Claudia, Freida, and Pecola of Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*, are the typical examples of life for children of colour who find how their father who is beaten by society, in turn beats his wife and thus gains power over her children.

The third ideology proposes that we always remain in touch with the social structures within a postcolonial society. The chain of command within society provides a variation in the experiences of women. This truth is also known by the Black women. Women at the bottom of the societal structure are often affected the most, while women at the middle or the top find that there are certain situations in which they have been granted immunity.

The principles proposed by Neville and Hamer are intelligent in their inclusion of specific particulars that other methods of feminism have failed to include. Although their work is not an ultimate end of all solution, it does highlight the occasional or situational problems of 'general feminism'.

As these changes have surfaced within the global community perhaps it is now the ideal time to begin the development of a new multicultural feminism. Becky Thompson's article "Multiracial Feminism: Recasting the Chronology of Second Wave Feminism" discusses the next step towards new literary feminism. Thompson repeats the claims that hegemonic (dominant) feminism "is white led, marginalizes the activism and the world views of women of color, focuses mainly on the United States, and treats sexism as the ultimate oppression" (337). Thompson explains the rise of an international movement dating back to the 1970s that began to unite women from multiple ethnic backgrounds with the antiracist Whites. The Whites had been privileged in many ways due to the fact that they were White they could not always

understand the peculiar problems associated with being a minority. Thompson's research is careful in its aim that the development of a new multi-racial feminism is inclusive to all women.

Thompson's Multiracial Feminism may contrast with direct protestations of ethnic modes of feminism. This ethnic mode of feminism also includes theories like Alice Walker's 'Womanist' theory. A theory built upon the very idea that, real life experiences of Black women make them different from other women. It would seem that if women are to truly unite under a new feminism model, one must first learn to appreciate the specific peculiarities created by ethnic differences. They should not use those differences to create a disruptive wall. The development of a new model would find the commonalities between the real life experiences of all women.

As illustrated, White and Black feminism certainly have important features in common. In spite of the attempts of some White feminists to include Black women in their feminism, Black women have however regarded themselves as unsuited and have called a Black feminist movement into life. In *Search of Our Mother's Gardens: Womanist Prose*, Alice Walker says that the Black feminism when compared to White feminism is different shades of the same colour, "purple to lavender" (xi-xii).

Alice Walker's Womanism is one of the many solid forms of Black feminism that has occupied recent years. First, Walker's definition of the concept is to be known and analysed. Walker coined the term 'Womanism' in her collection of essays entitled *In Search of Our Mother's Gardens*, 1984. At the beginning of the collection she gives a definition of Womanism as "feminist, Afro centric, healing, embodied, and spiritual concept" (100).

*In Search of Our Mother's Gardens: Womanist Prose*, Alice Walker describes about the womanism and womanist by:

Womanist 1. From *womanish*. (Opp. of “girlish”, i.e., frivolous, irresponsible, not serious.) A black feminist or feminist of color. From the black folk expression of mothers to female children, “You acting womanish,” i.e., like a woman, usually referring to outrageous, audacious, courageous or *wilful* behaviour. Wanting to know more and in great depth than is considered “good” for one. Interested in grown-up doings. Acting grown up. Being grown up. Interchangeable with another black folk expression: “You trying to be grown.” Responsible. In charge. *Serious*. : 2. A woman who loves other women, sexually and or nonsexually. Appreciates and prefers women’s culture, women’s emotional flexibility (values tears as natural counterbalance of laughter), and women’s strength. Sometimes loves individual men, sexually and/or nonsexually. Committed to survival and wholeness of entire people, male *and* female. Not a separatist, except periodically, for health. Traditionally Universalist, as in: “Mama, why are we brown, pink, and yellow, and our cousins are white, beige, and black?” Ans.: “Well, you know the colored race is just like a flower garden, with every color flower represented.” Traditionally capable, as in: “Mama, I’m walking to Canada and I’m taking you and a bunch of other slaves with me.” Reply: “It wouldn’t be the first time.” 3. Loves music. Loves dance. Loves the moon. *Loves* the Spirit. Loves love and food and roundness. Loves struggle. *Loves* the Folk. Loves herself. *Regardless*. 4. Womanist is to feminist as purple to lavender. (xi-xii)

In the first entry Walker defines womanist in reference to the origin and the original use and meaning of the term. The only phrase that does not go into these

more etymological issues is the one in which she indicates that womanist is a synonym for a Black feminist or a feminist of colour. The major part of this first entry deals with the origin of the term ‘womanist’. This noun is derived from the Black folk adjective ‘womanish’, which are primarily used in the Black folk expression, “You acting womanish” (xi), mothers say to their daughters and which means the same as another folk expression “You trying to be grown.” As quoted in the article “What’s in a name? Womanism, Black feminism, and beyond” by Patricia Hill Collins, Collins argues:

. . . taking the term from the Southern black folk expression of mothers to female children . . . Walker suggests that black women’s concrete history fosters a womanist worldview accessible primarily and perhaps exclusively to black women. Walker herself uses the two terms as being virtually interchangeable (10).

All the critics do not agree on considering womanism and Black feminism as synonyms. Patricia Hill Collins and Omolade say that it is a fact that both “are concerned with struggles against sexism and racism by Black women who are themselves part of the Black community’s efforts to achieve equity and liberty” (10). The two folk expressions *In Search of Our Mother’s Gardens: Womanist Prose*, Walker implies three internally connected meanings. First of all, the expressions indicate “outrageous, audacious, courageous or *wilful* behavior” (xi). These four adjectives all refer to doing or saying something that is not self-evident or easy, yet doing or saying it with strong determination and a lot of motivation. As James Robert Saunders argues, “the emphasis is on ‘wilful’ because for so long, so many Black women have not been considered to be in possession of their own free wills, and no

small part of the problem has resided in the psyche of black men” (11). Secondly, both expressions refer to an attitude that is characterised by “wanting to know more and in greater depth than is considered ‘good’ for one” (xi). Thirdly, the expressions indicate a mature, grown up attitude. As Walker says in the beginning of the entry, “womanish” is the opposite of “girlish”, which means “frivolous, irresponsible, not serious” (xi). In opposition, “womanish”, means not only acting, but also being grown up. It is associated with being responsible, in charge and serious. This emphasis on the mature side of womanists may indicate that the Black woman’s need for this principle does not arrive from a childish passion or an adolescent urge but it is a feeling of responsibility, of being in charge of the fate of Black women.

In the second entry, Walker defines ‘womanist’ by referring to the different types of relationships that can occur between women. Most importantly, womanists love other women, especially for those things that make their specific female culture, their emotional life, their strength. Besides just loving these female characteristics, they should also adore what is specifically female about them.

Although Walker refers to lesbian relationships in this entry, she does not refuse the heterosexual relationships. This is probably the feature that constitutes the most striking difference between Womanism and White feminism. Although Walker asks the Black women to love themselves, she is not at all hostile towards men. In fact, “loving individual men, sexually and/or nonsexually” (xi) is even considered a characteristic of a womanist by Walker. In the article “What’s In a Name: Womanism, Black Feminism, and Beyond,” Patricia Hill Collins adds that “Womanism seemingly supplies a way for black women to address gender oppression without attacking black men” (11). Walker openly expresses this non-separatist attitude in her words, a womanist is “committed to survival and wholeness of entire people, male *and* female”

(xi). With this statement Walker makes clear that Black feminism is not opposing the race liberation. Her non-separatist attitude is further demonstrated by her saying that womanists are “traditionally universalist” (xi).

Collins says that she demonstrates this by means of the metaphor of the garden in which “the women and men of different colors coexist like flowers in a garden yet retain their cultural distinctiveness and integrity” (11). In other words, Alice Walker indicates that a tolerance is not only needed among sexes, but also among races. In that way her philosophy is useful not only for Black women, but for the whole of mankind. In her article “To Build a Nation: Black Women Writers, Black Nationalism, and Violent Reduction of Wholeness,” Amanda J. Davis says that Walker’s definition illustrates that “individuals are not separate from the survival of the earth, but instead act as extensions of the universe itself” (33). Walker further refers to the relationship between a mother and her child as a specific relationship of women. She considers motherhood essential in the experience of being a woman. In her article “Response,” Arisika Razak claims that, Walker focuses on the “sharing and mentorship that are a traditional part of idealized Black mother-daughter relationships” (99).

In the third entry, Walker defines ‘womanist’ as an enumeration of things a womanist loves, which includes music and dance, love, food and roundness as symbols for the worldly, bodily pleasures in life as well as the moon and the Spirit as symbols for the spiritual dimension of our being. Furthermore, she says womanists love struggle, which probably means that they do not give up to easily in their struggle. And besides loving their people and folk in general, womanists also love themselves. These are some of the aspects that all Black women share.

The fourth and last entry of Walker *In Search of Our Mother's Gardens: Womanist Prose*, consists solely of the phrase “Womanist is to feminist as purple to lavender” (xii) which indicates that both have things in common, but in the end are undeniably different. By ending with this sentence, she moreover closes the circle of her definition, as she began with a similar observation in the first entry, namely that a womanist is a Black feminist. Why Walker chose purple and lavender as the colours of reference and where there is any relevance to *The Color Purple* is not clear.

In her definition of Womanism, Walker indicates several different things that are not clear. She depicts Black women as beautiful and strong human beings without disapproving men or Whites. In “To Build a Nation: Black Women Writers, Black Nationalism, and Violent Reduction of Wholeness,” Amanda J. Davis adds to it:

Through her four-part definition, [Walker] draws her reader's attention to importance of women's intellectual, physical, emotional, and spiritual wholeness, and she stresses the need to create a global community where all members of society are encouraged to survive and survive whole. (33)

Amanda J. Davis also says that, Madhu Dubey argues Walker's womanist project to “integrate the past and present, individual and community, personal and political change, into a unified whole” (33).

It is this ‘universalist’ stance that gives Walker more strength as a feminist. Talking about women, without strongly criticising other men and White people for any reason, she proves that women are worthy. Alice Walker has incorporated some of these ideals in her writings also.

The three key commonalities shared amongst all women are that all the women suffer from the societal oppression, no matter what background a woman

comes from. She is oppressed by many factors from birth. The female world is designed and constructed by patriarchal forces that give the natural authority to males. The male counterparts of the Black women as well as women of colour, although seemingly stripped off any power in the outside world are given ultimate authority over their women. Consequently, a woman must move the social sphere by first overcoming the genetic defects associated with her birth as a female. A woman must know her place or else she may find herself warned or punished for her actions. The act of silencing is another method of oppression that punishes women.

All women have been abused by someone. The lived experiences of Black women are noted by recurring episodes of abuse. However, the abuse of White women has not been discussed to the same degree as that of other women. Blacks and other women of colour have been vociferous about many forms of abuse that they have suffered. Stories of abuse of the White women are not less prevalent. The forms by which the abuse takes place may be different. If one is oppressed, then they are subsequently abused. In this fashion, women are again united by the common association of their experience with abuse, physical or psychological.

Women work harder than men to attain the same position. This act of establishing ones place in the world is a fundamental step in one's psychological maturation. Women, who are again born outside the privilege of manhood, must exert greater effort in establishing a place within the society. Thus, a male finds in the world a place where he must make his mark while women face the problem of knowing where they can make the same mark. The world itself remains largely the realm of the patriarch and usually the masculine principles are necessary to succeed and enjoy the pleasures of the world. Females therefore must find their way in a world wherein they simply act as decorative pieces in the living room of the man's world.

The established models of feminism have become outdated in a globalised world. Colonialism has influenced everyone. Although the Black women, as well as other women of colour have been affected differently, it does not refuse the fact that all women have been affected. Therefore, all the women have to come under one group to regain their rights, under a multicultural feministic front.

After having discussed the literary background of racism and feminism to such a deep extent, the discourses on racism which is the main segment of the study is to follow. The issues of effects of racism on the Black males, females, children, and on the male-female relationship in the novels of Toni Morrison and Alice Walker are to be discussed. The effects of White supremacy, internalised racism, intra-racial racism and the disruptions of familial and cultural structures are also to be discussed in detail in the following chapter.