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**Representation of Child Abuse and Treatment of Colourism in  
Toni Morrison's *God Help The Child* and *The Bluest Eye***

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Dissertation Submitted for the Degree of Master of Philosophy in English  
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## CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

Literature is a term used to describe written and sometimes spoken material. It was derived from the Latin Word 'Literatura' which means 'Writing formed with letters'. It is sometimes defined as 'anything written'. Sartre's *what is literature* article analyzed the literature in the sense of any writing and literature in the sense of verbal works of art. Robert Frost said, "Literature is a performance in words". Another view holds that literature has in it, a sense of entertaining display and provides pleasure in addition to the element of 'truth' involved (<http://www.english.ufl.edu>). It represents the culture and tradition of a language or the people. It is more than just a historical or cultural artifact but can serve as an introduction to a new world of experience. It is one of the fine arts that employ 'language' as a medium of expression. It is essentially an expression of human feelings, emotions, sufferings and joys. Language or culture may be different but human sentiments remain essentially the same in all literatures of the world. The analysis of Sharma defines literature is a mirror of life. It reflects the feelings of human beings.

Feeling is not just a feeling; it holds the joy, sorrow, struggles, abuses, depression, oppression etc. This dissertation reveals such kind of abuse like child abuse and colourism. When a parent or caregiver, whether through action or failing to act causes injury, death, emotional harm or threat of serious harm to child. R. M. Prabha's article *Child Abuse in Toni Morrison's Fiction* revealed there are four main types of child maltreatment including neglect, physical abuse, sexual abuse and emotional abuse. Child abuse refers to intentional or unintentional physical, mental or sexual harm done to a child. It is much more likely to take place in homes in which other forms of domestic violence occur as well. The treatment of child abuse in law has its origins in Anglo-American common law. Common law tradition held that the male was head of the household and possessed the authority to act as both disciplinarian and protector of those dependent on him. In the nineteenth century the forces of industrialization and urbanization loosened the community ties that had traditionally served as important regulators of child abuse and neglect.

'Trauma' is Greek for 'wound' and a term in medicine for massive physical injury. Psychological 'trauma' is defined by the American Psychiatric Association as 'an event or events that involved actual or threatened death or serious injury or a threat to the physical integrity of self or others'. Trauma essentially involves emotional, distortion of identity and dissociation of sensibility. When child abuse emerges, many authors focus child abuse as their theme of works. They want to reveal the struggles of children to the society and to create awareness form people. So they talk about child abuse in their works such Genres in African American Literature can be

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regarded as a productive site where trauma finds expression through the text. Frantz Fanon was the first to propose a linkage between individual Psychosis and oppression innate in a colony system. Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks* is one of the earliest instances of a comprehensive study of social trauma under colonial conditions. His extensive analysis of individual case studies offered corroborating evidence for the claim that the colony culture induced psychosis and demanded a reengagement with a reality more amenable to the colonial system.

*"Childhood Cuts Festered and Never Scabbed Over": Child Abuse in Toni Morrison's God Help the Child* by Manuela López Ramírez analyzed the violence as a whole is central to the African American experience. Blacks have suffered all kinds of victimization and oppression alienating them from their own culture. As Cathy Spatz Widom contends as, 'Violence begets Violence' (17). The intergenerational transmission of violence brings about childhood trauma and maltreatment. Children and youth in the United States experience an alarming rate of exposure to the violence and molestation a phenomenon that is even higher for black individuals. According to *Child Help* (2017), every year child protection agencies receive more than 3.6 million child abuse referrals, which involve more than 6.6 million children (a referral can include multiple children). Henry Kempe and his colleagues play a leading role in bringing child abuse to national attention during the 1960s and 1970s.

Following publication of *The Battered Child Syndrome* national outlets like *Newsweek*, *Saturday Evening Post*, *Parents Magazine*, *Time*, *Good Housekeeping*, and *Life* published emotional stories of child abuse often citing *The Battered Child Syndrome*. In 1962, there was little professional research and writing about abuse. Through the analysis of Myers's *Child Protection History*, Elizabeth Elmer noted "The amount of systematic research on the problem of abuse and neglect is conspicuously scant" (455).

According to 2012 UNICEF report the United States was ranked seventh out of 10 countries that represent more than half of all child homicides. Reported abuse and crimes do not often account for many of the other horror that children face: racism, insults, neglect, guilty etc. Before the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, child abuse was a socially unspeakable phenomenon. In the 1960s, C. Henry Kempe and his colleagues identified, and recognized child abuse and they are creating awareness and exposed its reality. They conceptualized *The Battered Child Syndrome*, which characterizes the clinical manifestations of severe physical abuse in young children. By the 1970s doctors started to work on the detection of child abuse and in 1974, Congress passed Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA), which provides support for the prevention assessment, investigation, prosecution and treatment of child abuse. The concepts of child abuse and neglect depend on cultural values and beliefs about appropriate childrearing and parenting. The World Health Organization (1999) defines child abuse in the following terms. Lopez

Ramirez's "*Childhood Cuts Festered and Never Scabbed Over*": *Child Abuse in Toni Morrison's God Help the Child* analyzed "Child abuse or Maltreatment constitutes all forms of physical and emotional ill treatment, sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or commercial or other exploitation resulting in actual or potential harm to the child's health, survival, development or dignity in the context of relationship of responsibility trust or power" (147).

Child abuse is a global problem. It can be a single incident, but it is usually constant in time. According to James Garbarino, what is truly harmful is the chronic pattern that "erodes and corrods a child" (Ramirez 148). Hence traumatic stress occurs when children or adolescents are exposed to a long term abuse or traumatic situations and this exposure overwhelms their ability to cope with these experiences. Child abuse not only occurs in a variety of forms, but also is deeply rooted in cultural economic and social practices.

Children are ill-treated by people who have some power over them. They are weak so they can be easily oppressed psychologically or physically. They become per excellence, the victims of scapegoating. Child abuse can be perpetrated by the family or someone from the community, when the trust has an important role or even from other people. Children are completely dependent on their parents or caregivers. When the child is hurt by their primary caregivers, the violation of the trust at the core of the infant's relationship with the world dramatically increases the level of trauma that the victim endures. Children who grow up in dysfunctional families are more prone to suffer from a range of psychological, emotional and social problems, which will last in their adulthood. As John Briere (1992) argues neglect and abuse, sexual or not at home, as well as witnessing and experiencing family violence have been linked with subsequent psychological disturbances. Abused or damaged children may develop coping strategies to resist maltreatment or they can internalize oppression and feel unworthy and accept self-loathing. This is a vicious cycle in which the victims will eventually become victimizers. So, such writers in African American Literature talk about child abuse as a subject in their works (148).

Following child abuse, colourism is also created an impact on African Americans and especially the children of African Americans. The purpose of this paper is to expose how African American Women in literature have been impacted by Colourism. It exposes the evidence of the impact of colourism and its impact on the image of African American Women, young girls and children. The funny thing is the word colourism does not even exist. Not officially. It auto corrects on one's computer screen. It does not appear in the dictionary. Still the author and activist Alice Walker is the person most often credited with first using the word "Colourism" out loud and in print. In an essay that appears in her 1983 book, *In Search of Our Mother's Gardens*,

Walker defined treatment of same race people based solely on their colour. Light skin preference had been common practice in the Black Community of generations. But Walker gave it a name and marked it as an evil that must be stopped in order for African Americans to progress as a people. But Black Americans are not the only people obsessed with how light or dark a person's skin. Colourism is a societal ill felt in many places all around the world, including Latin America, East and Southeast Asia, the Caribbean and Africa. Here in the US, because people are such a diverse population with citizens hailing from all corners of the earth, their brand of colourism is both homegrown and imported. In the US it has been repeatedly proven that skin tone plays a role in who gets ahead and who does not. A 2006 University of Georgia study found that employers of any race prefer light skinned black men to dark skinned men regardless of their qualifications. (<http://time.com/4512430/colorism-in-american>)

Colourism is a term popularized by Alice Walker to describe prejudice or discrimination based on skin pigment or lack of it. Colourism is not racism. It is a process of discrimination which light skinned counterpart. Colourism is the offshoot of "pigmentocracy", a term, scientists have coined to explain the attitude of the society in which wealth and social status are determined by skin colour alone. Christopher lane's *The Psychology of Race* is a seminal work that examines the paradigmatic shift of psycho analytic discourse towards an emphasis on race. To quote him, "We cannot comprehend ethnic and racial disputes without considering the implications of psychic resistance".

Colourism is a worldwide phenomenon and is a case of trickle down racism. As long as there is White racism, there will be racism within the Black Community and favoritism for lightness". Colourism is a form of intra group stratification generally associated with Black people in the United States present among all peoples of colour (<http://en.wikipedia.org>).

One of the damaging influences of racist oppression is the deliberate thrusting of the values and notions of the dominant culture upon the colonized group. The black skin of the African Americans that forms the basis of racism in America and it is an undeniable fact. Frantz Fanon, author of *The Wretched of the Earth*, explains how the colonizer fixes the oriental or the other with a look. The White Euro- American merely by looking at the Afro-American fixes him as a Negro, a primitive with his tom-toms and cannibalism and makes it impossible for him to escape from the inferiority caused by his black skin.

Therefore, many people affected by the issues of child abuse, discrimination, racism and oppressions. But some of them are come forward to create awareness from people through their writings, Such as James Baldwin, Alice Walker and Toni Morrison. They are the Black African American writers. In this dissertation deals about African American Literature and African

American Women Writers and also it deals about an international celebrity of Toni Morrison. She is a black African American Woman.

Among in all the literatures of the world, African American Literature has become an inevitable part of American Literature. The strong presence of African American literature has paved the way for the emergence of Native American, Asian American and Chicano American streams of literatures. It is only with the significant representation of African American Literature. American society stands to be cleansed from the problem of racial discrimination African American Literature has examined the problem of racial discrimination in all its philosophical, existential and epistemological aspects. It has traveled from 18<sup>th</sup> century with slave narratives to the current times with all its socio literary exuberance initiating a literary and cultural transformation in the fabric of American society.

It was only during the mid-twentieth century after the ground-breaking influential socio political texts Washington's *Up From Slavery* (1901) and Du Bois's *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903) and Zora Neale Hurston's *Their Eyes were Watching God*. Richard Wright, Ralph Ellison and James Baldwin devised a brand of African American modernism, Right's *Native Son* (1940), Ellison's *Invisible Man* (1952) and Baldwin eloquent volume of essays. *The Five Next Time* argued for social and cultural emancipation of African Americans cutting above the influence of Civil Rights Movement that were taking place simultaneously (1).

Through the analysis of Pankaj's article *African American literature* explains the emergence of African American Women Writers and their Writings brought in double jeopardy of racism in Black Women's Movement. Gloria Hull examined the dilemma of "Black Women in All the Men and Black. All the Women are White. But some of us are Brave" (Pankaj 2). This has made many black women to turn toward each other for a better introspective and analytical understanding of Black Women's problems. Maya Angelou's *I Know why the Caged Bird sings* (1970), and Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* addressed the question of how self-identity and respect is achieved by a black girl in society which hardly values her existence. Toni Morrison expanded her thematic range from female identity to Black people relationship with African American Past in her works *Song of Solomon* (1977), *Beloved* (1987) and *Jazz* (1991). These novels have explored folk heritage Slavery and Motherhood. This is followed by Alice Walker's *The Third Life of Grange Copland* that discussed the issues of poverty and family violence. She exposed the contradictions within the Black Movement depicting the issue of domestic violence, father daughter rape and female genital mutilation in *The Colour Purple* (1982) and *Possessing the Secret of Joy* (1982) (3).



Despite the negative representation of Black men, Alice Walker's works have initiated the renaissance of African Women's writings. This has paved the way for the emergence of literature of place, small towns and neighborhoods and of home. Many creative writers who are veterans of black movements and black feminism assisted by activist stance provided insightful literary and political essays. Goloria Nayler's *The Women of Brewster Place* (1982), Andrew Lord's *Zami* (1982), Paul Marshall's *Praise Song of the Widow* (1983) and Gayle Jones *Corregidor* (1975) have redrawn the map of African American Literary canon. All these works have proved that African American Literature has unleashed a new creative talent on par with other significant streams of Post-Colonial and Post Modernism Literatures.

Among all African American Women Writers, Toni Morrison is one of the most celebrated authors of the second half of twentieth century America who depict the consciousness of contemporary man entangled in the web of life. She describes in particularly the consciousness of African Americans who had to bear affronts on various levels of physical, mental, psychological and more important than these on the racial level. Further she eloquently speaks about an African American Woman who has been suffering indignities in the US on account of her being doubly oppressed as a black in America and also as a Woman in a patriarchic social setup. Her writings are filled with her concern over the sad plight of her ethnicity in America that it had to suffer since its forced import from atavistic Africa and its spiritual homeland. She writes about what Lisa Williams argues, "The destructive consequences of internalizing whiteness" (7).

Morrison is an author who has combined literary aesthetics and moral social, spiritual and psychological aspects in her narratives. She narrates what she has witnessed in the US, as its citizen and also as a part of her ethnicity. The first black woman is to receive the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1993. Morrison has proved her love, ability and loyalty toward her writing and her people growing up in a Black Community. She has witnessed and felt its problems, sufferings, pain, anguish and the trauma that goes with all this. Through her writings, she seems to suggest who the outlaws were who survived under what circumstances and why what was legal in the community as opposed to what was legal outside it. Her writing is like a mutual understanding, a sharing of fervors, thoughts and reactions. She loves to hold the hand of every reader and hear felt experiences. She mingles the unrealistic constituents of her race with a realistic presentation of life and characters giving them authenticity in certain ways. She even identifies the supernatural and the improbable and generates or word of magic realism. This magic appears in her first novel *The Bluest Eye* and also in her eleventh novel *God Help the Child*. In *The Bluest Eye* that divulges the belief in the church's power by some members of the community as well as the failure of the marigold to bloom. Through the text of Sebin Justine's *Treatment of Colourism in Toni Morrison's God Help the Child: A Gynocritical Perspective* analyses Bride herself belief

and realizes with a rude shock that her body is changing in ways only she can see, shrinking and hairless as if she is regressing back to girlhood. Since every writer is a product of their own age and depicts what they experienced in life, it seems imperative to have a brief look at the life of Morrison in order to see how different thematic stands get crystallized in her works (76).

Magic realism, is chiefly a Latin American narrative strategy that is characterized by the matter of fact inclusion of fantastic or mythical elements into seemingly realistic fiction. This strategy is characterized by two conflicting perspectives, one based on a so called rational view of reality and the other on the acceptance of the supernatural as prosaic reality. Magical realism differs from pure fantasy primarily because it is set in a normal, modern world with authentic descriptions of humans and society. Although this strategy is known in the literature of many cultures in many ages, the term magic realism is a relatively recent designation, first applied in the 1940s by Cuban novelist Alejo Carpentier, who recognized this characteristic in much Latin American literature. Prominent among the Latin-American magic realists are the Colombian Gabriel García Márquez, the Brazilian Jorge Amado, the Argentines Jorge Luis Borges and Julio Cortazar, and the Chilean Isabel Allende ([www.britannica.com](http://www.britannica.com)).

Toni Morrison was born Chloe Ardelia Wofford on 18 February 1931. She was the second oldest of four children. Her parents George and Ramah Wofford were the descendants of sharecroppers from Alabama and Georgia. Morrison grows up in the small street Mill town of Lorain, Ohio located on Lake Erie, twenty five miles west of Cleveland. The population of Lorain consisted largely of European immigrants and schools were not segregated. In fact, when Morrison started grade school, she was the only black child in her class and the only one who could already read ([www.biography.com](http://www.biography.com)).

Despite the fact that her school was integrated and that she was the best student in her class, Morrison experienced the effect of racism early for even the children of newly arrived immigrants who could not speak English were immediately taught that they and their families were not at the bottom of American society but that blacks were below them. Moreover, Morrison also experienced racist attitudes at home. She admits that she grew up in a basically racist household with more than child's share of contempt for White people. She imbibed this contempt from her father who had witnessed whites committing atrocities against blacks in the south and had therefore come to the conviction that corrupt. In addition to passing on to his daughter is a feeling of moral superiority over Whites. Morrison's father also bequeathed her his perfectionism as a Craft man, for her was a master shipyard welder. Who loved excellence, but she might also have inherited her perfectionism from her maternal grandfather Solomon Willis, who was not only artist and he had taught himself to play the violin, but also a first-rate carpenter.

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From both her father and mother, Morrison inherited a love of storytelling especially ghost stories. In several interviews Morrison reports that one of her family's evening pastime was to take turns telling stories and that the children were invited to contribute. Because of these stories, Morrison says she became intimate with the supernatural from an early age. To this day Morrison believes in spirits (149).

During high school, Morrison develops a love of literature studied Latin for four years and formed the decision to become a teacher. After graduating from high school with honors, Morrison enrolled as an English Major at Howard University in Washington D.C. she minored in the classics, performed on the stage with Howard University players and changed the first name Chloe to Toni. Having received her B.A degree from Howard in 1953, she enters the graduate program in English at Cornell University in Ithaca, New York. There she studied under David Daiches and wrote a master's thesis entitled "Virginia Woolf's and William Faulkner's Treatment of Alienated".

After receiving her M.A degree in Cornell in 1955, Morrison taught for two years at Texas Southern University in Houston, before she joined the faculty at her Alma mater, Howard University. While teaching at Howard University, she married the Jamaican architect Harold Morrison and gave birth to two sons, Harold Morrison and Slade Kevin. Her marriage ended around 1964 the year that she was denied tenure at Howard University "because she did not have a PhD degree.

The mid 1960s were the most depressing years of Morrison's life. After living with her parents in Lorain, Ohio for a while, she moved to Syracuse, New York. Where she worked as a textbook editor for L.W. Singer, a subsidiary of Random House, to overcome her depression, Morrison decided to rework a short story. She had written at Howard University and turn into a novel. That became *The Bluest Eye*, Morrison had a hard time getting it published several publishers turned it down before Holt, Rinehart, and Winston finally printed it in 1970.

In the 1970s, Morrison suddenly got fame. When, she published *Sula* (1973), and *Song of Solomon* (1977). She became recognized as one of the most important new voices in American fiction. The success of *Sula* earned Morrison an appointment as lecturer at Yale University and *Song of Solomon* won her the National Book Critics Circle Award. In 1980, President Jimmy Carter appointed her to the Nation Council of the Arts and in 1981; she was inducted into the American academy of Arts and Letters.

Also, in 1981, Morrison published her fourth novel *Tar Baby*. Although the novel drew mixed reviews, Newsweek put Toni Morrison's picture on its cover and published a long interview article on her life and work. Three years later in 1984, Morrison left Random House to devote herself exclusively to her writing and teaching her first career choice. All along, she had been teaching in various places on the side including Bard College and the State University of New York at Purchase.

In 1984, Morrison was appointed to the Albert Schweitzer Professorship of the Humanities at the State of University of New York in Albany. While she was in Albany, she wrote and directed the performance of a play, *Dreaming Emmett* (1986). But more importantly she also wrote and published *Beloved* (1987), the novel for which she received the Pulitzer Prize. In 1989, Morrison has been Robert F. Goheen Professor in the Humanities at Princeton University. She has also lectured at many Universities among them Howard and in 1992, she published three of her Howard lectures under the title *playing in the Dark: Whiteness and Literary Imagination*. That same year she also published her sixth novel *Jazz* which received Moderate Praise. ([www.biography.com](http://www.biography.com))

Morrison's lasting fame was secured in 1993 when she was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature. She was the first black person and only the eighth woman to receive that recognition. In explaining the choice of Morrison Sture Ahlen, the secretary of the Academy that bestows the award said about her, "She delves into the language itself, a language she wants to liberate from the fetters of race". And she addresses with the "luster of poetry". Language was also the focus of Morrison's address to the Nobel Prize Committee. Morrison said, "Language can never 'Pin down' Slavery, genocide, war nor should it yearn for the arrogance to do so. It forces its felicity is in its reach toward the in effable.

Recurring themes in the fiction of Morrison are the failure of love, the quest for identity or conversely the failure to achieve such an identity, the clash between material and spiritual values between the belief that the physical world is all there is and the belief that beyond the physical world there exists a spiritual world. Moreover, on some level Morrison always deals with the role of Women in African American Society.

Toni Morrison's notable works are *The Bluest Eye* (1970), *Sula* (1973), *Song of Solomon* (1977), *Tar Baby* (1980), *Beloved* (1987), *Jazz* (1992), *Paradise* (1998), *Love* (2003), *A Mercy* (2008), *Home* (2012) and *God Help the Child* (2015). Morrison's first novel is *The Bluest Eye* (1970). There are two important themes are the failure of love and the reasons some African Americans repudiate their racial identity by adopting the values of white society. The protagonist Pecola Breedlove longs always for the blue eyes like Whites have. This desire for blue eyes gets

more intense as the squalor of her life increases. She raped by her own father Cholly. Her longing for the blue eyes everyone in her society maltreats her. At last she became mad.

Morrison's second novel, *Sula* (1973) has a less contrived structure and its style comes closer to that of folk narrative. The central theme is quest for personal identity, but this quest is taken to an egocentric extreme. Morrison explores that the protagonist Sula Peace and her best friend Nel Wright are symbolic of good and bad. She follows the supernatural elements in this novel. Another supernatural element in Morrison's next novel is *Song of Solomon* (1977). For this reason, case can be made that *Song of Solomon* is not a novel all but a romance. The actual in the case of *Song of Solomon* is the realistic settings and imaginary is the extraordinary characters and the unusual and supernatural events. Major themes are the search for identity values. These themes are developed in a plot that describes the spiritual coming of age of Milkman Dead. The events of the plot combine the actual and imaginary the natural and the supernatural.

In her next novel *Tar Baby* (1980), Morrison gives a new twist to the familiar themes of the repudiation of racial identity and that of the conflict between material and spiritual values. *Tar Baby* is a young Black Women, Jadine Childs who is the niece of the millionaire's black servants Sidney and on dine. The novel begins Jadine has come to spend Christmas on the island to decide what do with the rest of her life. Her six years after *Tar Baby*, Morrison published *Beloved*, which explores and throws light on the history of the treatment that black female Slave have received from white ever since they were packed onto the slave ships that brought them to America. The central theme is moral one. The novel refers the child whom Sethe killed and who twenty years later, returns to her mother not only as her dead baby grown up but also as a personable to remember several previous incarnations all the way back to the middle passage and beyond that to Africa.

Morrison got her idea of sixth novel *Jazz* (1992) from a book of photographs of dead Harlem residents entitled, *The Harlem Book of the Dead* for which she wrote the introduction. The central character is Dorcas Manfred. She invented the events leading up to and following her death. Morrison's seventh novel *Paradise* (1998) breaks new ground because it does not focus on a single protagonist but develops a conflict between two opposed groups of people, because its central theme is that of bigotry among African Americans and because its vision of life has strong religious under tones. Then, Morrison seems to be at the height of her powers in her next novel *Love* (2003). This is a demanding novel and needs serious attention for its very rich and satisfying in it, Sweeps the readers into a subtle world that they need time to take in. In this novel the author packs mystery, suspense and multi strange tale told with extraordinary deftness.

Morrison's next novel is *A Mercy* (2008). *The Times* states it is "a beautiful and important book" where the issues the novelist explores go to the root of what humanity is". Her characters are as a matter of fact, contemporary human beings who are torn between varied worlds of sense and sensibility. They are also lampoons in the general life and suffer from existential dilemma. And at the latest novel of Morrison is *God Help the Child* (2015), which is set in a present day California overrun with Pedophiles and defective parents. The main characters sustained hurts in childhood. Bride is now a successful Cosmetics Business Woman. Sweetness was shocked by her daughter's blue black colour skin. Bride boyfriend Booker was a happy little boy in a happy family until his beloved older brother Adam was murdered by a child molester, leaving a hole in Booker's heart. The main theme of the novel is child abuse, trauma, colourism and segregation. Bride falsely testified her teacher a white woman named Ms. Sofia Huxley of sexually molesting her classmates. Bride's testimony inspires her mother. Bride decides to approach her former teacher, who has recently been released on Parole, to make recompense for her imprisonment, but Huxley greets Bride with vicious, disfiguring beat down. Bride calls her friend Brooklyn to cover her workload and her convalesce at home. During her recovery, Bride informs him of her pregnancy and also why she testified against Sofia in the Court room. At last they want care for the newborn, soon.

If any writers in Literature, they have their own Identity and they followed their own style of writing. Likewise, Toni Morrison is also followed her own style of writing and techniques in her works. Morrison's writing is intellectually challenging both when it comes to form and structure. A close analysis reveals, however, that it aims to question and discuss society's norms, as well as on a number of levels individual's behaviour. The aspect of social criticism is thus important in her fiction, revealed both in terms of plot and characterization. Her characters are as complex as her plots. Revealing the full story only in bits and pieces and avoiding chronological order, the structure of her narratives reflects the complexity of the real world and the people in it. Her narratives also clearly aim to criticize society. She reveals how human behaviour is, in part, socially and culturally constructed.

The theoretical perspectives and approaches most relevant in order to understand Morrison's fiction are consequently those that apply history and culture as a means of understanding and explaining literary texts. New Historicist Criticism may for instance help shed light on Morrison's writing as it looks at a work's discourse as something which is strongly linked to the society in which the author has created it. The gender codes in *Sula*, the oppressive environment in *The Bluest Eye*, and the complexity of sexuality and love in *Love* can all be recognized as aspects of society of the twentieth century, not only familiar to the author, but also to the reader. The reader too, is strongly linked to society its ideology and belief systems and will understand a work of literature accordingly. Morrison clearly demonstrates in her literature

sympathy for marginalized people through her portrayal of the most vulnerable members of society such as the children and the women in her fiction. She also clearly draws parallels between the oppression of blacks in America and the oppression within the black communities. The use of a social and cultural approach when analyzing Morrison is thus helpful, as her writing portrays behaviour as a social and cultural construct. The colloquial language that for example Morrison applies in her discourse is an example of how she draws on different aspects of black culture, which help make her stories representative of the time and place in which the stories are set.

As she weaves specific literary techniques such as stream of consciousness and magic realism with African American folk tradition, Morrison brings a beautiful complexity to the novel. Some kind of repetition of words which is almost musical and soothing not only to the ears of the characters in the novel, but also to the readers is typical of literature by many African American women writers.

Another literary technique that Morrison appoints apart from magic realism is the stream of consciousness technique. Stream of consciousness is a method of narration that describes in words the flow of thoughts in the minds of the characters. The term was coined by a psychologist called William James in his research *The Principles of Psychology*, where he used the metaphor of a 'river' or a 'stream' to describe the thought processes of man. The Stream of Consciousness style of writing is marked by the sudden rise of thoughts and lack of punctuations. The use of this narration mode is generally associated with the modern novelist and short story writers of the 20th Century (<http://b.scorecardresearch.com>).

Toni Morrison's stories are fascinating. She weaves together characters, settings, traumas, and journeys in such compelling language. The dreary settings can be amazing. A house is bathed in red light. A cold room is stuffed with love. Morrison shows how what can often be overlooked or devalued holds much significance. She honors folktales and black folks, humble beginnings and uncertain yet faintly hopeful futures. Her words and language are deftly chosen. Sometimes she hints at something that upon second reading evokes something much deeper. Other times she bashes over the head with something, it's done in such an unexpected way. Sometimes the bleakness of her stories becomes overwhelming. *Paradise* begins with someone being shot. Intense trauma happens in all her novels. But with her novella, the entire trauma was included but they could only be touched on superficially. A story well told is a story well told, and Morrison is a master of language and storytelling. She's poetic and to the point.

Morrison is famous for her use of fragmented narrative with multiple perspectives. Her use of different narrative styles alternating between first and third person omniscient gives her the freedom to do two interesting things. On the one hand, she uses Claudia to convey the

thoughts and perceptions of a nine years old girl, giving the novel an aspect of innocence. On the other hand, the use of third person omniscient narration allows the novel to cover broad sweeps of time and space like when we get the history of the Breedlove's storefront or stories about Soaphead Church's white ancestors. This opens the novel up, giving it historical depth, and allowing us to see how the racial issues of the past are still impacting these characters in the 20th century. Sometimes the contrast between speakers is particularly vivid. This makes the narrative more inclusive, giving rural, less educated characters the opportunity to describe their own experience in their own language.

Morrison wants her prose to recreate black speech, "to restore the language that black people spoke to its original power" for her, language. She hears her prose as she writes, and during the revision process she cuts phrasing which sounds literary or written rather than spoken. She rejects critic's assertions that her prose is rich; to those who say her prose is poetic, she responds that metaphors are natural in black speech. Morrison wants readers to participate in her novels, to be involved actively. Readers are encouraged to create the novel with her and to help construct meaning. Morrison's style combines these unrealistic elements with a realistic presentation of life and characters. This mixture has been called "magical realism". Initially she objected to the label 'magical realism' feeling it diminished her work or even dismissed it. Now, however, she acknowledges that it does identify the supernatural and unrealistic elements in her writing. In *The Bluest Eye* the 'magical' appears in the failure of marigolds to bloom and the belief by some members of the community in Soaphead Church's powers.

In *God Help the Child*, most of the characters are told from a first person point of view based on whichever character is named in the title of the chapter. Each of the main characters has the opportunity to express their feelings to others and within their own thoughts. During some of the characters accounts they give information about what is happening in the present, but each character also at one time or another, shares flashbacks from the past to help the reader better to understand the situation or the feelings that are going on in the present. Learning the backgrounds of the characters help the reader to understand from what angle they see the world, Knowing intentions behind each character's action. In this novel, Morrison uses the flashbacks and magic realism techniques (<http://b.scorecardresearch.com>).

This dissertation deals with the Child Abuse and the Treatment of Colourism in Toni Morrison's first novel *The Bluest Eye* and in her latest novel *God Help the Child*. These two novels come under the theory of Traumatic Theory by Judith Hermen. Toni Morrison talks about the main issues of childhood trauma and colourism how its affect the children in these novels. Then it deals with this question profoundly that Morrison makes it her mission to show the world how destructive this act of child abuse is to the victims' psyche as well as to the community's



stability, steadiness, and progress. Indeed, from *The Bluest Eye* (1970) to *God Help the Child* (2015), Morrison endeavors to communicate the suffering of a hundred if not thousands of children under abuse and molestation. In *God Help the Child*, the protagonist Bride and other characters like Rain and Hannah are like “Pecolas” because in these novels deals about how the black’s skin colour affect their lives and how the characters are victimized by child abuse. Racism, patriarchy and sexism are part of the ideology in the societies that Morrison portrays. By telling the stories of young girl’s exposure to sexual harassment and how this affects them, and by showing how marginalized people in *The Bluest Eye* like the poor Breedlove’s along with the prostitutes and in *God Help the Child*, Morrison explores the characters victimized by child molestation, childhood trauma and how this affects their life and are made vulnerable by the norms of society. Morrison’s writing explains human behaviour as something which is result of and marked by social and cultural constructs (31).

This project entitled Representation of Child Abuse and Treatment of Colourism in Toni Morrison’s *God Help the Child* and *The Bluest Eye*. There are four chapters in this dissertation. The first chapter “Introduction” focuses on the title, African American Literature and author’s biography. The second chapter “Child Abuse in *God Help the Child* and *The Bluest Eye*” focuses the main theme of child abuse in these two novels. The third chapter “Treatment of Colourism in *God Help the Child* and *The Bluest Eye*” exposes how the blacks affect by colourism and especially the main characters of these two novels. The fourth chapter “summation” deals with the narrative technique of Toni Morrison’s works.

#### Note of Documentation:

The researcher has adhered to the Methodology suggested in MLA Hand Book for writers of Research Papers, Seventh edition.

## CHAPTER II

### CHILD ABUSE IN TONI MORRISON'S *GOD HELP THE CHILD* AND *THE BLUEST EYE*

Toni Morrison's one of the main thematic concerns is child abuse and trauma which is dealt in her latest novel *God help the Child* and her premier novel *The Bluest Eye*. She has actually dealt with all sorts of child abuse and maltreatment in her novels. In her recent novel *God Help the Child*, Morrison brings into a very complicated childhood trauma stories like her first novel *The Bluest Eye* in which all of the characters suffer some kind of child abuse like neglect, witnessing, domestic violence, emotional and psychological abuse, molestation, sexual abuse etc. She shows how the child exposure to traumatic experiences has a dramatic and far reaching effect into adulthood such as psychological, emotional, behavioural and social problems. Morrison explores the curse of the past, the legacy of slavery and its aftermath and it holds on the present, through the fact of colourism. In these two novels of Toni Morrison's *God Help the Child* and *The Bluest Eye* clearly deal about the term racism and it is based on the skin colour result in childhood trauma. Children may adopt coping strategies of resist maltreatment or they may internalize oppression and accept self-loathing.

Violence generates violence, a vicious cycle which will eventually make the victims, future victimizers. Therefore, *God Help the Child* and *The Bluest Eye* are not only about the Child abuse and trauma, but also about transformation and healing. Morrison describes the characters restorative journeys towards redemption. Through the analysis of Manuela Lopez Ramirez's article "*Childhood Cuts Festered and Never Scabbed Over*": *Child Abuse in Toni Morrison's God Help the Child* explains Toni Morrison has always been truly concerned about children and the way we treat them which is really important to her. In "Remarks Given at Howard University Charter Day Convocation", she delivered a speech on March 2, 1995 to the audience Morrison asserts

It's important to know that nothing is more important than our children. And if our children don't think they are important to us, if they don't think they are important to themselves, if they don't think they are important to the world, it's because we have not told them. We have not told them that they are our immortality. (Ramirez 146)

Morrison's own experience as a child highlights the paramount importance of protecting children. In an interview with Jerry Gross (2015), she tells the story of how her father, who was not a violent man, threw a white man down the stairs thinking he was after his daughters, and how Morrison felt protected. She asserts that

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*Representation of Child Abuse and Treatment of Colourism in Toni Morrison's God Help The Child and The Bluest Eye*, M.Phil. Dissertation

I think his (Morrison's father) own experience in Georgia would have made him think that any white man bumbling up the stairs toward our apartment was not there for any food. And since we were little girls, he assumed that, I think he made a mistake, I mean, I really think the man was drunk. I don't think he was really trailing us. But the interesting thing was, A, The White Man was—he survived, B, the real thing for me was I thought—I felt profoundly protected and defended [...], so I didn't think of it as, oh, look, my father's a violent man. He never quarreled with us. He never argued with us. He was dedicated and he was sweet. So he did this thing to protect his children. (Ramírez 146)

Child abuse is at the core of *The Bluest Eye*, Morrison's first novel. She tells the life story of Pecola, a girl who succumbs to insanity after the terrible maltreatment and abuse she goes through in her family and in her own community. In fact, child abuse, racism and long standing victimization, both domestic and communal have been dealt with extensively in Morrison's works. Morrison's latest work *God Help the Child* echoes the evils of child molestation, neglect and abuse.

Morrison is also interested in figuring out ways to actually heal the horrors of the past. She expresses how her characters confront their pain and suffering and reclaim their lives. Her novels *God Help the Child* and *The Bluest Eye* are a tale of childhood abuse and trauma. But these are also a tale of healing and redemption. Child abuse and trauma are one of the main themes in these novels. Violence, as a whole, is central to the African American experience. Black people have suffered all the victimization and oppression, alienating them from their own culture. The intergenerational transmission of violence brings the childhood trauma and maltreatment. Children and youth are in the United States have the experience of violence and molestation, a fact that is even higher for black individuals. The United States has one of the worst records among industrialized nations. An average of children between four and seven suffer under the problem of child abuse and neglect every day.

According to a 2012 UNICEF report, the United States was ranked seventh out of 10 countries that represent more than half of all child homicides. In the report abuse and crimes do not often account for many of the other horrors like racism insults, neglect, guilt that children face. Before 19<sup>th</sup> century child abuse was a socially unspeakable fact. In the 1960s C. Henry Kempe and his colleagues identified and recognized 'Child Abuse', creating awareness and exposing its reality. They conceptualized The Battered Child Syndrome, which characterizes the clinical manifestations of severe physical abuse in young children. Then in the 1970s, doctors started to work on the detection of child abuse and in the 1974, Congress passed the law of Child

Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA), which provides support for the prevention assessment, investigation, prosecution and treatment of child abuse. The World Health Organization (1999) defines child abuse in the following forms like child abuse or maltreatment constitutes all forms of physical and emotional ill treatment, sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or commercial or other exploitation resulting in actual or potential harm to the child's health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power" (147).

There are several aspects of the victim's describe the personal experience in the aftermath of child sexual abuses. Subject recruitment involves a multistage stratified probability sample of 126 African American and 122 White women, ages' from 18 to 36 years in Los Angeles County, matched on education, marital status, and the presence of children. Few ethnic differences relate to the initial response and short term effects of the victim's experiences. Lasting effects of sexual abuse include sexual problems for women of both ethnic groups, but avoidance of men resembling the perpetrator identifies among African American women. Ethnicity may be a contributing factor to other adjustment relate ting to the problems that African American women encounter in addition to their child sexual victimization.

Child abuse is a global problem. Toni Morrison concerns this theme in his novels. Toni Morrison's latest novel, *God Help the Child*, explores the damaging effects of racism on motherhood and the dramatic impact of toxic mothering upon children. The institution of patriarchal motherhood fails to enact the critical tasks of mother work preservation, nurturance and cultural bearing, while mothering is a potential site of empowerment of black children and African American culture. African American authoritarian parenting style, associated with patriarchal motherhood, has a correlation with diverse factors, such as the legacy of slavery and its survival strategies, low income and single parent households and the disruption of the mother line. Motherhood distorted by racism cannot develop a sense of black selfhood in children, thwarting their chances of survival, resistance and subversion of racist ideologies.

In the novel *God Help the Child* begins with Sweetness, the protagonist mother tells the story of her daughter Lula Ann Bride well's birth. Toni Morrison portrays the young girl's sufferings in her childhood and how they are segregated by their own mothers and their own community. In *God Help the Child*, Sweetness' family is an example of transmission of racist ideologies and attitudes due to the rupture in the mother line. Sweetness cannot enforce a positive mothering, fostering a meaningful racial identity in her child because of her self-contempt. Like Jadine or her grandmother, she identifies herself with the values of the dominant culture. From the first moment as soon as her daughter is born, she knows "something was

wrong. Really wrong. She was so black she scared me. Midnight Black, Sudanese Black” (*God Help the Child* 5). At first Sweetness describes her features of her skin colour.

Sweetness lives in a white dominated racist urban environment, seems to have lacked, as a child and as an adult, the other mothering that rural black communities can provide. Sweetness’s racially confused self is disclosed when she sees her daughter, Lula Ann, for the first time. The exposure of her unmistakably African ancestry turns her world upside down. Owing to racial discrimination and segregation, blacks have come to incorporate racist stereotypes, perceiving themselves according to the ideals of the white dominated society. African Americans have embraced white aesthetics as desirable, since by mixing freely with whites the self-disgust inculcated in them would vanish. Assimilation would apparently let them enter the mainstream, a phenomenon that affects specially women who are judged by their straight hair or light skin. Black females need to be beautiful as defined by white society. Sweetness’ attitude towards Lula Ann is a response to the hegemonic discourse of female beauty. Morrison’s work is crowded with typical mother figures, which searches for self-realization and self-worth in a world that has deprived them of these values.

Children are ill-treated by people who have some power over them and also by their own community. They are weak so they can be easily oppressed psychologically or physically. They become par excellence, the victims of scapegoating. Child abuse can be perpetrated by the family or someone from the community. When trust has an important role, or even from other people, Children are completely dependent on their parents or caregivers. Their world revolves around them as they are the primary source of love, safety, nurturance, encouragement acceptance, positive attention and support. Even though most parents want the best for their offspring, some of them may emotionally, psychologically or even physically harm their children, because of stress, poor parenting skills, social isolation, racial self-loathing lack of available resources etc or because they were also victims of abuse. Among a myriad of co-variants are parent’s education, family composition, teenage pregnancy etc. Through Manuela Lopez Ramirez’s article “*What You Do To Children Matters*”: *Toxic Motherhood In Toni Morrison’s God Help the Child* analyzed the type of family has been regarded as a relevant factor in parenting styles; “Many single parents are find it difficult to function effectively as parents. They are less emotionally supportive of their children, have fewer rules, dispense harsher discipline are more inconsistent in dispensing discipline, provide less supervision, and engage in more conflict with their children” (114). The one parent family can be a key risk indicator associated with patriarchal maternal practices when, as in Sweetness’s case, it is combined with the mother’s self-loathing, a poor socio-economic status and a surrounding racist society. In addition to a highly trying environment, child rearing stress has been linked to the father’s absence, which leaves the parenting exclusively to the mother. Fathers and fathering are part of the nurturing that

guarantees children's psychological growth; "there must be shared responsibility both parents, for the child to begin to approach wholeness" (115).

In *God Help the Child*, after Lula Ann Bride well's birth, her mother Sweetness and her father Louise scared about her skin colour. It is a blue black. He accuses Sweetness and always fights with her. Louise is a porter. He does not consider Bride as his daughter. Sweetness is a housekeeper in a rich white couple house. Sweetness and Louise were high yellow, light skinned and with good hair. So they fell about their neighbours and if they know about Bride is their daughter her parents think how the people treat them and so they felt ashamed. These are all their feeling towards her black skin. So, Bride's father and mother always quarrel with each other. Suddenly Louise leaves his family. He goes off and sends a fifty dollar money order to his family once a month and Sweetness' night job at the hospital helps her and her daughter's welfare. Her mother thinks that before Bride's birth, she and her husband led a happy life for three years and because of her blackness they are separated. This frustration always hurts Sweetness and so she hates her daughter. She does not feed her and does not want to touch her. Soon she gives a bottle feeding to her daughter. She says "All I know is that for me, nursing her was like having a pick ninny sucking my teat. I went to bottle feeding soon as I got home" (*God Help the Child* 5).

Sweetness does not allow her daughter to call her as "Mother" or "Mama" instead of "Sweetness". Because she is scared about what others will think about Sweetness. And it they come know that the blue black girl called Sweetness as mother. So, she treats her harshly and she is a strict mother to her daughter. This helps her daughter to know how to behave then how to obey and not to make trouble. Authoritarian mothers more often use power assertive techniques to discipline their children. They usually play higher value on obedience and are more likely to use physical punishment and more commands, without explaining them. Sweetness' patriarchal motherhood is about maternal control, compliance and conformity. She thinks that she has to be Very careful in raising her daughter. She has to be strict, very strict.

Sweetness' destructive patriarchal mode of motherhood transmits racist ideologies and attitudes. Sweetness's self-hatred prevents her from handing down a positive racial image to her daughter. Her strictness and lack of affection destroy Lula Ann's sense of self. And so, Sweetness wants to believe that she was trying to protect her child from the racist society. As a mother she had a feeling of guilt when she attempts to convince herself that she was not a bad mother. Her words are at the beginning of the novel, "It's not my fault. So you can't blame me. I didn't do it and have no idea how it happened" (*God Help the Child* 5) reveal by her. Her feelings of guilt are concealed beneath her patriarchal toxic motherhood.



In this novel, Morrison talks about a critical aspect of motherhood, how mothering is highly impacted by a racially prejudiced society and the dramatic result that affects children which she has already explored in her first novel *The Bluest Eye*. Sweetness is an inter racial individual whose marginal and tragic between two worlds status makes her the victim of a race conscious society. Sweetness believes Lula Ann blue black skin will be her cross. So she has to protect her child from the society's racial prejudice. She does not want to take her out and she is also afraid of people's reaction on seeing the black baby. That is why Sweetness instructs her daughter to call her only by her name "Sweetness". Then she does not want to attend her daughter's school events. Then her intentions are one to teach Lula Ann coping skills, to survive people's cruel racism, which Sweetness has also experienced as an observer in her life. She recalls the incident and witnessing a group of white boys bullying a girl almost black as her daughter. They teased her. So she wants to protect her daughter and she does not want other people to know that Lula Ann is her daughter. She does not foster a positive racial identity in her daughter so she can resist racist practices. Conversely, she imposes on her the societal cultural norms, values and expectations of the dominant culture. Lula Ann's upbringing and disciplining are really harsh and even more when she is turning an adolescent. Her rearing was all about following rules, which she obeys her mother and says "I behaved and behaved and behaved". And yet, Lula Ann feels that

She never knew the right thing to do or say or remember what the rules were. Leave the spoon in the cereal bowl or place it next to the bowl; tie her shoelaces with a bow or a double knot; fold her socks down or pull them straight up to the calf? What were the rules and when did they change? (*God Help the Child* 78-79)

The impact of Sadism on Sweetness and Lula Ann as a victimizer and victim is appalling. Her constant rejection of her daughter as a result of her skin colour is a most deceitful form of emotional abuse.

Likewise, in Toni Morrison's first novel, *The Bluest Eye*, the principal forms of child abuse delineated in this novel include verbal abuse, physical abuse sexual abuse and psychological abuse. Child abuse in Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*, which is represented through children named Pecola Breedlove Frieda and young Cholly Breedlove. They get abused sexually, physically and psychologically. In this novel, child abuse is done by Cholly to Pecola, Henry to Frieda and Cholly's mother to Young Cholly. Racism makes the black people lead an oppressed life and a bad behaviour such as addiction to alcoholism and prostitution and becomes the root of child abuse. The victims get the traumatic effects and consequences in their personalities and behavioral consequences. Pecola Breedlove is the protagonist of the novel *The Bluest Eye*. Pauline Breedlove is the mother of Pecola showers her love and affection on her

white employer's child. In her family, there are four members. Cholly Breedlove is a father of Pecola, Pauline Breedlove is her mother and Sammy is her brother. Pauline does not want to give her love to her own children. She even scolds them and beats them because of their blackness. In her family Pecola is a young black girl. She always thinks that due to her ugliness her parents maltreat her. So, she longs for the blue eyes like whites. She believes that if she has blue eyes her ugliness will disappear, and she will gain the love and security which is desperately missing from her life. Pecola's mother wants to identify herself with the white woman who longs for beauty, romance love, recognition and desire to live an ideal feminine life. Deprived of the same, she develops self-hatred. She tries to explore herself as central rather than marginal. She becomes an ideal servant because that role practically fulfills all her needs. She compares the lovely house and the household things of her employer, Fishers with her own and neglects her house, her children and her husband. For her life at Fishers family is light, more delicate, and lovelier. She has found beauty, order, cleanliness and praise at Fishers residence. Power, praise and usury are hers in this house. Pauline keeps this order for herself and does not impose it on her children. She teaches her children fear of being clumsy, being like father who is not loved by God, "Into her son she beats a fear of growing up, fear of other people, fear of life" (*The Bluest Eye* 126).

Cholly, Pecola's father is an Orphan had always felt insecure and alienated as a child. He is rootless and in search of his self-identity. The rape of Pecola by her own father Cholly could be an attempt to recede to the days of his first love. His love towards Pecola changes into lust and ranges as he remembers the incident of his first act of intercourse, he was forced to perform in a flashlight by a white man. "Get on with it nigger", I said, "Get on with it" and make it good nigger, Make it good" (*The Bluest Eye* 146). The flashlight man laughed laughter of contempt and scorn. Cholly's first sexual experience leads to his hatred for women, hatred for his own race and his feeling of being unlovable. The combination of these things leads to the rape of his daughter. The incident tempts Cholly and so he rapes Pecola while she was doing her household works. Pecola tells about the rape to her mother Pauline. She does not want to hear her words and she does not believe Pecola. She beats her daughter. This unnatural rape is the distortion of his love for Pecola. Pecola becomes victim of her parents' discontentment. Her parents' self-hatred which is extended to their daughter has its roots in racial order in America which is the source of marginality Pecola experiences suffering at the hands of these negligent parents.

Morrison concerns with the ontological structures and mythological thought systems that blacks develop to define and reinforce their definition of self-existence. The hatred of the Breedlove family members for one another is the result of internalization of racist hatred. So Pecola attempts to change her fate by means of prayer for the bluest eyes. Each night without fail she prays for the blue eyes. She believes that blue eyes could change everything. Her longing for the blue eyes makes her own defeat and makes her as a mad person.

Similarly, in Toni Morrison's *God Help the Child*, certain incidents affect Lula Ann mentally and physically. In this novel, not only the central character is affected by child molestation and also other characters of Rain and Booker's brother Adam also affect by child molestation. Child molestation or pedophile is a form of child abuse in which an adult or older adolescent uses a child for sexual stimulation. The word pedophile is commonly applied indiscriminately to anyone who sexually abuses a child, but child sexual offenders are not pedophiles unless they have a strong sexual interest in prepubescent children. Under the law, child sexual abuse is often used as an umbrella term describing criminal and civil offenses in which an adult engages in sexual activity with a minor or exploits a minor for the purpose of sexual gratification. Forms of child sexual abuse include engaging in sexual activities with a child, indecent exposure, child grooming or using a child to produce a child. This type of abuse affects the children deeply. Lula Ann Bride well, when she enters her high school, she is countrified her name as Ann Bride. In her school days she testified against her schoolteacher named Mrs. Sofia Huxley. Bride's classmates are accused for molestation and no one to have the guts to testify against her. But Bride is one of them to have no fear to testify against her in court room. After, she sends to the Decagon Women's Correctional Centre, where she served twenty five years, who helped to put Sofia behind bars by testifying at her trial.

Despite the fact that Bride helped put Sofia away, she has been planning for a year to do good deed for the ex con upon her release, because she falsely to testifying against Sofia Huxley. So she wants to release her in the Decagon. After Sofia's release from the jail, Bride carries gifts to help Sofia get started in her life, she has \$5000 in cash, \$ 3000 Continental Airlines gift certificate and a promotional box of YOU GIRL cosmetics all placed neatly into a brand new Louise Vuitton shopping bag. When Bride becomes a popular businesswoman, she wants to help Sofia. She works for the cosmetic company named Sylvia Inc. She has actually been developed and is now owned by Bride herself. And she calls it, "YOU GIRL: cosmetics for your personal millennium". After her meeting with Sofia, Bride terribly attacked by Sofia because of Bride's testifying against Sofia. So she rejects Bride's offerings and terribly attacks her. Sofia's only relief is beating Bride until bleeding. Believing that, Bride sympathizes with Sofia Huxley, a child molester.

In this novel, Adam, Booker Starbern's brother is also affected by the child molester. Adam is Booker's oldest and closest brother. In their childhood, Adam had been sexually abused, then killed by a man referred to in the text as 'The nicest man in the world' (*God Help the Child* 120). And he also abused six children including Adam. They are Boise, Lenny, Adam, Matthew, Kelvin and Roland. Booker was deeply touched by this incident and becomes obsessed by his Bride's childhood ghosts; the narrative introduces other characters who suffered childhood

trauma. They are Rain and Hannah. Feeling the absence of Booker, Bride takes up a journey in search of him, which takes her from the urban city of California to a rural valley in an unknown forest. The journey was causes physical and emotional hardships the protagonist breaks her leg in the middle of her journey and takes refuge in a house owned by Steve and Evelyn till she recovers. However, Bride carries out her search for Booker and finally she meets him in Whisky Valley and together they rescued his aunt Q. Olive from fire accident. Booker and Bride reconciled and confessed their past secrets, Bride confesses that Mrs. Sofia Huxley was an innocent and the lie she told was for some reason and Booker in his turn she tells her that he has left her because he thought that she forgives a child molester like the one who once abused and killed his brother Adam. Besides, Bride makes another confession to Booker that she is pregnant. The couple accepts the child to come to the world and plan for a better future.

Bride, in her childhood days, is witnessed by Mr. Leigh. He is the landlord. Sweetness family pays the house rent to him correctly. He is a very strict person who collects his rent perfectly. If the people delayed to pay the rent, he would punish them severely. In his apartment there is a little boy delay to pay the rent. So, he maltreats him. He does kind of child molestation. Bride saw this incident through her window when Mr. Leigh saw Bride, who was only six years old. He shouts at her and called her “little nigger cunt!” (*God Help the Child* 55). Although she has never heard the words before, she felt the hatred and revulsion they carried with them. She was really pointing at the idea of Mr. Leigh. His nastiness or the curse he threw at me?” (*God Help the Child* 56) the emotional toll on children who is the witness, witnesses often experiences the effects of trauma, Sometimes with the same sympathy of those of the primary victims. After leaving Booker, Bride is addicted to drug and sexual relationship. For example, Bride’s driver tries to seduce her. She does not know his name. He is an employee to Bride. But he does not act like that. When he finished his relationship with Bride, she rushed to bathroom and knows about her intercourse with him with the help of sheath. When she realizes his using of sheath and then she feels free for their intercourse.

Then in search of Booker, she takes a journey. During that journey she met with a car accident. At that time Steve and Evelyn, the couple rescued Bride. She needs a six week for her recovery. So she stays at their house. In their house she meets Raisin actually her name as Rain, the couple calls her as Rain because they found her in the place of Rain. Raisin is also rejected by her parents. Her mother is a prostitute, so she sells her daughter to another prostitute. After her parents neglect she attacked by the child molester and escapes from them. After, she was rescued by the couple and stays with them. They were taken care her. Bride and Rain shares their grievances and become close to each other. In this novel, *God Help the Child*, negligence plays an important role in the character of mother. When the parents neglect their children, their life became slaughter.

The same idea of sexual abuse and maltreatment followed in Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* and also, he talks about the abuse of psychologically. Remember one incident sexual abuse occurs when adults use a child for sexual purposes or involves a child in sexual acts drunk and beats his wife and children. He rapes his own daughter in two times as a result she becomes pregnant with his child. Cholly is notorious for his indiscipline and awkwardness. In one of his drunken stupors, he lights his own house on fire and burns it down. He is a dreadful father to both his kids. His blackness angers him, eventually leads him to believe he is ugly, and disagreeable. He strongly believes that he does not deserve a better life. He always uses his anger negatively by hurting those around him.

Pecola is an easy prey to Cholly because she is a child and has no power or control over adults. She is a female and no knowledge has been imparted to her to oppose any form of oppression. Pecola has to face sexual abuse at the hands of her father Cholly. She is forced to participate in a horrendous sexual act, which is just intended towards the physical gratification of her father. He rapes her regardless of the outcome. He is more powerful than Pecola, so makes her the victim. This is a form of incest, which leaves Pecola in a psychological trauma. Cholly's rape results in impregnating Pecola. The whole community, both blacks and whites start to hate her for carrying her father's baby. Social stigma of Pecola's sexual abuse compounds her psychological harm. By raping Pecola, her father has killed her infinite number of times. Her mother Pauline Breedlove neglected Pecola's complaints to her and beats her. By neglecting her and not consoling her, Pauline indirectly made Pecola die infinite times.

Sexual abuse has also happened for other characters as well as in Toni Morrison's *God Help the Child*. Rain who is neglected by her parents, also experiences sexual abuse and molestation through her mother. Rain, even before the age of six, has to endure atrocious life because of her mother, who is a prostitute. Another character Hannah in this novel is also molested by her own father. Hannah is a daughter of Queen Olive. She is the aunt of Booker Starbarn. She was rumored to have had many husbands, one a Mexican, then two white men, four black men, one Asian, but in a sequence to one recalled. Once Booker says of Hannah to Bride,

There was a thing with Hannah. Rumor in the family was that Queen ignored or dismissed the girl's complaint about her father the Asian one, I believe or the Texan. I don't know. Anyway, she said he fondled her and Queen refused to believe it. (*God Help the Child* 170)

Hannah is also neglected by her mother Even Rain and Lula Ann Bride well are also neglected by her mother. So, they are like Pecola in this novel *God Help the Child*. Child neglect is when parents or caregivers do not give the care, supervision, affection, and support needed for a child's health, safety and wellbeing. Child neglect includes various types, Physical neglect and inadequate supervision, emotional neglect, medical neglect and educational neglect.

Many of Morrison's mothers neglect their own children. There are mothers who neglect their children when they are adolescents. Cholly's mother in *The Bluest Eye* abandons him soon after his birth. His life is negatively impacted by his inability, abandoned by her father before his birth and abandoned by his mother nine days after his birth. Cholly's great aunt says about his mother, "your mama didn't name you nothing. The nine days wasn't up before, she throws you on the junk heap" (*The Bluest Eye* 131). In this novel, mothers do not care about their daughters. In Morrison's last novel, many mothers are seen to be neglecting by their children. Child abuse grazes sharp scar through Toni Morrison's *God Help the Child*. The novel is a brisk modern day tale with shades of the imaginative cruelties invested on children.

Toni Morrison seems to be frustrated with the undue suffering that abused children have to undergo. Morrison also stats to establish this in her first novel *The Bluest Eye*, which is all about the abuse of an eleven year old girl Pecola, who finally succumbs to the abuse by becoming insane. In her eleventh novel *God Help the Child*, there are many 'Pecolas' to suggest that the problem is too much to bear. Initially, Morrison is used to talking about child abuse from inside the family. In this novel, there are many illustrations of criminal offence against children. So she portrays many children as victims. In some ways, Morrison's latest novel is reminiscent of her debut novel, *The Bluest Eye*.

In *The Bluest Eye*, also the children are tolerating the most of all of society's illnesses. They are the truest victims of Poverty and Racial prejudice. Racially some of the characters are abused. They are light skinned. They follow the white people's lifestyle and admire them. In this novel Geraldine is a light skinned lady, Junior is her son. Junior is also a black boy like Pecola. Her mother does not allow him to play with other children. And she does not talk to him, but she fulfills her every other desire to him. She fulfills his needs always. She has a cat in her house. She loves her cat. In her society, the white people teach their children like this way. They say

White kids; his mother did not like him to play with niggers. She had explained to him, the difference between colored people and niggers. They were easily identifiable. Colored people were neat and quiet; niggers were dirty and loud. (*The Bluest Eye* 85)



So, he used to play with black boys in his school. His blackness of rejection makes him ruder. So, he always does nasty things. He plays only with Ralph Nisensky, who was two years younger, wears glasses, and doesn't want to do anything. Junior enjoys bullying girls. When they get angry on him, it makes him feel good. Everything is done by him, but he says his mother, everything was done by Bay Boy. He lied to his mother and it upsets his mother. Then he meets Pecola in the Playground. He has already seen her and knows that she is always alone. He invites her to his house. In his house, he asks her to see the kittens. He bulls her into another room. She was deep in admiration of the flowers when junior said

“Here!” Pecola turned. “Here is your kitten!” he screeched. And he threw a big black cat right in her face. She sucked in her breath in fear and surprise and felt in her mouth. The cat clawed her face and chest in an effort to right itself, then leaped nimbly to the floor. (*The Bluest Eye* 87-88)

He laughed on seeing her crying. He said “you can't get out. You're my prisoner,” (88). This kind of attitude makes him feel happy. Then he kills his cat and when his mother comes, he lies to that Pecola has killed the cat. So, his mother scolds Pecola and says “Get Out,” she said her voice quiet. “You, nasty little black bitch. Get out of my house” (*The Bluest Eye* 90).

Pecola is abused mentally and physically by her own community. Criminal offence expresses in *God Help the Child*, when Bride witnesses as a child in the beginning of the novel there is an anonymous little boy, whose rapes Bride saw that, and she is unable to stop. This is an example for criminal offence.

Thus, Toni Morrison has written eleven novels. The first ten novels have a lot of accounts on the issues of child abuse. However, in the latest novel, *God Help the Child*, child molestation and abuse forms the primary theme of the novel. Many characters in the novel are abused or molested. Toni Morrison seems to be so much distributed by the issues that she talks about it so much in her latest novel. Even the title of her latest novel has the word ‘Child’ in it and is such that one is asking help for the abused children. It is like asking ‘God’ to help the suffering children. It is a novel written to arouse awareness about child abuse. In Morrison's first novel *The Bluest Eye* captures the spirit of the 1940s. She was a child and always deemed as ugly and inferior.

Through the character of Pecola, Morrison has highlighted the plight of the black girl in the society dominated by the white and the ways her mother neglected her in childhood expressed in this novel. In this novel, the characters suffer not only because of their poverty, but because of colour. The prevalence of sexual violence in the novel suggests that racism is not the

only thing that distorts black girlhood. There is also a pervasive assumption that women's bodies are available for abuse. The refusal on the part of parents to teach their girls about sexuality makes the girl's transition into sexual maturity deal with their trauma and move along. It is not all about you and your little trauma.

Morrison focuses on the need to put down traumatic past and the need of self-forgiveness and self-acceptance. She seems to hope that despite the deep rooted damage inflicted by child abuse, black individual can overcome it and live the present fully and intensely. Then she exposes the damage adults inflict upon children and the lasting impact it has on their lives. So child abuse is a global problem. The real brunt and burden that comes as a result of abuse of children can be intolerable. The victims suffer the most. They lose their sense of survival and may go insane. Toni Morrison emphasizes the importance of recognizing and exploring this disastrous evil of 'Child Abuse' in order to prevent it. 'Child Abuse' results in the development of a psychological barrier that prevents the normal development of the child. Abuse destructs the tender self and mind.

Thus, Child abuse in her novels has devastating outcomes when compared to the results of maternal child murders seen in her novels. This chapter analyses the child abuses in Morrison's novel and the way it affects the community. These two novels are compared under the theme of child abuse and childhood trauma. It is child abuse that causes more traumas to the self and could result in complete extinction of one's mind. Then it categorizes the abuses of children by Morrison's mothers and discusses the behavior of the abusive mothers who are factual murderers of 'self' and also analyses the effects of such abuse in the lives of the victims and as well as others around them. Above all are the issues of child abuse in Toni Morrison's *God Help the Child* and *The Bluest Eye*.

### CHAPTER III

## TREATMENT OF COLOURISM IN TONI MORRISON'S *GOD HELP THE CHILD* AND *THE BLUEST EYE*

A critique of Toni Morrison's latest novel *God Help the Child* and her premier novel *The Bluest Eye* expatiates on the traumatic experiences of an African American mother and her two black daughters. And also, these two novels explore the impact of colourism. Some of the characters are affected by the colourism. Numerous factors can contribute to "race" (including ancestry). Therefore, racial categorization does not solely rely on skin colour. Skin colour is only one mechanism used to assign individuals to a racial category, but race is the set of beliefs and assumptions assigned to that category. Racism is the dependence of social status on the social meaning attached to race; Colourism is the dependence of social status on skin colour alone. In order for a form of discrimination to be considered colourism, differential treatment must not result from racial categorization, but from the social values associated with skin colour. Research has found extensive evidence of discrimination based on skin colour in criminal justice, business, labor market, housing, health care, media and politics in the United States and Europe. Lighter skin tones are seen as preferable in many countries in Africa and Asia. Many studies report lower private sector earnings for racial minorities, although it is often difficult to determine the extent to which this is the result of racial discrimination.

*Treatment of Colourism in Toni Morrison's God Help the Child: A Gynocritical Perspective* by Sebin Justine analyzed Colourism is a term popularized by Alice Walker and she is the first person to use this term colourism in her book *In Search of Our Mother's Gardens* (1983). As she defines colourism as a "prejudicial or preferential treatment of same race people based solely on their colour" (73), she describes prejudice or discrimination based on skin pigment or lack of it. Colourism is not racism. It is a process of discrimination which light skinned people of colour of the same race show over their dark skinned counterpart. It can be found even in a mother's neglect of her own daughters. But black Americans are not the only people obsessed with how light or dark a person's skin is. Colourism is a societal ill, felt in many places all around the world, and including Latin America, East and Southeast Asia, the Caribbean and Africa. Here in the U.S., such a diverse population with citizens hailing from all corners of the earth, our brand of colorism is both homegrown and imported. And make no mistake, white Americans are just as "colorist" as their brown brothers and sisters.

In the 21st century, as America becomes less white and the multiracial community formed by interracial unions and immigration continues to expand, colour will be even more significant than race in both public and private interactions. Because a person's skin colour is an irrefutable visual fact that is impossible to hide, whereas race is a constructed, quasi-scientific

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*Representation of Child Abuse and Treatment of Colourism in Toni Morrison's God Help The Child and The Bluest Eye*, M.Phil. Dissertation

classification that is often only visible on a government form. In the meantime, skin colour will continue to serve as the most obvious criterion in determining how a person will be evaluated and judged. In this country, because of deeply entrenched racism, the dark skin is demonized, and light skin wins the prize. And that occurs precisely because this country was built on principles of racism. It cannot be overstated that if racism didn't exist, a discussion about varying skin hues would simply be a conversation about aesthetics. But that's not the case. The privileging of light skin over dark is at the root of an ill known as colourism.

The main reason for emergence of colourism is the desire for beauty, desire for blue eyes and degrade about their blackness. These are all the causes for the colourism. These themes have also dominated Morrison's non-fictional endeavours. She once argued for the desegregation of the American canon, and in *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination* (1992), she advanced the proposition that her country's literary tradition was not as it had been made to look naturally and necessarily white, but sculpted to appear that way, to free her nation's cultural history, from the supposed taint of darkness. This sanitizing and self-deceiving impulse was, Morrison held, not merely detrimental to those with dark skin: it was a "savage" way of approaching literary history that was ruining the intellectual, mental and moral health of the entire populace. The chimera of whiteness was "an inhuman idea".

Toni Morrison's *God Help the Child* and *The Bluest Eye* stand out as a critique of the culture's idea of beauty. Its idea is based on the racial prejudice and racial discrimination. The culture's proposition is that black people are ugly and white people are beautiful. It is emphasized in movies through bills and in their glances. In these novels the black people think that their blackness is ugly. This is the main reason for their defeat.

Morrison explores the term colourism clearly in his novels. Some of the incidents make clear to identify colourism plays in her novels. Almost 30 years later, in her stark novel *Paradise* (1997), she turned to consider the ways in which the cultural politics of the late 1970s were inflected by the language and "theory" of racial superiority. In *God Help the Child* (2015), Morrison set herself the task of imagining the ways in which inter-generational love can be thwarted by the forms of triumphalism and deception that arise from the lure of "colourism". For example, in *God Help the Child*, Bride the protagonist of this novel describes by her mother Sweetness in this way, "the Midnight black, Sudanese black" (*God Help the Child* 3). Bride was rejected as a child by her light skinned mother, who has been poisoned by the strain of colour and class anxiety still present in black communities. Bride's father Louise is also not ready to accept the child's dark skin. He deserts the family accusing Sweetness of infidelity. She says

“It broke our marriage to pieces. We had three good years together but when she was born, he blamed me and treated Lula Ann like she was a stranger—more than that, an enemy”. (*God Help the Child* 5)

Bride grows up, pinched by hunger and shame and yearning for love and acceptance. Bride says of her mother

Distaste was all over her face when I was little, and she had to bathe me. I used to pray she would slap my face or spank me just to feel her touch. I made little mistakes deliberately, but she had ways to punish me without touching the skin she hated bed without supper, lock me in my room. (*God Help the Child* 31)

Bride grows up without love, tenderness, affection or apology. Sweetness makes it clear that she wants to protect her child from a world that would be even more inclined to punish her for the colour of her skin. While Sweetness apologizes for her child’s dark skin, what she will not apologize for is how she sees the world and how she raises her child. She says, “Some of you probably think it’s bad, a bad thing to group ourselves according to skin colour. The lighter, the better- in social clubs, neighborhoods, churches, sororities even coloured schools. But how else can we hold on to a little dignity?” (*God Help the Child* 4).

This is what makes it so difficult to judge sweetness’s choices. She should know better, but her choices have been shaped by the realities of being blackish in a white world, a world where the lighter your skin; the higher you climb. Bride colludes with her classmates to accuse their teacher Mrs. Sofia Huxley of sexually molesting them. Bride’s testimony inspires Sweetness to show, if only once, affection for her daughter publicly. But her innocent teacher is sentenced for twenty years imprisonment.

Later, as an adult, Bride has found a way to be somewhat comfortable in her own skin. She is a successful executive of a cosmetic company, making money, running with all the right crowds. She is blue black beautiful kind of woman, who turns heads wherever she goes. She is tall, elegant and wore a white dress only, the better to reflect her beauty. And still her past is with her. She wants to express her beauty. So, she wears a white dress only. She creates her own impact on beauty.

Toni Morrison is the one of the great contemporary analysts of race and identity. In *The Bluest Eye*, her debut novel of 1970, she introduces us to the lives of the members of a poor black family in 1940s Ohio, to address the pernicious phenomenon of racial self-loathing. In *The Bluest Eye*, Toni Morrison implicates colourism in order to illuminate the intrapersonal

hatred within the black community by characterization, and also includes the negatives of sexual exploitation by including the sexual initiations of some of the characters, to convey to the reader of a community's responsibility to act out against sexual violence.

Likewise, in Toni Morrison's first novel *The Bluest Eye*, Claudia MacTeer is the narrator. The analysis of Shahaji V. Gaikwad's article *Pecola of The Bluest Eye: A Juvenile Female Victim of Culture* discusses the novelist explores "the social and domestic aggression that could cause a child to literally fall apart" and lists, "a serious of rejections, some routine, some exceptional, some monstrous" that contribute to the fall" (8). The Breedlove family has fallen prey to the culture's ideas of beauty; they are forced to believe that they are ugly. The narrator tells us how their ugliness is unique and does not belong to them

[...] their ugliness was unique. No one could have convinced them that they were not relentlessly and aggressively ugly, Except for the father, Cholly. Whose ugliness (result of despair, dissipation, and violence, directed toward pretty things and weak people) was behaviour, or the rest of the family—Mrs. Breedlove, Sammy Breedlove, and Pecola Breedlove—wore their ugliness, put it on, so to speak, although it did not belong to them. (*The Bluest Eye* 36)

The narrator tries to find out the source of the Breedlove's ugliness and she comes to know that it stems from their conviction of it. It is the culture that has told them that they are ugly, and they have accepted it without any contradiction. All of them together convince the Breedlove that they are ugly thus affecting their attitude and their behaviour. The other factor that affects the Breedlove's interpersonal relationship is poverty. The narrator calls their poverty as "traditional and stultifying". It does not allow them to generate new ideas of life, the ideas that will help them to maintain relationship between them in good terms. Pauline Breedlove and Cholly Breedlove both are husband and wife. They are always quarreling with each other. They begin their quarrel for their need of money and desire for beauty like the whites. The relationship between Pecola and her mother is devoid of love and compassion. Pecola's calling her mother as Mrs. Breedlove suggests formality of their relationship. Distinctions based on skin color and results in the favourable or unfavourable treatment of individuals based on the lightness or darkness of their skin color. Pecola's first experience with sexuality is the beginning of her menstrual cycle. The situation proves to be humiliating because she is not aware of what it was. Her first sexual encounter is when Cholly rapes her. However, men can sleep around with whoever they wish. Sexuality is associated with violence and humiliation, recurring imagery of women sexuality as negative prevalence of sexual violence suggests women's bodies are available for abuse. Women who openly accept their sexuality is ruined. Black girls in the novel are victims, sexually and socially powerless. Sex can potentially be fraught with peril. Parents



refuse to teach their girls about sexuality. Women labeling other women encourage men to treat women like sexual objects. Pecola's mother never tells a word against her husband's act of sexuality with her daughter. But she beats her daughter terribly. There is no single moment in the novel when the mother confides things of life with her daughter. Instead of love, Pauline fills up her children's mind with fear—fear of everything

[...] she [...] taught them fear: fear of everything, fear of being like their father, fear of not being loved by God, fear of madness like Cholly's mother. Into her son she beat a loud desire to run away, and into her daughter she beat a fear of growing, fear of other people, fear of life. (*The Bluest Eye* 126)

Mrs. Breedlove puts forth an example of a mother who could not bring up her children properly. Fear over comes Pecola whenever she encounters the boys and girls of her age. She cannot retaliate back when she is being harassed because she fears them. Mrs. Breedlove could have taught Pecola how to live in the culture of which she herself is the victim. Her past experiences could have been useful to her daughter, but she could not share them with her. She does not enjoy her own. Neither Cholly nor Pauline could enjoy their childhood. She fantasizes about love of men touching her when she is fifteen. She wants to be in company of someone and she may “lay her heart on his chest” (*The Bluest Eye* 115). Pauline's fantasy accounts for the absence of love in her life. Her fantasy comes true when Cholly Breedlove comes in her life taking her deformity like something special and endearing. Love flourished between them while they were living in the south their own region.

The condition in the North Lorain, Ohio where the lovers become husband and wife, are quite different. For the first time, Pauline feels alone in an alien culture. She is surprised by the presence of large number of white people while missing her people. She even marks the difference between the black people of the North and the black people of the South. In the North, Pauline suffers from “gloating glances and private snickers” of black women at her “way of talking and dressing”. She admires the white people. She wants to dress up like whites but purchasing new dresses requires money. The newly married couple quarrels over the purchase of new clothes bringing discord in their life. Their quarrel affects their life. The source of the quarrel between them lays in the alien culture that sets the standard of behaviour as it does of beauty. Pauline has no craze for new clothes, but she merely wants “other women to cast favorable glances her way”. She learns “the idea of romantic love” and “physical Beauty” in pictures that she starts attending. Her interest in white men affects her love to Cholly. She does not want to look at him. She takes Jean Harlow as the model of beauty and tries to look like her by doing the hair style as the star does.

Pauline is a mother who herself is the victim of wrong notion of beauty in pictures but their perception of it is wrong. He has become “an ideal servant” of the Fisherman family doing work all day. She stops trying to keep her own house, but because she does it in the Fisher’s house. She neglects her family because she finds beauty order, cleanliness and praise from the Fisher’s family. Because of the influence from whites Pauline makes herself beautiful by avoiding drinking and smoking and by attending church and making herself a virtuous woman. She moves to respectability and fills her children with fear of everything. She always scolds Pecola for silly reasons. For example, Claudia and Frieda visit her house because of their need for whiskey to drink. At that time, Maginot Line smiles at them. They meet Pecola in the Lake Shore Park. She sits there on the tiny railed stoop. She asks them that how they know she is in the park. They say that Maginot Line told them the where about Pecola. Pecola tells them the lady named as Miss Marie, but everyone calls her as Miss Maginot Line. Then they reached the house and get some whiskey from her without a reason. But the reason is Mr. Henry seduced Frieda, so the sisters think Frieda is to be ruined. So, Claudia suggests her to drink whiskey keep to herself beautiful. Pauline comes home and asks Pecola to get some purple juice for her master’s daughter. A little girl, Fisher’s daughter wants the purple juice. She calls Pauline as Mrs. Breedlove Polly. She calls Pauline as her nickname and asks the juice. As the pan is hot, it slips from her hand and the pie juice splashes on her legs. It is very painful to her. But unthinkingly, Pauline slaps her in front of her friends. She insults Pecola and says “Crazy fool [...] my floor, mess [...] look what you work [...] get on out [...] now that [...] crazy [...] my floor, my floor [...] my floor” (*The Bluest Eye* 107). Pauline is obsessed with cleanliness always. So she gives more importance to the floor rather than her painful leg, Pauline’s influence by the white’s family shatter’s her family.

In *God Help the Child*, Bride herself wants to enhance her beauty. So she wears white clothes always. One incident makes clear her desire for beauty. For example, Brooklyn Bride’s friend organizes the prelaunch party. She enriches herself to attract everyone in the party. She is the main attraction in one who invented YOU GIRL cosmetic business and helped create all the excitement about the brand. The location is a fancy hotel. She makes herself perfect with costly jewels and clothes. Bride’s mother is a light skinned. In her bedroom, she has so many cosmetics things like tweezers, cotton balls, that round box of Lucky Lady face powder, the blue bottle of Midnight in Paris cologne, hair pins in a tiny saucer, tissue, eyebrow pencils, Maybelline mascara, Tabu lipstick. Bride tries some of these things to enrich her blackness since Sweetness hates her. Then she wants to become a successful cosmetic businesswoman and also, she achieves her dream. Her desire for beauty spoils her own self. In her young age she has an illegal relationship with her driver even she does not know about her name itself. This is the way she spoils herself.

Colourism plays a vital role in *The Bluest Eye*. Pecola in her class was the only person to sit alone at a double desk. The first letter of her last name forces her to sit in the front of the room always. Marie is a girl who shares her desk with Luke Angelino. Pecola's teacher treats her badly. This discrimination goes to the extent that if any girls want to insult a boy or get an immediate response from him, they say "Bobby loves Pecola Breedlove! Bobby loves Pecola Breedlove!"

This insult brings her to the fact of absence of love in her life. She searches for love in the eyes of other people. She tries to see it in the blue eyes of Mr. Yacobowski. But he does not see her because for him there is nothing to see. Pecola sees no curiosity about her in the eyes of Mr. Yacobowski instead she sees vacuum and distaste

She looks up at him and sees the vacuum curiosity ought to lodge. And something more. The total absence of human recognition - the glazed separateness. She does not know what keeps his glance suspended. Perhaps because he is grown, or a man, and she is little girl. [...] yet this vacuum is not new to her, her blackness. All thinks in her are flux and anticipation. But her blackness is static and dread. And it is the blackness that accounts for that creates, the vacuum edged with distaste with white eyes. (*The Bluest Eye* 46-47)

In a white culture, Pecola is not recognized as a human being to the white people. She is an animal of distaste. The total absence of human recognition on the part of the white people fills her with shame and anger. Morrison considers racism as the African American's primary obstacle. Racism pushes the central characters in *God Help the Child* and *The Bluest Eye* towards the fringes of existence. These novels focus on intra-racial as well as inter-racial problems. The black community wants to conform to white standards of beauty, they desperately want to be accepted by the whites and this internalized racism is the root cause of central conflict in the novels. It makes one of the most powerful attacks on the relationship between white standards of female beauty and the psychological oppression of black women.

Morrison clearly explores the hatred of upper class white people in these novels. For example, in *God Help the Child*, Lula Ann Bride well at her age of six, she is victimized by Mr. Leigh. Mr. Leigh is the landlord. He demands the rent should be paid in cash before noon on the first day of the month. If anyone delays in paying the rent late, he punishes them harshly. This is an evident when Mr. Leigh physically harasses the boy who pays the rent late. He makes a sound like cat. Bride saw him through the windowsill. Mr. Leigh noticed Bride and starts to shout her vulgarly. He says, "Hey, Little nigger cunt! Close that window and the fuck Outta there!" (*God Help the Child* 55), she never heard the words like "nigger" or "cunt" before. This incident

relates to another incident in her past and her school days. A girl and three boys tease her. They heap a bunch of bananas on her desk and imitates like monkeys. They treat her like a freak, strange, soiling like a spill of ink on white paper. She does not complaint to the teacher. She is afraid of suspension or expulsion from school if she points against them. The author clearly exposes the upper class mentality in this novel.

In *The Bluest Eye*, the upper class characters are represented by Soaphead church and the family, living close to the playground. They do not allow themselves and their families to make friends with neither the poorest nor the middle class people. The novel's protagonist tries to conquer about with self-hatred. Every day she encounters racism, not just from white people but also from her own race. In their eyes she is too much dark and the darkness of her skin somehow implies that she is inferior. During the course of the novel Pecola undergoes two sorts of violation, mental and physical both prove devastating to her. After the sexual violation by her father, Pecola appears trying more to fulfill her desire of the blue eyes. She visits the shop of Mr. Soaphead Church, a miracle assured by him in his card. To Soaphead Church, Pecola is "pitifully unattractive" and an object of anger. The girl's demand challenges the professional skill of Mr. Soaphead who really wants to help her through a miracle. The exchanges between Pecola and Mr. Soaphead reveal the problem of Pecola's loneliness due to not having the blue eyes for the first time in the novel. She is articulating her desire to a white man. Her desire can never be fulfilled as it is beyond human capacity. Mr. Soaphead is unable to do it. He becomes successful only in making her believe that he has changed her eyes. Pecola fantasizes that her eyes are changed to blue and, as a result, other girls are jealous of her. She tells Claudia about her blue eyes. Pecola's insanity is the result of the white culture's force on the weak. It is standards of beauty on the one hand and it is critique of wrong notion of beauty on the other, Pecola Breedlove is pitied against two hostile worlds: one of the white worlds that entice her with values unnatural to her that is blue eyes, and then pitilessly rejects the other, her own people and her own culture. She is doubly pressed and victimized. Cholly, Pecola's father physically abuses her and Soaphead spiritually exploits her. Her search for acceptance finally annihilates her spiritual solitude.

Frieda, Pecola's friend also faces physical and psychological oppression. While her parents and sister are not at home, she is sexually harassed by Mr. Henry the tenant of MacTeer's family. Mr. Henry does physical touching to Frieda such as patting, brushing or pinching her. It makes Frieda psychologically depressed.

In these two novels, most of the characters like Sweetness, Bride, Cholly, Pauline Breedlove, Pecola, Frieda have a desire of beauty like whites have. But some characters like Claudia and Booker Starbern do not have any desire on beauty like white people. In *God Help*

*the Child*, Booker Starbern, who hates the upper class whites, is a lover of Bride. Both of them love each other. Suddenly Booker leaves her without reason. She feels depressed when Booker leaves her, she tells herself: “What’s going on? I’m young, I’m successful and pretty. Really pretty, so there! So why am I so miserable? Because he left me?” (*God Help the Child* 53). She shares everything with him. He is the only person she believes who loves her more. But her thinking is shattered, because he deserts her. She says, “I spilled my guts to him, told him everything: every fear, every hurt, every accomplishment, however small” (*God Help the Child* 53).

Without telling a reason he leaves her. She does not know the reason. Everything she shares with him may be her sharing is the cause of their distance, because she tells about the testifying against her teacher Mrs. Sofia Huxley to him. She wants to meet her in Decagon. But Booker does not know why she wants to meet her. Sofia is a child molester accusing by Bride. But why she wants to rescue her and helps her. He does not know. So, he gets angry on her. Her brother Adam is also a victim of child molestation. A man named nicest man is a child molester. He terribly molests Adam when he is fourteen. The nicest man in the world is caught tried and convicted of SSS, the Sexually Stimulated Slaughter of six boys. The nicest man in the world is an easy going, retired auto mechanic who solicited home repairs. There are six boys harassed by him. They are Boise, Lenny, Adam, Matthew, Kevin, and Roland. They are tortured and killed by him. So, Adam’s death makes a big loss in Booker’s life. He loves his brother very much. Bride’s helping nature especially towards the child molester Sofia, hurts Booker and does not say the reason to her and leave her. So, he hates the man and partly hates the white people. When Bride and Booker reunite, she explains Booker why she has lied about her teacher Sofia in the court room. She says; “I lied! I lied! I lied! She was innocent. I helped convict her, but she didn’t do any of that. I wanted to make amends, but she beat the crap out of me, and I deserved it” (*God Help the Child* 153).

Bride does not know about her mother’s love. So, she wants her love due to her testimony against her teacher only she gets that love from her. After her trial against Sofia, Sweetness looks at her with proud eyes and holds her hand for the first time she feels the love of her mother. So, she tells all to Booker. But Booker’s leaving hurts her. He thinks that she forgives child molester and wants to rescue her life. His thinking is wrong she has a reason for her release. He compares Sofia is like the nicest man in the world who murdered his brother Adam and molested him. After explaining about her trial Booker feels free. At last they reunion. Bride reveals that she is carry his child. She exclaims

I’m pregnant and it’s yours... A child. New life Immune to evil or illness,  
Protected from kidnap, beatings, rape, racism, insult, hurt, self-loathing

abandonment. Error free. All goodness. Minus wrath, so they believe. (*God Help the Child* 174-175)

As for as in *The Bluest Eye*, the narrator Claudia also has some hatred in her mind and heart. Claudia's task in the novel is not limited to the narration of the story only. She breaks the silence of Pecola and speaks of her feeling and acts and reacts for her. In the house of her parents Claudia is totally neglected, she and her sister simply point out and introduce to Mr. Henry. Claudia tells how she and her sister are taken as things like bathroom and closet. Claudia's desires are not taken seriously. She never asked about the gift on the Christmas occasion. Claudia tells that

Adults, older girls, shops, magazines, newspapers, window sings—all the world had agreed that a blue eyed, yellow haired, pink skinned doll was what every girl child treasured". (*The Bluest Eye* 18)

But Claudia dislikes the blue eyed doll. She destroys it because she is more interested in only in humans of her age and her type. Claudia says; "I had no interest in babies...I was interested only in humans my own age and size" (*The Bluest Eye* 18).

Through the analyses of the article *What The Bluest Eye Knows about Them: Culture, Race, Identity* by Christopher Douglas discusses the most interesting allusion in *The Bluest Eye* to *Brown* is the doll test developed by Kenneth Clark and Marmie Clark. In May of 1951, Robert Carter to Charleston, where, while Marshall and Carter prepared a legal argument, Clark interviewed sixteen black children in Clarendon County's segregated schools. Using his doll test, in which children were asked to compare otherwise identical brown and white coloured dolls, he discovered that "ten of the sixteen children said they preferred the white doll. Eleven of the children referred to the black doll as 'bad', while nine said that the white doll was 'nice'. Seven of the children pointed to the white doll when they were asked to choose the doll, they liked the most. In the case that would become *Briggs v. Elliott* (1951). Clark testified, based on these tests, "that school segregation was distorting the minds of black youngsters to the point of making themselves hating" (149). Although the majority opinion has rejected the introduction of Clark's sociology into legal interpretation, it is found that the material conditions of the segregated schools are unequal and gave the county six months to equalize the black and white schools. *Briggs v. Elliott* was one of the four cases on appeal before the Supreme Court in 1952 and 1953, all of which ended together in *Brown v. Board of Education*. In the renowned footnote 11 to this decision, the Court referenced Clark's work as one of the seven social science studies substantiating the psychological damage that attended school segregation. A decade after *Brown*, towards the end of the Civil Rights Movement that it had enabled, and as the Black Arts



Movement commenced, Morrison turned to this figure of the black child's desire for the white beauty and subjectivity embodied in a doll. Unlike the black children in the Clark's studies in the 1940s, who tended statistically to prefer white dolls, *The Bluest Eye's* narrator, Claudia, thinks back to what she realizes is her atypical reaction, as a black child in the 1940s, to the "blue-eyed" dolls received at Christmas. From clucking sounds of adults, I knew that the doll represented what they thought was my fondest wish," Claudia recalls (*The Bluest Eye* 18). This was Clark's conclusion as well: "It is clear [...] that the majority of these Negro children prefer the white doll and reject the coloured doll" (149). Claudia can read the racial code, at least retroactively, understanding the white doll to be "beautiful", but she lacks the spontaneity of many of Clark's students who chose a white doll "because he's pretty". Instead of pleasure and desire, the doll elicits only revulsion from this atypical pupil

I had only desire: to dismember it. To see of what it was made to discover the dearness, to find the beauty, the desirability that had escaped me, but apparently only me. (*The Bluest Eye* 18)

The blue eyed baby doll represents the standards of white beauty and it is the same standards that Claudia challenges when she destroys it. In the destruction of the doll is a standard of beauty. A sense to understanding things is the quality that Claudia displays in the course of the narrative. She knows that the so called notion of 'cuteness' about the white girl makes the black girl lesser. She admits that to destroy the white doll is easier but to destroy the very notion of beauty is difficult. She sees that consent to the notion of beauty in "the honey voices of parents and aunts, the obedience in the eyes of our peers, the slippery light in the eyes of ... teachers" (20). Claudia interrogates the white culture; she asks, "what did we lack? and why was it important?" (20). Her questions are related to beauty that the culture has conferred on Maureen Peal. Claudia says to that black girls love themselves and they are "comfort" in their black skin. The white girl Maureen peal is not an enemy to the black girls, hence no need to fear her. But "thing to fear was the thing that made her beautiful". The thing is the white culture that has made Maureen Peale beautiful ignoring outright the black girls.

As the third person omniscient juvenile narrator Claudia's role in the novel is to present Pecola's story in form made out of pieces of Pecola's life. Towards the end of the novel Claudia tells how she and her sister Frieda have collected pieces of Pecola's story from the conversation of people. Claudia performs difficult task to structure Pecola's story and share the secret of her life with the reader that otherwise would have remained a secret. She also exposes the realities of life in an impoverished African American community, whose abject socioeconomic all these she does, Claudia does them from the feminist perspective. Thus, Claudia makes the novel more

feminine from her outlook and her curiosity. A womanish curiosity wakes up in her when Frieda tells her that Mr. Henry has picked at her breast. She asks her sister

“... How did it feel?  
Oh, Claudia...  
It didn't feel anything  
But wasn't it supposed to? Feel good, I mean?”. (*The Bluest Eye* 97)

Such questions make the novel unique in its own way. In its language and expression, the novel is more realistic than any other texts near to it. Toni Morrison has done her best by choosing Claudia the narrator of the novel. Passiveness and quietness of Pecola are skillfully balanced in active and articulate Claudia. In *God help the Child*, there are four parts. In the first part, there are nine sections, each driven by individual voices of Sweetness, Bride, Brooklyn and Sofia. Part II contains four sections, two sections told by an omniscient third person narrator and one section each by Sofia and Rain. Part III is devoted entirely to Booker's antecedents, told by an anonymous third person. And part IV is made up of three sections. Brooklyn's return, the anonymous third person's narration of Booker's reunion with Bride and Sweetness's closing the story with final flourishes. It is a kind of novel where reader can feel the magnificence just beyond their reach. The storytelling is completely absorbing. The story carries the shape of a grander book, where the characters are more fully explored and there is far more at stake. Following the author represents the nightmarish experiences of a mother and daughter. The author through Sweetness focuses on the theme, Structure and characters of the novel. Sweetness confesses

True. I was really upset, even repelled by her black skin when she was born and at first, I thought of ... I know I did the best for her under the circumstances. When my husband ran out on us, Lula Ann was a burden. A heavy one but I bore it well. Yes, I was tough on her. You bet I was. After she got all that attention following the trial of those teachers, she became hard to handle. By the time she turned twelve going on thirteen. I had to be even tougher. She was talking back, refusing to eat what I cooked, primping her hair. When I braided it, she'd go to school and unbraided it. I couldn't let her go bad. I slammed the lid and warned her of the names she'd be called. Still, some of my schooling must have rubbed off. See how she turned out? A rich career girl. Can you beat it? Now she's pregnant. Good luck and God Help the Child. (*God Help the Child* 177-178)

Thus, Toni Morrison has successfully presented her greatness of the beauty of her works, her formal and imaginative risk taking, and her intellectual prowess. It is founded on fiction about human devilishness and weakness, minds crippled in crisis and the impact of our histories

on our emotional faculties. Her powers are clearly on display in her novels *God Help the Child* and *The Bluest Eye*. She creates art from the rumblings in the human hearts. As an author, she has clearly presented the treatment of colourism and how it creates the impact from the blacks and also exposes how people suffer by the problem of colourism in her first and the latest novel.

## CHAPTER IV SUMMATION

This chapter deals with the narrative techniques and the author's grand style of writing. An author's writing style is what defines his or her work. Toni Morrison has become an international celebrity. Considered as one of the best living exponents of Black Women's fiction, her works are about the predicament of Afro-American women in White racist America. Through the analysis of Valsala Menon's article *White Racism on Black Psyche: Beauty as a Measurement of Self-Worth in Toni Morrison's The Bluest Eye* discusses Toni Morrison is "a Black writer struggling with and through a language that can powerfully evoke and enforce hidden signs of racial superiority, cultural hegemony and dismissive 'othering' of people" (10).

Toni Morrison's writing style is easily distinguishable due to her unique use of language. She attempts the strategies of abrogation and appropriation to overcome the signs of racial superiority in the language. Her fiction contains all the elements of Post-modernist and Colonial literatures like the quest for identity, opposition to establish and imperialistic systems, elusiveness of meaning, a tendency towards fragmentation, multiplicity of voice and self-reflexivity. She also makes extensive use of myths, allegories, folk tales and imageries peculiar to Africa. Her novels are easy to read, and she incorporates many different styles into her writing, such as switching the voice of narration throughout her stories for a change of perspective. Some of her most commonly used techniques are the use of descriptive analogies, important historical references, and varied sentence structure. By examining these examples, it will give a clearer understanding of the type of literature that Morrison produces.

In *Childhood Trauma in Toni Morrison's God Help the Child* (2015) by Sara Ramtani, analysis of inter-racial oppression is a conflict between two different races, basing on some physical characteristics such as skin color, nose size, eyes color and lips shape. This can be extended to social class, caste and ethnicity. Intra-racism or the so called colourism is a kind of discrimination within the same racial group, believing, as in the African American history and context, in the superiority of the lighter and the inferiority in the darkly skinned ones (19). Toni Morrison in her childhood days, may have crossed the many boundaries like racism, slavery, suppression and childhood trauma. So, this kind of experience makes her to show her problems through her novels characters. So, most of her works deal the themes of racism, slavery, child abuse, quest for identity, suppression and marginalization.

Morrison is generally known for her use of unusual style yet effective unique comparisons that give further description to the details she presents. More specifically, she utilizes similes in her writing to help the reader connect the content with alternate images and

experiences. This can be seen in *Song of Solomon* at Hagar's funeral as Pilate whispers, "My baby girl" and Morrison describes the atmosphere of the church: "Words tossed like stones into a silent canyon" (*Song of Solomon* 319). Another instance in which Morrison uses a unique comparison occurs in *The Bluest Eye* when Pecola Breedlove lies awake at night, listening to her mom and dad fight; "the unquarreled evening hug like the first note of a dirge in sullenly expectant air" (*The Bluest Eye* 39). Yet another simile appears in *Jazz* when Violet describes her fascination with the city: "Daylight slants like a razor cutting the buildings in half" (*Jazz* 7). In *God Help the Child* also Morrison uses the simile when Booker and Bride have a relationship before their breakup; "their sexuality like lightening and the sky going dark to show off the shine of their skin" (*God Help the Child* 9). Clearly, these analogies not only make the novels more interesting, but also contribute to the overall style of Toni Morrison's writing.

One of the key "trademarks" of Morrison's work is her frequent use of significant references to history. These not only provide background information about the time period in which the novels take place, but the historical roots that add more depth to the stories and make them seem more realistic. For example, *Song of Solomon* contains a lot of magical realism, yet Morrison also grounds the plot with concrete examples of history, such as when Milkman questions Susan Byrd about his grandfather's past: "Did Jake have to register at the Freedman's Bureau before he left the state? Everybody did. Everybody who had been slaves, that is" (*Song of Solomon* 324). This gives the readers specific information about the Macon Dead's (Jake's) past and also reminds them the time period in which the story takes place by including a reference to the Freedman's Bureau. Another indication of the historical implications of a time period surfaces in *The Bluest Eye* through what Pecola has learned from her parents about the outside world: "Outdoors, we knew, was the real terror of life. The threat of being outdoors surfaced frequently in those days" (*The Bluest Eye* 15). In *God Help the Child*, Sweetness wants to indicate the crucial outside world to Lula Ann through her ill-treatment so as to make her she learns the how world is; "I had to protect her. She didn't know the world. There was no point in being tough or sassy even when you were right" (*God Help the Child* 41).

Morrison's novels depict Black-American appearance and reality, the magical and the real, the tragic and the comic. She frames her tales within mythic narrative structures, thereby creating a heroic context for her themes and characters. Through the analyses of the text of Sebin Justine's *Treatment of Colourism in Toni Morrison's God Help the Child: A gynocritical Perspective* expresses, Morrison's themes are often those expected of naturalist fiction the social effects of race, gender, class, love, death, betrayal and the burden of the individual's responsibility for his or her own destiny. She develops a rich irony by juxtaposing heroic confidence and mundane reality. By pitting contrasting figures against one another, Morrison repeatedly reverses the reader's expectations. Her writings are focused on the relationships

between the inner life of her characters and the world within which they find themselves. Still, regardless of her political and social commitment, Toni Morrison, as shown in *God Help the Child* and *The Bluest Eye* uses magical realism through the reference to supernatural elements and also some fabulous ideas clearly in evidence to the text. During the course of the novel's actions, Bride sets a guest in a white hippy couple house in an isolated forest, described as being distant from contemporary modern society and times, and encounters witch like character, Booker's aunt. After the break with Booker, Bride fantasizes about the degradation of her body, her breast and peculiarly stops menstruating; the reader is not sure if this is a reality or just comes from the protagonist's imagination that is haunted by depression because of her boyfriend's absence. This is the plot point where the novelist tries magic realism. Bride realizes with a rude shock that her body is changing like this way

It was when she stood to dry herself that she discovered that her chest was flat, completely flat, with only the nipples to prove it was not her back. She plastered the wet towel above the place where her breasts had once upon a time announced themselves and risen to the lips of moaning lovers. (*God Help the Child* 92-93)

In *The Bluest Eye* that divulges the belief in the church's power by some members of the community as well as the failure of the marigold to bloom. For example, at the beginning of this novel, Claudia narrates "there were no marigolds in the fall of 1941. We thought, at time that it was because Pecola was having her father's baby that the marigolds did not grow" (*The Bluest Eye* 3). This proves an innate fear, of being an outsider or rejected, that people of that time period would have experienced.

While linguistic logistics are obligatory for an author's style, sentence structure is also an extremely important element to include in the process, and Morrison exceeds more than this task. She includes a wide variety of sentences, which makes her writings much more fluid. One type, she often inserts into her writing is balanced sentences, exemplified in *Song of Solomon* when Milkman ponders the relationship between Corinthians and her mysterious lover: "He thought it was funny, sweet, and a little sad" (*Song of Solomon* 211). Another way that Morrison takes advantage of her style is by also applying periodic and inverted sentences to her novels, such as in *The Bluest Eye* when Junior's mother comes home to discover her precious cat dead and spots Pecola: "Up over the hump of the cat's back she looked" (*The Bluest Eye* 90). The author's reason for including these types of sentences is to break the stream of monotonous reading by creating dynamic sentences that are somewhat unexpected.

In addition, Morrison entices the reader by manipulating sentence length and wording to express the tone or emotion she is trying to convey. The idea of using sentences with no verbs



also appears in *The Bluest Eye* when Cholly is relieved that the banquet after his Aunt Jimmy's funeral has finally come: "Laughter, relief, a steep hunger for food" (*The Bluest Eye* 138). Here the reader can easily follow what is going on without the aid of complete sentences. Morrison demonstrates her skill in sentence usage very often throughout her works, and the quality of these sentences reflects her overall skill as an author.

Toni Morrison's eleventh novel, *God Help the Child*, has an affinity with the techniques of modernist and postmodern literary tradition as it makes use of a flock of flashbacks and a stream of consciousness technique, which together cause the narrative to be disunited and discontinued. It also uses the postmodern technique of minimalism, which strives to play down characterization and details to appeal to the readers' interpretation and insights into the phenomenon being described in it. Moreover, *God Help the Child* is multi-voiced; the narrative is structured through different narration points of views which epitomize Michal Bakhtin's polyphony and also solidify the fragmentation characteristic of the novel and the protagonist's consciousness. The author's choice for multiple narrative viewpoints in the text, and even in the postmodern context, is significant as it subverts the traditional dominant voice of the omniscient narrator which represents truth or reality in an objective manner and from one single perspective. The multiplicity of views analyses reality from different perspectives and suggests that truth exists in the plural and not in a single form. More important than this, through these multiple viewpoints, Morrison recovers and grants authority to the female voices silenced to be heard and narrate their stories. Morrison uses the storytelling technique, emphasizing the very practice of morality by considering the text as a story to be heard from the character's voice. Storytelling in African-American community has long contributed to one's self understanding one's identity building.

Morrison's narration strategies are traditional, yet her novels undercut the traditional kinds of authority in which such narrative forms are usually grounded. This technique might be treated as a common place post-modern gesture if not for the fact that these same novels, in their thematic messages about art, register strong disapproval of post-modern games and even serious philosophical games with readers concerning truth, meaning and value. In earnest pursuit of some unambiguous truth that she might convey to readers, Morrison, through her fiction, challenges basic assumptions about aesthetic as a trustworthy epistemological category. Her novels are strategic attacks on innocent readers, who assume that art or any other form of human communication carries reliable messages to or from the obscure territory of the inner self.

A key element of Morrison's authorial identity derives from her apparent need to expose and eradicate the sin of innocence. Innocence derives from naive assumptions about one's ability to know the truth. Morrison's preference for omniscient narrators seems puzzling at first. After

all, the moral and epistemological authority such narrative usually embodies is a focus of Morrison's attack. Morrison sometimes employs a Jamesian technique: she temporarily merges the narrator's point of view with that of a character, but later undercuts or problematized this point of view by presenting its alternatives. Such a strategy finally reiterates her thematic message that there is no reliable ground or mooring from which to know or tell the true version of any story. Morrison's omniscient narrators, whose points of view only intermittently imply her own apparent authorial point of view, are ultimately as bereft of certainty as Milkman Dead, when in *Song of Solomon*; he tries to locate the original version of his family history within the variants of it that leads him into acts of interpretation.

One type of narrative mooring lost in the novels is the conventional circular pattern. Such patterns traditionally suggest closure or the availability of complete knowledge. For example, the rise and fall pattern of many nineteenth century novels implies a full circle structure of human density and the initiation story and the *Bildungsroman* implies a logical progression from youth to maturity that coherently reconciles origins with endings. In Morrison's novels some type of circular narrative pattern attempts but conspicuously fails to enclose a completed story. The idea of closure is kept alive as an ideal, but the origins and endings of the various strands of the stories remain elusive, a narrative feature for which Morrison has been criticized. The characters, together with their stories, evade closure. Pecola Breedlove steps over into madness and isolation, Sula dies misunderstood, Milkman Dead flies away, son gallops off to join the mythical Haitian horsemen of the Isle de Chevaliers, *Beloved's* ontological status is unclear from the outset of the novel, and Booker's unreasoned breakup with Bride and then narrator concludes by telling that she is disremembered and unaccounted for, at last.

In her lecture as the recipient of the 1993 Nobel Prize in Literature, Toni Morrison, delivered a well-wrought paean to language and to the sublime vocation of "word work". In a half-hour address that bought the crowd in the Swedish Academy to a standing ovation, she spoke of the value of language: not official language or the censoring language of the state or the trick language of journalism, but language as words, with the magic they contain. It is words, she suggested, that empower meditation that lend off "the scariness of things with no names" and that ease the burden of oppression ([www.cambridge.org](http://www.cambridge.org)). And in the end, it is words that enable us to make some sense of our existence by allowing us to stand aside to narrate it; "We die", she said, "That may be the meaning of life. But we do language. That may be the measure of our lives". ([www.cambridge.org](http://www.cambridge.org))

Whether the critics come from the Academy or outside, one major point of focus in their examination of Morrison's writing is her use of language, either as a way to attest to the author's skill as a writer or to emphasize the complexity of her writing. In these critiques there lies a

danger of ignoring the stories and truths Morrison shares about American culture, the larger society, and the experience of African Americans. Many critics attribute the difficulty some readers have interpreted her writing to what they perceive to be the complex language she uses. Yet, while Morrison definitely writes lyrical sentences, the lyricism must not be confused with complex syntax. Her narratives invite readers to construct meaning from what they read. In fact, Morrison's novels can be read as if the narrator is speaking directly to the reader, evoking response.

*The Bluest Eye* is Morrison's first novel focused on a pair of very young black girls and her narrative procedure is the attempt in a plethora of ways to recreate their experiences. Claudia and Frieda MacTeer provide both the voice and the understanding consciousness for Pecola Breedlove's story, a story that would have been vastly different if told by another kind of observer. The aptness of having the young black girl's story told by her peers, other children for whom life sexual, political, economic is as much a mystery as it is for Pecola, becomes clear as Morrison closes the masterful "Autumn" with the sleepy dialogue between Pecola and Friends, with Claudia listening. Morrison chooses an elaborate structure to prevent the novel from becoming just another first person, child as innocent account, even though and somewhat ironically *The Bluest Eye* derives its power from being exactly that. Pecola's story in *The Bluest Eye* is conveyed through strategies of encirclement, as if drawing smaller and smaller rings around a centre could somehow force truth to appear there. The seasonal chapter headings of the text compose the outermost circle of the narrative. The narrator's mind turns, for example, upon childhood memories of people who were, paradoxically, both monstrous and kind. Memories of child molesters, including Pecola's father, Mr. Henry, and Soaphead Church, motivate the narrator to discover "what got into people" to account for such crimes. Morrison does not use the elaborate, layered, segmented narrative manner again; she relies instead on a much simpler narrative technique.

As in *The Bluest Eye* and *Sula*, the story cannot be contained within narrative boundaries. *Song of Solomon* follows a pattern of forward motion through time. It traces the life of Milkman Dead from birth to death. However, this novel more than the other, reveals serious difficulties in maintaining this straightforward pattern. The narrator not only backtracks through personal histories and circles back onto pivotal obsessions of the characters but also fractures the diachronic process by variously beginning again, as if there were no logical place to pick up the strands of the story in order to advance it. As in *Beloved* the past does not elaborate upon the present, but revisions, embellishments, and readings of the past can be used to fill in what is always missing in the present.

*Tar Baby* exhibits a circular narrative pattern without closure. The novel begins and ends with Son travelling toward the Isle des Chevaliers and within this outermost narrative circle, his and the other characters' lives circle around nodal points without any resolution. *Tar Baby* follows the process of backtracking, especially in the life of Son, the main character. Thematically, the novel insists, like *Song of Solomon*, on the impossibility of anyone's knowing anyone else. The structures within African American novels consistently defy and collect eventualities of the past, present, and future and in consequence a consideration of this aspect may be more appropriate frame through which to consider the chronicle of events in *Beloved*.

In Morrison's fiction, sensuality is embedded in the past and sensual descriptions explode the effects of alienation and repression. Morrison's own narrative technique self-consciously uses music as a model for resisting logo-centric narratives both through the use of repetition as a narrative device and through the prominence of song in her stories. Morrison uses black music as a model for turning the novel from a closed text into a narrative performance that is transient, shared, and open to both repetition and modification. And also, Morrison uses the blue songs in her fiction *God Help the Child* and *The Bluest Eye*, because she wants to express the extreme level of the feeling of their characters. For example, in *God Help the Child*, Bride listens the blue song while Booker's unreasoned breakup, "Baby, baby, why you treat me so? I do anything you say, go anywhere you want me to go" (*God Help the Child* 9). And in *The Bluest Eye* Poland one of the neighbours who lived in the apartment above Breedlove's storefront sings about her past in this way

I got blues in my mealbarrel  
Blues up on the shelf  
I got blues in my mealbarrel  
Blues up on the shelf  
Blues in my bedroom  
'Cause I'm sleepin' by myself. (*The Bluest Eye* 49)

The theoretical perspectives and approaches most relevant in order to understand, Morrison's stories are consequently those that apply history and culture as a means of understanding and explaining literary texts. New Historicist Criticism may for instance help shed light on Morrison's writing as it looks at a work's discourse as something which is strongly linked to the society in which the author has created it. The gender codes in *Sula*, the oppressive environment in *The Bluest Eye*, and the complexity of sexuality and love in *Love* can all be recognized as aspects of society of the twentieth century, not only familiar to the author, but also to the reader. The reader too, is strongly linked to society, its ideology and belief systems and will understand a work of literature accordingly. Morrison clearly demonstrates in her literature

sympathy for marginalized people through her portrayal of the most vulnerable members of society such as the children and the women in her fiction. She also clearly draws parallels between the oppression of blacks in America and the oppression within the black communities. The use of a social and cultural approach when analyzing Morrison is thus helpful, as her writing portrays behaviour as a social and cultural construct. The colloquial language that for example, Morrison applies in her discourse is an example of how she draws on different aspects of black culture, which helps make her stories representative of the time and place in which the stories are set.

Toni Morrison's stories are fascinating. She weaves together characters, settings, traumas, and journeys in such compelling language. The dreary settings can be amazing. A house is bathed in red light. A cold room is stuffed with love. Morrison shows how and what can often be overlooked or devalued holds much significance. She honours folktales and black folks, humble beginnings and uncertain yet faintly hopeful futures. Her words and language are deftly chosen. Sometimes she hints at something that upon second reading evokes something much deeper. Other times she bashes over the head with something, it's done in such an unexpected way. Sometimes the blackness of her stories becomes overwhelming. *Paradise* begins with someone being shot. Intense trauma happens in all her novels. But with her novella, the entire trauma was included but they could only be touched on superficially.

In *God Help the Child*, most of the characters are told from a first person point of view based on whichever character is named in the title of the chapter. Each of the main characters has the opportunity to express their feelings to others and within their own thoughts. During some of the characters accounts they give information about what is happening in the present, but each character also at one time or another, shares flashbacks from the past to help the reader better to understand the situation or the feelings that are going on in the present. Learning the backgrounds of the characters help the reader to understand from what angle they see the world, Knowing intentions behind each character's action. In this novel, Morrison uses the flashbacks and magic realism techniques.

Thus, there are numerous components that compile to form an author's style. A few recognizable traits of Morrison's work include the use of similes and creative analogies, excerpts from history to make the stories legitimate, and diverse sentence structure. All of these aspects and more combine to make Toni Morrison's complex and intricate novels what they are today. This author's distinctive style is what has made her so renowned and prominent in the literary world. As a writer she wants to prove herself to be a great writer. She achieves that goal in her life. She always suggests the audience that "If there is a book that you want to read, but it hasn't been written yet, you must be the one to write it" ([www.azquotes.com/author/10441-Toni-](http://www.azquotes.com/author/10441-Toni-Morrison)

Morrison).Through her suggestion, she makes herself to encourage and write the unwritten messages to create awareness to the society. Surely her intentions became successful through her works. This dissertation also proves her awareness of child abuse and the treatment of colourism through her novels *God Help the Child* and *The Bluest Eye*.

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