

## RACISM AND SLAVERY IN TONI MORRISON'S *BELOVED AND THE BLUEST EYE*

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### Abstract

The main focus of this article is to investigate racism and slavery in Toni Morrison's *Beloved* and *The Bluest Eye*. This research focuses on "How does Ecofeminism intersect with themes of nature, gender and race in *Beloved* and *The Bluest Eye*?" The research is qualitative and descriptive. The data used for this research is also qualitative. The primary source of data was the novels *Beloved* and *The Bluest Eye*. The secondary source of data was research articles, academic journals and theory of ecofeminism by Greta Gaard. In this study the marginalized people of the society are put under investigation such as black people, slaves and females. This research highlights the role of nature with woman in *Beloved* and *The Bluest Eye*. The purpose of this research is not only to highlight the issues faced by black women but also their journey of becoming more self-reliant towards the end of the novel. The characters in the novels faced discrimination based on their skin color and gender such as Pecola and *Beloved*.

**Keywords:** *Females, Gender subjugation, Marginalization, Racism, Slavery*

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## 1. Introduction

This research focuses on the issues faced by characters in *Beloved* and *The Bluest Eye* due to racism, gender and slavery. The main aspect of the research is to investigate the impact of these issues on the lives of black people especially females. African-American women faced complex type of oppression regarding their gender and race. It is believed that women and nature are related to each other through ancient ages. Due to the areas where African-American communities are located the people of those places especially females were exposed to severe environmental risks. Those areas were actually exposed to environmental hazards due to the lack of resources. The females faced those hardships and stayed strong in order to work against those issues.

Hazel Johnson was an activist and also known as the mother of environmental justice gives example of the criss-cross of ecofeminism and that of African -Americans women's activism. She was an activist and struggle against the pollution she faced in African-American community the place where she lived in Chicago. She brought into light that how environmental issues are so deeply connected with both economic and racial inequalities. African -American women faced various kind of oppression due to racism and sexism. The double marginalization experienced by them was due to their gender and skin colour. Black females face various kinds of discrimination in the society as compared to white females. African American women also face various kind of health issues due to lower living standards. Black women experienced more domestic violence as compared to white females. Racism is an important issue faced by African-American women in their communities Ibram X. Kendi (2016) defined racism as a collection of immoral actions in which a specific group of individuals are badly mistreated. Due to the difference in their race and skin colour they are considered marginalized and are given no rights in society. African-American faced racism and were treated as enslaved women throughout history. Many writers have claimed women's rights and their freedom. Toni Morrison is one of them.

Morrison's novel "The Bluest Eye" in 1970 narrated African-American sufferings and how society mistreated them and oppressed their freedom and treated them as enslaved people. Pecola, the novel's protagonist, has been victimized due to her blackness and ugliness. She faces huge oppression from both black and white community. She believed that she might fit in the society only by gaining blue eyes. The story of Pecola is similar to many African-American women who are subjected to slavery and racism. Morrison through her novel "Beloved" and "The Bluest Eyes" explored those sufferings. These novels criticize white nationalism and demand for an equal relationship. In "Beloved" Sethe the black female along with other characters such as her daughter Beloved suffered from the issues of subjugation based on color and gender. Sethe's life was spent under oppression, and she killed her own children in order to save them from the horrors of slavery.

## 2. Theoretical Framework

The term race refers to groups of people who possess differences and similarities in biological traits judged by society to be significant in society, meaning that people treat other people differently because of the colour of the skin.

Eco feminism is a political as well as philosophical theory which asserts that both women and nature are exploited in the hands of patriarchy. Ecofeminists believe that a hierarchy is being created in the society by white male society. The duality is defined as when priority is given to one thing as compared to the other. The duality is men/women in this case more priority is given to male. White/Black same is the case with this one as white receive more priority in the society. Culture /nature showcase the superiority of culture over nature. This kind of duality in a society showcase the superiority of one and inferiority of other things. These hierarchies showcase that whites are considered more civilized compared to blacks. In the same case superiority is given to culture because it is thought to be associated with men and nature as weak compared to women. The main goal of ecofeminists is to create a balanced society for all individuals. Simon de Beauvoir (2011) states that women have to be obedient, powerless, futile and passive.

Although women are considered inferior in the patriarchal society as compared to male, but it is true that without women there would be no one where male could show their superiority so although male are considered independent they are somehow dependent on females. In creating a duality in the society nature and culture are put one against another, in which culture is placed at a higher place because it is related to men. In gender-based societies it is a common believe that women and nature's goal is to produce. Roach (2003) highlights "women are the life givers of the human species". Nature due to having women characteristic are called as mother earth. One of the most important things in Ecofeminism theory is dualism. According to the environmental moral philosophy there are two different types of values one is instrumental value. The instrumental value is not given much importance as it is inferior and it is believed that nature has instrumental value and women also have the same value. Non-instrumental value is considered superior in this aspect.

Culture basically came out of nature, but people still believe that culture is superior and nature inferior. From both scientific and Religious way, it is proved that nature is not dependent and exists freely although culture is dependent .From scientific point of view George Lemaitre Big Bang demonstrates that before the culture the environment was already present. It shows that everything came into existence after the emergence of nature. From Greek mythology at first everything was all over the place and then nature came into being. The hierarchies were created by society, and they started dominating nature for their personal gain. They overpowered nature .It is also a believe that at first both men and women were same, but men gained the authority over nature and women by simply using the resources of nature .By doing this they gained control over nature. This shows that the

hegemony was not already present, but it was developed by man. The story of Adam and Eve is of much importance in this aspect because at first God created nature and then Adam and Eve came into existence which showcases the equality given by God to both the genders. But another aspect is, if it is viewed as God at first created Adam and then Eve so it dismantles the first perspective which is that there is equality between both sexes. But in second case there is no equality which show that man was superior to woman. In this case also men dominated both nature and women. The other aspect is that Eve ate the forbidden fruit, and God punished her by giving superiority to male because after eating the fruit it brought death to the world. So, the world was created and in order to protect their body they used the leaves to cover themselves. This was the first step when nature was exploited for human gain and also the first step towards civilization.

Alternatively, it shows the hierarchies being created in the society like man/woman, culture/nature etc. The first Ecofeminist Conference was held in Amherst in (1980). There were three central connections of Ecofeminism. One of them was empirical. The empirical point of view is of the view that in most parts of the world the environmental problems unequally affect women of the society. The second connection was that women and nature are culturally and symbolically connected. In western countries the idea was presented in the form of dualism. The third and the last claim was epistemological. The claim was that woman were more exposed to nature because of their exposure to the environment. This claim was supposed by indian Ecofeminist Vandana Shiva. Core principles of ecofeminism: The oppression of women and nature arose particularly due to the result of patriarchal dominance. There were also other writers who explored the psyche behind Ecofeminism Vandana Shiva, in *Staying Alive : Women, Ecology and Development* in (1988) Carolyn Merchant, *The Death Of Nature :Women, Nature and Scientific Revolutions* in (1980) are few of them that closely investigated it. Val Blamwood, Greta Gaard, Susan Griffin, were also among them. Ecofeminism was introduced almost 50 years ago today and its principles are still in use in modern day.

The principles are as follow:

1. The oppression of marginalized groups and the exploitation of nature the cause of the interconnectedness of both is the same. The domination of masculine leads to the exploitation of land, nature and women as well. They only considered themselves superior.
2. Society needs to switch from a culture of controlling to a culture of caring.
  - a. Carolyn Merchant says that Ecofeminism calls for equality Professor and Ecofeminist scholar Heidi Hutner explains “When we poison the earth, we re poisoned, and it all comes from this history of patriarchal domination where whoever holds the most power has this right to dominate, control and exploit everyone else”.
  - b. Ecofeminism wanted to change the domination of patriarchy and replace it with the ethic of care which is a characteristic of females.

3. Oppression in all its forms is unacceptable – and interconnected.

In Ecofeminism all forms of oppression are not acceptable. Hunter adds ,With all environmental injustice ,ultimately, people suffer the most .Particularly women of colour.

4. Understanding that these connections are necessary for equitable change.

If we want to make a real change in both the environmental degradation and women suppression it is important to understand their links to patriarchy.

5. The movement must be led by people who were affected by the destruction .

A person who is affected by an incident is the one who can describe it more effectively as compared to the one who didn't experience it so this means that the people particularly black women are the ones who can briefly describes it because they experienced everything. Ecofeminist believes that there is a deep sense of interconnectedness between both the degradation of environment and exploitation of women. In patriarchal societies women suffers from the issues of marginalization. Ecofeminist believes that there is a connectedness between racism and sexism along with slavery .They believe that it is important to understand those interrelated issues in order to achieve justice in the society. Ecofeminism values caring and nurturing principles in society. Ecofeminists wanted to create an ethic of care and reciprocity in society. Ecofeminist also criticizes the thinking of dualism. They believe that there should be no dualism between humans and nature, body and mind .They asserts that there should not be any difference between reason and emotion. Ecofeminists wanted to go beyond that dualism .They wanted to create comprehensive ways of understanding. Ecofeminism calls for a lifestyle that is ideologically responsible for the well-being of the planet and also of its citizens. Role of ecofeminism in our daily life.

The role of ecofeminism is to make choices that are environmentally conscious for consumers by supporting fairly produced products. In order to support communities this includes buying local and fairly trade goods especially to support the women in backward countries .The women of marginalized societies often bear environmental degradation. Activism in ecofeminism means to participate in protest for equality in society. It also includes working on issues and with organizations such as climate issues and reproduction rights along with the access of clean water. The role of ecofeminism is to build interconnected communities. This is also helpful in order to strengthen relationship based on sympathy and unity and supporting marginalized group .Ecofeminist focuses on the marginalized people of the society. The other most important feature of Ecofeminism is to give education to people about the connections between genders and race ,class etc. Through literature one can educate the other about the impact of ecofeminism. Engagement of Ecofeminism on local and international level can impact policy making. This also includes voting for someone who is concerned towards the rights of humanity.

One can work on himself in order to create change in society. This also includes challenging the gender roles present in society. Ecofeminism also promotes local food and tries to reduce the use of meat. They focus on the agenda to save animals and nature. Water on the other hand is also a fundamental source and human right. One can contribute to society by saving water. Ecofeminists wanted equal clean water resources for all human beings especially those living in rural areas. Ecofeminism also values green spaces for the wellbeing of humans. The role of people in participating in green movements is that they can protect natural habitats. In order to protect nature ecofeminist dismantles the use of plastic they aim to promote zero waste lifestyle. Ecofeminism also dismantles the use of transport that pollutes the environment with harmful gases. They show other alternative methods such as walking and cycling.

Ecofeminism also gives awareness to marginalized girls and women of the society. They also wanted girls to take part in making policies about the environment. The ecofeminists also criticize how fashion industry exploit the female labour and polluting the environment. Ecofeminist believes that it is good to buy second-hand clothes. People should wear clothes made from organic and maintainable material. People should also support brands that make sure fair wages and also working conditions for workers. One of the principles of ecofeminism is to apply renewable sources of energy in homes and communities. They make sure the use of solar panels and the use of appliances that consume low energy. People should also be mindful of the use of digital technology and how it affects the environment around them. This also includes recycling of electronics. The role of ecofeminism in our daily lives also includes the use of ethical technological companies. In our daily life Ecofeminist wanted to create holistic health practices that include the interconnections between health of one's own and well being of community.

### **3. Literature review**

Racism according to Cornel West who was not only a well-known author but also a civil rights activist believes that racism is a system and in this system people are treated accordingly based on the color of their skin. He believes that it is unfair and keeps inequality going (Valls, 2005). Bell hooks stated that racism is not only that people become mean towards those different in colour. He believes that it is how society rules and treat people differently based on their skin colour. This makes life hard for dark coloured people and easier for light colored people (Hooks, 1996).

Racism is just like a cancer tumor that actually eats away the core of the society and in return it keep in existence the injustice and equality (Smith, 2019). Smith argues that racism does not only affect its victims but it is a continued process that leads to discrimination and marginalization in the society. Rodriguez (2018) explores the cross-sectionality of racism she believes that racism also led to other forms of oppression and highlights the fact that individuals experience different layers of discrimination as well such as class, gender. The goal of Rodriguez was to achieve equality and justice. Racism



is not just a personal problem rather it is a problem that is merged in history and society (Johnsons, 2016). Bouson (2000) states that in her novel Morrison exposes the ways in which racism impact not on the psyche of the people who faced it rather it creates a haunting experience for generations to come. Through racism some people are believed to be different, and it leads to unfair treatment based on those stereotypes (Li, 2023).

The second issue that needs to be addressed is slavery and its impact on the lives of characters. The issues of slavery are also presented in Morrison's *Beloved* and *The Bluest Eye*. According to Bhandari (2017) Morrison very cleverly used the experiences faced by characters in "The Bluest Eye" from the historical trauma of slavery that highlights the everlasting impact on the identity of African-American. Anderson (2013) states that in "The Bluest Eye" the haunting presence of slavery underlines the struggles of the characters in the novel to find agency and self approval. According to Çelikkol (2015) *The Bluest Eye* showcases the persisting impact of slavery in African-American societies due to the theme of racial hierarchies and manipulation of bodies. Syah (2008) examined the prevalent theme of racism in "The Bluest Eye" throws light onto the devastating effect of incorporated racism on characters like Pecola Breedlove. He states that Morrison with the help of vivid imagery and depth of the narrative reveals the cunning ways in which systematic racism penetrates the lives of black individuals to keep alive the cycles of devaluation.

According to Tayebbenyahia, (2021) the novel is an influential critic of white supremacy. It impacts the communities of black as well. He states that through the characters like Claudia Macteer the novel encounters the legacy of both slavery and colonialism. It also shows that how ideologies made by racist continue to shape the perception of both beauty and worth as well as belonging. Zaynalabden, (2022) argues that particularly in the context of American South in the 1940s Morrison's novel *The Bluest Eye* affronts the reader with the harsh realities of institutional racism. Characters in the novel such as Pauline Breedlove incorporates racism that persuade black communities as they tried to blend in white dominated society, the society that systematically oppresses them. The way Morrison used symbolism in the novel especially about whiteness it gives in depth look into the issue of racism. Douglas (2006) argues that with the use of whiteness in the novel she not only shows the privilege of white race but also to criticizes the oppressive structure of racism.

Smith (2011) in *The Bluest Eye* explores the theme of gender and highlights how societies create expectations regarding gender that shapes the identity of the characters and their experiences. Morrison question the traditional gender roles through the character of black girl Pauline Breedlove and Claudia Macteer. It not only reveals the restrictions the traditional gender roles inflict on individuals but rather on the ways through which they contribute to the cycles of self -destruction and oppression. The analysis of Smith in the novel shows that Morrison didn't only showcases the surface level issues rather it dive deep into how the complexities of gender intersect with class and race in order to shape

character's lives. Beaulieu (2003) examine the character of Cholly Breedlove and Soaphead Church and dive into the complexities of the male characters. Mayberry (2010) states that Morrison in her novel didn't only show the strength and dominance of the male class rather also displayed the insecurities. These insecurities challenges the stereotypes of black male society.

Racism in *Beloved*, Morrison in her novel *Beloved* explores that racism not only represents itself as a historical issue rather it impacts on the psyche of the people as well. Through her character of Sethe in the novel she highlights the trauma of slavery on the lives of people and the way it lingers over them and affects their psyche. Sethe's act to save her children from slavery also depicts the horror of enslavement deep rooted in people. Scholars talked about the novel due to its dominating issue of slavery. Smith (2012) argues that Morrison's work *Beloved* provides a picture of the ongoing consequences of historical oppression while rejecting the myth of post-racial America. Smith undergone a scrupulous reading of the language and style of the novel of Morrison. Smith gives a demonstration of the novel that it provides the reader with uneasy truths about the history of slavery in America. The other thing was the example of *Beloved* who shows the power of human nature in the face of hardship as well. *Beloved* is very famous work for the fact that it brings innate response of the readers and also the ways in which racism continued to shape the society even today.

Abd & Abdullah (2022) affirms that the way Morrison used imagery and symbolism go beyond the pages of the books rather it draws the attention of the reader towards the themes of trauma and memory. Durrant (2012) draws attention toward the fact that the way Morrison depicted the characters of the novel shows not only the psychological impact of racism but also the ways in which characters are burdened with remembering and forgetting their past. The trauma of slavery is highlighted within the characters of *Beloved*. Morrison underlines the ways that shows that the past events had an impact on the present which continues to haunt those who were exposed to slavery and how it shapes the identity of characters and their relationships with other people. Gomes contends that the way Morrison's depiction of Sethe's disintegrated psyche shows the issues endured by African-American women where trauma of slavery was composed of societal expectations and obligations of family (Gomes, 2019).

Slavery is one of the main themes of the novel *Beloved*. Smith (2012) observes that Morrison very cunningly exposed the cruelty of slavery and also the ever-lasting impact on human psyche. It also highlights that the challenges of freeing himself from the chain of enslavement and also the reclaiming ownership of one's identity. The struggles faced by Sethe in order to get freedom shows the larger struggle of African-American in order to get dignity in a society that is set up on the exploitation of their labour and bodies. According to McNulty (2015) *Beloved* presents an agitating exploration of slavery on individuals in the novel and on communities. The characters in the novel struggle with the issues of their past and with the burden of collective memory. Morrison with the help of



imagery and lyrical prose clearly showcases that how trauma is being transmitted into generations and also the ways through which the past continues to shape the present.

#### 4. Text Analysis

The *Bluest Eye* by Toni Morrison is a story of the experiences African -Americans where they face issues like racism and slavery in a society dominated by white strata of the society. In the text there are number of issues that are linked to each other like the exploitation of women through colour of their skin and through their gender and the degradation of nature all are somehow interconnected . I will focus on the issues of patriarchal dominance by also considering issues of gender, race and class as they all are interconnected according to ecofeminism. Pecola's wish to gain blue eyes was an attempt to be accepted by white society. She believed that any kind of subjugation she went through was due to her color .Ecofeminist believes that women and children were suffering in the hands of patriarchy. The African Americans also suffered due to racism. The white class of society used to keep their gardens clean, which involves the clearing of nature as well. Pecola somehow related herself with dandelions as she believed that just as the leaves of the dandelions were used and their heads were thrown away. In the same way the black people were also wished to be removed from society by Patriarchy. Pecola faced racism not only from white people of the society rather she even faced it from people of her own community.

Racism was very evident when Polly Breedlove used to calm the little white girl rather consoling with her daughter whose legs were almost burned. "Cholly Breedlove, then, a renting black, having put his family outdoors, has catapulted himself beyond the reaches of human consideration. He joined the animals, was, indeed, an old dog, a snake, a ratty nigger. Mrs. Breedlove was staying with the woman she worked for, the boy, Sammy was with other family and Pecola was to stay with us. Cholly was in jail"(p.16).This text showcases the condition of marginalized black people. The marginalized people were also suffering within their own communities. Women were forced to live under patriarchal system.

Cholly Breedlove is also an example of black man. He set his home on fire and the members of the family were left with no place to live. He himself started living with animals. His wife Mr. Breedlove used to work in the home of a rich lady, so she started living with her. People of community used to sympathize with them. Pecola started living with claudia macteer and frieda macteer as they were almost of her age. This highlights the disrupted lifestyle of black people. "Frieda brought her four graham crackers on a saucer and some milk in a blue-and-white Shirley Temple cup. She was a long time with the milk and gazed fondly at the silhouette of Shirley Temple's dimpled face"(p. 17).This statement highlights the fact that Pecola was very drawn towards white colour. In one incident Frieda brought milk for Pecola but the focus of Pecola was only on the beauty of Shirley Temple. Pecola who was a black girl was inspired by white standards of beauty

.Her wish to gain blue eyes is the depiction of her struggles to be accepted in the white community. “Geraldine,Louis,Junior ,and the cat lived next to the playground of Washington Irving School”(p.84).This text highlights the hatred of white people towards black people. This shows the racism faced by the people of black community. Geraldine doesn’t want his kid Junior to play with black people whom she calls as niggers. She very clearly taught him the difference between neat clean and dirty people. The character, Geraldine, is the representative of the white class. She was self obsessed about her house, her clothes, her hair and everything related to her personality. Junior his son was clever and abusive. The family lives next to the playground of the school and Junior in his isolation longs to play with his fellows but he was not allowed for those activities. Junior took Pecola into his house and then threw his mother’s cat in her face. The cat started scratching the face of Pecola and she tried to escape the house, but Junior would not let her go. Geraldine blames the entire incident on Pecola. The hatred of white class toward black people is evident through the text.

The white people used to subjugate the black people due to their dark complexion. “Pauline felt uncomfortable with the few black women she met. They were amused by her because she did not straighten her hair”(p. 116).This passage brought the fact that black people even faced racism in their own community. Pauline was a black woman and used to live in black community but women living there used to taunt her on her appearance and on her accent as well. This highlights the fact that black people were even marginalized in their own communities. “There stood two white men .One with a spirit lamp the other with a flashlight. There was no mistake about their being white., he could smell it. Cholly jumped, tried to kneel, stand and gets his pants up all in one motion. The men had long guns”. This text explains the situation in which Cholly was found. Two white men were watching him performing sexual activity. This also showcase the Patriarchal thinking of male where they molest females for their desires. “It had occurred to Pecola some time ago that if her eyes, those eyes that held the pictures , and knew the sights – if those eyes of hers were different, that is to say ,beautiful, she herself would be different .Her teeth were good , and at least her nose was not big and flat like some of those who thought o cute. If she looked different ,beautiful , maybe Cholly would be different , and Mrs. Breedlove too. Maybe they’d say , “Why, look at pretty- eyed Pecola .We mustn’t do bad things in front of those pretty eyes”. This paragraph describes that due to her skin colour Pecola felt that she was ugly. According to her the only way to fit in the society was to achieve fair skin colour. She believes that the only way to look beautiful and to see herself beautiful is by achieving the white standards of beauty. Pecola used to think that people around her teachers, classmates etc. used to hate her due to her skin colour.

This text shows that Pecola was drunk, or maybe she drunk three quarts of milk due to her greedy nature. The cup had a Shirley Temple picture on it. Due to this obsession, she drank all the milk but by the people she was perceived as greedy by the people around her “I hated Shirley. Not because she was cute , but because she danced with Bojangles, who was my friend ,my uncle, my daddy, and who ought to have been soft-shoeing it and

chuckling with me. Instead, he was enjoying , sharing, giving a lovely dance thing with one of those little white girls whose socks never slid down under their heels (Morrison, 1970).

This text shows the innocent ideas of a 9-year-old girl. Frieda and Pecola used to idealize Shirley Temple due to its white color, but Claudia hates her. This also clears that she was against white beauty and standards. The irony was that the family members used to hate each other. Pecola believed that she was ugly. Breedlove has addictions and hates himself and so people are attached to him .He sets his own house on fire. This shows the irony that the black characters hate themselves and felt unadjustable in the society .Climax of the novel took place when Pecola was raped in the hands of her own father. The story of a girl who lost her innocence throughout the story. The story also includes flashbacks. Folklore is also used in the novel.

Toni Morrison used an epigraph in her novel. The novel includes events of 1939.This is a traumatic novel. There are also number of natural images in the novel as well The theme of the novel is based on the struggles of black people. From their birth it was infused in their mind that they are somehow lower as compared to the white class. Of the society .Due to racism blacks were forced to live under the rules set by the white people of the society. Language is the lens through which one can understand the work of the author. Toni Morrison used different characters to tell the story which gave a real impression to the novel. The protagonist Pecola a young black colour girl who went through extreme difficulty in her life .She in search of blue eyes, became insane towards the end of the novel. Another character is a young girl who is Claudia Macteer. The most part of the novel was told by her. She was depicted as a strong nine-year-old girl. She was a black girl who hate white people passionately.

In one hand Pecola admire White Shirley Temple due to its white colour but on the other hand Claudia destroyed white dolls which show her anger. She sincerely describes the story of Pecola in the novel. She even talks about the memories of Pecola of which the reader was unaware. Claudia and Frieda even feel guilty when they find out about the pregnancy of Pecola. The females presented in the novels went through marginalization in the hands of white people. The females went through many types of discrimination in their life such as racial discrimination and sexual discrimination. Toni Morrison describes that Pocola's identity was lost due to her inclination towards white people and white colour. Toni Morrison describes in her novel that white have been exploiting black for centuries and this thing also affected the psyche of characters which she portrayed in the novel.

## 5. Beloved

The novel Beloved by Toni Morrison is a masterpiece and thought-provoking novel about the experiences of black people. The protagonist of the novel was a black

woman named Sethe who was stuck between her past and present. She was constantly worried about her situation because of the horror of slavery she once faced in her old hometown Sweet Home. The novel showcases two different time periods one is present Cincinnati in 1873 and the other is through flashbacks of the memories of her Sweet Home in 1850. Sethe was a slave in Ohio and escaped from there. She started living with her daughter Denver in 124 a haunted home in Bluestone road. Both the trauma of slavery and the experiences of the haunted home play an important role in the novel. In the 1st chapter the trauma of slavery is clear especially from the experiences of Sethe. She herself was once enslaved so in order to save her children she killed one of her daughters named Beloved.

This incident of killing her own child showcase the societal oppression on people especially on females. The exploitation of nature is also very clear in the 1st chapter where the new home of Sethe was shown as surrounded with unwanted grass. This show the neglect towards environment and how women and nature were neglected. The house was covered with unwanted vegetation and the gardens near the home were also abandoned. This thing highlights the exploitation of both women and nature in the hands of those in power. In the 1st chapter Sethe isolated herself after moving to Cincinnati. This isolation was basically referred to as isolation from other people. Sethe was a black woman and marginalized in the society, so she tried to remain away from society of dominating people. In order to feel a sense of security she isolated herself in the home. This is another aspect of ecofeminism in which marginalized women used to distance themselves in order to save themselves from patriarchal society.

The goal of Sethe was to create a life for herself and to gain an identity is also the goal of ecofeminism in order to achieve equal rights in society. Paul D was a slave along with Sethe in Sweet home. Ecofeminism is highlighted through the cyclical oppression faced by Sethe. Sethe was recovering from her past, but the arrival of Paul D disrupted her life again. This cyclical nature of oppression is a theme of ecofeminism. The 2nd chapter of the novel deals with a deeper aspect of characters' lives. Sethe escaped from Sweet home, but it still had a negative impact on her psyche. This is ecofeminist view that trauma of slavery was still lingering over the psyche of black females. During slavery the bodies of females were used by the patriarch of the society which shows the exploitation of women. Sethe tried to save her life against the mental oppression. In the 2nd chapter Sethe was separated from her childrens and she was very unsatisfied with the forced separation from her children. Two black females such as Sethe and Baby Suggs supported each other against the oppression. The ghost of Beloved used to haunt Sethe which depicts that her trauma was unresolved. In chapter 3 Sethe's memories of her past came back with the arrival of Paul D. Sethe used to work in Sweet Home Plantation that brought her good and mostly bad memories regarding the nature in which she lived. She faced violence in her old home. Due to the patriarchal oppression the black women were forced to live under great control of patriarchy.

Due to the patriarchal pressure of slavery Sethe even killed her own daughter which greatly impacted her psyche. Denver the daughter of Sethe was a black girl. She faced double marginalization based on race and gender that showcases the double oppression faced by black females. In chapter 7 and 8 the white male subjugation is clearly seen where they believe that only white have the authority to speak. Nobody was allowed to talk about their painful experiences of the past and that's why one time, while recalling her past almost lost her life in the hands of Mr. Garner. This shows the increased amount of oppression on marginalized people of society. The only thing that differentiates between humans and nonhumans is the ability to speak. The white slave owners made it clear that those who tried to go against them would not be able to speak again. This showcases the brutality faced by black people in the hands of white community. Chapter 10 highlights the issue that were faced by the black people who were sold and were forced to live in difficult situations. Paul D was also one of the prisoners, but he managed to escape. The scene of the sexual encounter in chapter 11 between Beloved and Paul D highlights the fact that he was somehow still engaged with his past. Chapter 16 highlights the fact about Sethe that after one month of being in Cincinnati 124 the slave master School teacher along with his nephew came back to take Sethe and her children with them. This shows the brutality of patriarchal society who used to exploit people especially black females. They treated them like property just like they treat earth for their own gain. The patriarchal domination over nature and women is clear from their actions. The act of killing her own child by Sethe should be taken that although it was not acceptable in a society, but she did it in order to save her childrens from slavery.

In chapter 19, Stamp paid focuses on the issues of black people. He states that black people suffered the most due to the controlling nature of white people. He states that black people were also unable to remove themselves from white authoritative people. The majority of black people discussed in the novel were suffering under white domination. The character of Beloved also shows two contradictory natures in which one point she is represented as weak and in other as strong. In the second part Beloved talked about the place where she previously lived. She states that it was full of horror where slaves were transported from Africa to America. "I got a tree on my back and a haint in my house, and nothing in between but the daughter I am holding in my arms. No more running -from nothing"(p. 18,19). This above text throws light on the experiences of a black female Sethe. She was an African -American woman. Sethe share that the scars on her back lookalike a tree. This represents the struggle a woman faced under subjugation. The image of the tree can be metaphorically as the oppression marginalized women faced in the hands of patriarchal society. This shows that both women and nature were used as commodity by male. Male use both of them as a commodity. Sethe also discussed the trauma she faced even after escaping from slavery.

The text highlights that the ghost of her child Beloved was living with her in the same house. This indicates that Sethe was suffering from physical abuse and mental abuse of slavery as well. The trauma was destructive for both environment and human beings

especially females. Sethe then talks about her daughter which represents a ray of hope in Sethe's life. The daughter of Sethe symbolizes the hope for a future free from all kinds of trauma. Sethe asserts that she wanted to break free from the oppression of society. This passage is embodiment of both past, present and future.

From ecofeminist view it not only focus on the hardships Sethe went through in the hands of white man but also her present trauma that somehow still lingered. The above text with the example of daughter also emphasizes that Sethe wanted to create a harmonious relationship in the society. The scar on Sethe's back represents the pain she endured in the hands of slave master, schoolteacher. She tried to escape from Sweet Home Plantation. School teacher along with his nephew brutally tortured Sethe. He was a vicious man his aim was to use the marginalized people for his personal gain. Schoolteacher was the master mind behind the subjugation of African people. He enslaved the majority of people in the community. He is an example of cruelty in society. African-American faced extreme physical labour along with mental trauma as well. He used to humiliate them in order to achieve a sense of superiority over them. He viewed the black individuals as an object to be bought and sold.

"They used cowhide on you"?

"And they took my milk"!

"They beat you and you was pregnant"?

"And they took my milk"(p.117).

This text highlights the sufferings of black women in the hands of white patriarch. Ecofeminist point of view is that women faced double marginalization due to patriarchal society. Women of colour faced double marginalization based on their race and gender. Women were greatly suffered under the male society. Black women were not only abused mentally but physically as well. They went through severe difficulties in their lives. Sethe was not sexually raped, but she went through cruelty while she was enslaved in Sweet Home.

The example of physical assault of Sethe portrayed the condition of enslaved mothers. Through the example of Sethe Morrison highlight the extreme pain black females went through while living under the control of white male society. This text highlights that the one thing that was linked between mother and her children was milk. The only thing Sethe cared about was her milk. The stealing of Sethe's milk showcase the extreme amount of torture faced by the black women. The white men used the enslaved people to work in Sweet Home and also exploited their lifestyle as well. The domination of men over nature and women is highlighted aspect in the novel. Baby Suggs is another woman who faced sexual abuse in her life. Ella another female character who faced sexual abuse and got



pregnant but lost her child. This indicates the domination of man that they used women bodies in order to satisfy their thrust without thinking about the consequences on the lives of affected females. Ecofeminist believes that men exploit nature and women for their personal gain. White men exploited not only nature but women as well without facing any trouble. They were in absolute power, and nobody was allowed to question them for their barbaric actions.

“The quaking slowed to an occasional lurch, but Paul D did not stop whipping the table around until everything was rock quiet”(p. 23).

The home is a place of identity for its residents .One feels secure in their own home. Home 124 in *Beloved* is actually a haunting place because it was believed that the ghost of the murdered child came to visit it. The coming of *Beloved*’s ghost in the home is the indication of the past traumas coming back to the lives of enslaved people. The trauma not only affected the enslaved people but rather it impacted the future generations as well. The arrival of the past in the future also indicates the need for characters to face their fears in order to progress in society. “Paul D who was also a slave in the hands of white man was shocked by the presence of *Beloved*’s ghost. She threw them all away but you. The one from the crew threw away on the island. . . Without names ,she threw them .You she gave the name of black man” (Morrison:62).

This text highlights the impact of slavery on the lives of enslaved people. They were suppressed to the point especially black females that in order to save their childrens they used to kill them. The killing of their own children is worrisome for people, but it was a kind of their love and protection for their childrens to save them from slavery. Black women faced slavery and were aware of the pain and sufferings. Black people went through marginalization based on racism and gender. The black people were enslaved by the white community. They considered them animals with no rights to speak and question. The children of Sethe’s mother used to remind her of the sexual assault she went in her life, so she killed them. When Sethe herself became mother she understood the love her mother had for her and also the sufferings she went through in her life while raising Sethe.

“I couldn’t let her nor any of em live under schoolteacher”(Morrison .163).This text highlights the intentions of an enslaved woman Sethe who wanted to save her children from schoolteacher who was the master of slaves. Sethe killed one of her child *Beloved* in order to protect her from slavery. Sethe was not a bad mother, rather she was aware of the hardships faced by slaved people. Slavery left a traumatic scar on the lives of black people. The only thing Sethe had for her childrens was milk which the white people also tried to steal from them. “The war had been over four or five years then, but nobody white or black seemed to know it .Odd clusters and strays of Negroes wandered the back road and cow paths from Sechenetry to Jackson”(p. 60).This text highlights that the Civil War was ended but it still impacted the lives of people especially the black people. The trauma of slavery was still observant in the lives of black people. The enslaved black people were

forced to displace from one place to another. People lost their homes and their loved ones. Slavery left a negative impact on the psyche of black people especially children's and black females. They suffered not only due to their colour but also based on their gender as well. These experiences also shape the lives of people with their surrounding environment. When warm weather came, Baby Suggs, holy, followed by every black man, woman and child who could make it through, took her great heart to the Clearing – a wide – open place cut deep in the woods nobody knew for what at the end of a path” (p. 104). This text showcases that Baby Suggs was a character who used to heal the mind and souls of people especially the black women and children. The place where Baby Suggs took them was in between the woods which itself act as a healing force for people.

After the arrival of Sethe in Cincinnati, Baby Suggs welcomed her to the town. The place was open for almost everyone to visit and even for rest. Baby Suggs opened her heart and place for the people who wanted to heal from their trauma of slavery. The African American people used to come there in order to get peace of mind because they were subjugated in white communities. The place was present between woods which indicates the healing power of nature and the healing and nurturing abilities of Baby Suggs. Baby Suggs used to pray on a stone and then she allowed people to come and meet her. The place was present in the woods, and nobody knew where it led except the one who made it in the first place. People used to wait for Baby Suggs in the trees. She used to tell the children to laugh while doing this their sound used to echo in the woods. Baby Suggs used to tell the women to cry out their heart out in order to release the pressure.

“Negros to love—and being loved by them, to counsel and be counseled, protect and be protected, feed and be fed, and then to have a community to hold step back and hold itself at a distance - - - well it could wear out a Baby Suggs” (p. 200). Racism is a prominent theme in ecofeminism. The black people were marginalized in the society due to their skin colour. They were dehumanized and treated as slaves. Both race and gender impacted the lives of characters in the novel. The above text mentions that every individual deserves to be treated equally in society and being loved. The black people deserved to be live and loved. The focus was that one should consider the sufferings of black people and being sympathetic towards them. The text highlights that their rights need to be protected in the society. This text call for mutual care towards both the black people and their environment. The text calls for a harmonious relationship between human beings and nature. The water in the novel also used symbolically especially the Ohio River because different characters of the novel like Sethe and Denver along with Paul D were given new life. The birth of Denver took place near that river which means that water for her was a source of life.

Although Sethe thought that she was going to lose her daughter “gonna die in wild onion on the bloody side of Ohio River”. (31). The text highlights that the wild onion provided protection to Sethe and her child. When Sethe reached her destination her own water bag was released but faced complications during the birth of Denver. The river could

represent darkness to some people but for others it represents light and renewal. Water represents the transition of Sethe from slavery to freedom. Amy Denver a white woman saved the life of Sethe during pregnancy. The Ohio River given her life and removed the traumatic memories of her past. Water also acted as a barrier between her life of slavery and freedom.

## 6. Conclusion

This article with two novels of Toni Morrison who represented the issues of black people in *Beloved* and *The Bluest Eye*. After analyzing the novels it is observed that the characters of novel faced serious issues such as racism and slavery in their lives particularly due to their gender. The novel *Beloved* is Morrison's interpretation of the lives of black people and their survival. The conducted research highlights the issues faced by black female child as well as adult females. Nature served as a comfort for both Denver and *Beloved* and as a longing for Sethe. It is analyzed that the environment was harsh towards the African-American especially black females. The chokecherry tree on Sethe's back indicates the struggles black enslaved people suffered in the hands of white male society. This research also establishes the victimization faced by black woman. Due to slavery the misfortune of killing her own child came in the life of Sethe. Black females faced double marginalization based on their race and gender. The analysis of "The Bluest Eye" emphasizes that the sufferings a young black girl Pecola went through due to her race and gender. The sufferings of African-Americans are clearly discussed through the examples of Pecola along with other black girls. The rape of Pecola in her father's hand depicts the cruelty women faced in patriarchal society. This novel reflects on the cruelties of American society which disrespected the black people based on racism and gender. The young character Pecola gained a sense of self authority while moving towards the end of the novel. Sethe in *Beloved* is an important character and through her sufferings one can understand the horrors of slavery. This article brought into light the horrendous act of slavery faced by Africans especially the black people.

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