

Tribhuvan University

Black Feminism in Toni Morrison's *Love*

**A Thesis Submitted to the Department of English, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences,
Ratna Rajyalaxmi Campus for Approval of the Research Committee in the Partial
fulfillment of the requirement for the Degree of Masters of Arts in English.**

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April 2017

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Declaration

I hereby declare that the thesis entitled
"Black Feminism in Toni Morrison's *Love*"
is my own original work carried out as a Master's student at the Department of
English at Ratna Rajyalaxmi Campus except that assistance from others
in the thesis's design and conception or in presentation style and
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All sources used for the thesis have been fully and properly cited. It contains no
material which to a substantial extent has been accepted for the award of
any other degree at Tribhuvan University or any other educational
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is made in the thesis.

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April 2017

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Letter of Approval

This thesis titled Black Feminism in Toni Morrison's *Love* submitted to the Department of English, Ratna Rajyalaxmi Campus, Pradrashani Marg, Kathmandu by Gita Khadka has been approved by the undersigned members of the Research Committee.

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Acknowledgements

I express my heartfelt gratitude to my Supervisor Dr. Hari R. Adhikari, Associate Professor in English, Ratna Rajyalaxmi Campus, Kathmandu who continuously inspired and advised me with appropriate ideas and suggestions to this research work. His encouragement and assistance at all times have been of immense importance and value. This is my luck to get suggestions and ideas from my friend Janak Bahadur Rajguru. He deserves special thankfulness from my part.

I would like to thank all my respected teachers in Ratna Rajyalaxmi Campus, administrative staff and friends in the Campus. My thanks are dedicated to my family members for their moral supports and never ending encouragements. Special thanks to my husband for his continuous encouragement and support during the preparation of the thesis.

April, 2017

Gita Khadka

Abstract

The study on Toni Morrison's *Love* tries to unveil the women's position in the patriarchal society. In the novel, black females are victimized and suppressed by the society in general and by the male in particular. Bill Cosey is the dominant male character who imposed male hegemony upon the helpless women. Black feminism deals with experiences of women in the Afro- American society where female are abused sexually, physically and mentally.

In the novel *Love*, the major female characters Heed, Christine, Junior, May, Vida and L (the former cook of the hotel) are victimized by the Bill Casey to whom they are considered as the god when he is alive. Later, females realize their position in the society and the causes of their pathetic condition. At the beginning, Mrs. Heed and Christine fight for their position in the Cosey's family. But after the death of the Bill Cosey, they feel their guilt and united for their right and freedom. Here, the novel *Love* captures the experience of black females who develop the sense of resistance after the long time suffering.

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Chapter I : Contextualizing Writer and The Text

The present research is an interactive study of the Morrison's *Love* through the light of Black Feminism. The novel *Love*, by the renowned American novelist Toni Morrison presents black female characters in the marginalized position suppressed by the male dominated society in general and by their relatives in particular. They are presented as the commodity rather than human beings. They are under the plight of their male relatives. The black female characters like Heed, May, Junior, Christine, and Vida are victimized and traumatized by the patriarchal society. They revolve around the male character Bill Cosey who dominates and influences the females even after his death. The patriarchal society has developed the hegemony to dominate and suppress the female throughout the history.

Morrison's sixth novel *Love* presents female character within the clutch of male character. So, this research will be the study of the male –female relation in the patriarchal American capitalist society where females are considered as the supplement of male. The patriarchal capitalist society gives rise to the economic inequality, dependency, suppression and ultimately unhealthy social relation between men and women which is the root cause of the domination and discrimination. In the novel, the black female characters are doubly victimized by the patriarchal society on the one hand and the white mentality on the other hand. The society builds various patriarchal norms and values which discriminates female as other and neutralize their economic and social role. In this sense, in her book, *The Second Sex*, Simone de Beauvoir argues:

History has shown us that men have always kept in their Hands all concrete powers, since the earliest days of the patriarchate, they have thought the best to keep women in a state of dependence; their codes of

law have been set up against her; and thus she has been definitely established as the other. (171)

Here, Beauvoir argues that males always kept the females under their power. They have developed different laws and order to follow women and make them dependency for male and they must remain under the shadow of male.

A premier contemporary American novelist and the first African- American woman to win the Nobel prize in literature- Toni Morrison was born in Cole Ardella Wofford in Lorain, Ohio in 1931 during the great depression. She was the second child among four children and her parents, George Wofford and Ramah Wofford belonged to working class. After her BA from Howard University and MA in English from Cornell University, Morrison has been engaged herself in the different academic areas especially contributing to the Afro-American literature. She began her career by lecturing at several universities i.e. Howard University, Texas University, the State University, Yale University and Princeton University. Besides authoring six novels, Morrison has displayed a genius as a writer in criticism of white American and Afro-American as well.

Even in patronizing context of American white male authors over Afro-American black women, Morrison is recognized along with Richard Wrights, Ralph Ellison and James Baldwin. She deals especially with Afro-American women's status and their problems in her writings.

Morrison, in her literary works, brings the issues that other male writers have simply ignored. She believes that the voices of the Black females are missing from American literature. It is not only the white writers but also distinguished black writers such as James Baldwin, Richard Wright, Ralph Ellison who missed to examine the complex and rich life styles of black women. Toni Morrison examines

the reality of friendships between black women. Morrison refuses to show her black women characters in a degrading way.

Her early work struggles with the effects of colonization on African-American individuals and the community, while her later works move into exploration of decolonizes African-American culture and history. Morrison writing has greatly been affected by American colonial treatment, so her characters in her novel are victimized and she herself had to face the problems. Even she changed her name from Chloe to Toni because her contemporaries felt difficult to pronounce her Afro-American real name. John N Duvall in his writing “*Descent in the house of Chloe, Race, Rape and Identity*” in Toni Morrison’s *Tar Baby* writes:

By naming the woman in her family- her mother, sister, and grandmother; Morrison indirectly includes herself as one of those sisters who has remained true to her identity as an African-American woman. Yet the very need to declare her questioned herself regarding the validity of this claim, especially given the value changes that transform Chloe Wofford in to Toni Morrison. (328)

Here, according to John N Duvall, Morrison herself is a black writer. Being an Afro-American female writer, she has experienced what one African female does. So, her novels are nearer to real experiences faced by the African- American women in the male dominated patriarchal society.

Her family also has been colonized by American Patronizing concepts. So, she herself searches her identity within her family as well. In fact, Morrison ties this quest for identity for herself. Her first name often signals a particularly hated form of racial oppression and servility in the agrarian south for being an Afro- American woman. So, she was compelled to change her name Toni which was familiar to American

society and easy to survive in American capitalistic society. Furthermore, Wofford became Morrison when she married Jamaican architect Harold Morrison in 1958. This is the good example in her life that she has changed her surname according to the traditional patriarchal rules. From this, we may gather that her change of surname is the cause of domination upon them and suppression over real identity. Morrison's first birth place is associated with her maternal grandmother, Ardelia that is Chloe Ardelia Wofford. Her naming from matriarchal system shows that her parents predict her name from matriarchal system to establish female identity by rejecting the notions of patriarchal American society.

Responses to the novel *Love*

Different critics and commentators comment on Morrison's novel *Love*. Some of them call it as a collection of the experience of black women and some others called it as a general text talking about common sufferings of African women. In this sense, Stephen M. Deusner, an American critic argues that *Love* is complicated story, the kind of multi-themed, multi-layered, multi-generational novel Morrison is known for. She pushes the reader to think about the kinds of love. People experience an how that can be destroyed, she expounded on the nature of change and how it can both nourish and poison. On this, Morrison opines that race is at the heart of democracy but not for struggle of minority groups.(78)

Here, Stephen defines *Love* as a complicated love story. According to him,*Love* includes the voice of the minority specially the black females and encourages the women to be rebellion against the existing discrimination among human beings in the American society.

Morrison explores the racial discrimination, injustices in this novel. Black entrepreneur is neglected by American entrepreneur. Black are to be situated where white people left.

Similarly, black females are more victimize and dominated that the black male. So, black females are marginalized doubly. In this regard, “Los Angeles times Book Review” stated about the novel *Love*: “A marvelous work, which enlarges our conception not only of love but of racial politics, the ubiquitous past and paradise” (56). So, *Love* is the novel which addresses the issues of race, sex, and gender together.

Hazel V Carby focuses that the complex literary work of black women writer with its political and theoretical problems cannot be solved by deconstruction. Carby in her *Reconstructing Womanhood: The rise of Black Woman Novelsit*, claims that the critical discourse emphatically includes the historical/cultural specificity while discussing the writing of black women writers. She notices the folk roots of Afro-American culture influenced by transformative power of both historical and urban consciousness.(140)

As Carby argues, black womens’s fictions are the evidence of the effects of post modernity: fragmentation or erasure of identity, the loss of history. Morrison’s fictions are the obvious examples of these effects. Like Carby, Morrison makes clears, in *Rootedness: the Ancestoras Foundation*: “ That black Fiction today functions for debate and interpretation of their experience, replacing the forms of communication in church and policy of those now vanished tightly knit black community” (758). Thus, the black feminist issues are tied up tightly with political and cultural problems.

Morrison’s works always engage major contemporary social issues: the interrelatedness of racism, class exploitation and sexism, domination, the mythic

scope of the immigration and the negotiation of the slippery boundaries are also the major events of her works. She is different from other novelists because she has managed to invent her own way of writing. She is often called 'a poetic writer' though she does not like strong power and diversity in her subject matters, her literary works appears complicated.

In the course of writing, her first novel *The Bluest Eye* written in 1970 is the story of a 11 years old African American girl who is raped by her own father. Her greatest desire is to have blue eyes because in the contemporary society only little white girl with blue eyes is loveable. The novel describes the pain of internalized racism, where blacks internalize all the negative stereotypes of their race.

Morrison's highest achievement was writing the novel *Beloved*. The novel prize winner *Beloved* has been acclaimed as Morrison's most dramatic novel. The story pulls the reader in to the meaning of slavery for women in American, through the extra-ordinary figure of Beloved , the murdered baby girl of Sethe. The novel is written in complex way and weaving across different time frames and different voices to reveal the hideous shape of slavery in the mind of all who survived it. In the process of slavery, women are more dominated by American patriarchal society. The female characters are sexually exploited and physically tortured to get entertainment and to accomplish their own house as well as outward work.

Toni Morrison's latest opus *Love* (2003) is a story about just love, in all its assorted varieties- familial, romantic, and self-prevented, platonic and tough. It shows how brazen women can take a good man down, what Morrison delivers in a vivid and stirring account of the turmoil that ensues when young women are deprived of the parental but mostly paternal love and guidance that is their birthright.

The nine chapter novel, set mainly in 1990s east American coast country, is a tale of childhood confusion, miscommunication and all the hurt and wrong that can follow. It takes place in a town called Silk, in a house at 1 Monarch Street –home to the Cosey women: Heed, Christine, and May, the wife, granddaughter-in-law and daughter-in-law respectively, Bill Cosey resident rich man and proprietor of the popular in the 40s, Cosey’s Hotel and Resort. A woman named L is the resort’s first chef and levelheaded arbitrator.

The novel focuses on the conscious of black women who are in pathetic condition in the male dominated patriarchal society. It also delineates their keen desire to be equal and the bearer of their own property. The important female character Sandler Gibbons get relief from the plantation camp. Another major character May also gets identity on family prosperity. They are on the way to construct their identity themselves in the capitalist society of America. They move to the direction for the quest of their independent and identified self in the light of women rights and freedom.

Morrison’s novel *Love* present the character Bill Cosey, a powerful and respected man in male dominated capitalist society. The nine chapter novel presents Cosey as the dominant character even after his death. Without him there would not be story. Yet he is never really there. Viewed only through the eyes or thoughts of those who remember him, Cosey represents the past. His ghost pervades the book, his influences continues to affect he present. The Cosey women revolve around him like satellites. May is his daughter-in –law and the widow of his only son Bill Boy who died young of walking pneumonia and left May with their daughter Christine. When Cosey temporarily withdraws form the world to mourn his boy, L and May run the hotel in his place. May continues to devote her life to Cosey , allowing L to raise

Christine , in later years Christine will harbor a great deal of anger toward her grandfather, believing that she consistently ignored her in favor of her former friend, Heed the Night Johnson.

The novel *Love* depicts the suppression and subordination of females. Toni Morrison thinks that the real happiness of female can be achieved within the female's intimacy but not within the male notion of intimacy. The novel has highlighted that marriage and love only do not bring happiness to the lives of females in the capitalist patriarchal society. The society has created the burden upon the life of woman. The female are left to take the loaded responsibilities and they have no way to improve their own personal status. Therefore, love and marriage in the patriarchal society are the hindrance to develop the personal career of female life. It is also the form of suppression.

This thesis focuses on the oppressed and victimized in the modern capitalist African American male dominated society. In patriarchal society a woman is dependent upon man throughout her life. She does not enjoy freedom and independence, the male ideology has hindered and prevented women's productive and creative possibility. In the novel *Love* all the female character are dependent upon the male. They cannot decide properly what to do what not to do. Their life is controlled by the power of the male. In this context, Morrison writes:

Who could not form a correct sentence; who knew some block letters but not script? Under those circumstances, she had to be braced every minute of the day. Papa protected her, but he was not around all the time or in every place where people could mess with her, because May and Christine was not the only ones, as a particular afternoon proved. (75)

Here, the above statement clears the reality of black women who are deprived of minimum education who could not read and write properly. Their father, brother, or uncle should protect them; they are not capable of defense themselves.

This thesis explores the suffering; domination and violence experienced by different black female characters are explored. Heed is the major female character of the present novel *Love*. She represents the sufferings faced by the women in patriarchal African-American society. She works for Mr. Cosey but never get the right of his property. Rather, Mr. Cosey makes the real inheritance of his property to his property to his small grandson. Though the female characters face the different sufferings throughout the life, they are conscious for their rights in the society. Junior is free to search her job alone wherever she wants. And closed Coseys's hotel and resort indicates the fall of the male dominated society and the freedom of female who are in the way to establish their free self and identity.

Toni Morrison's works concentrate on gender relation, women's lives, motherhood, sisterhood, the community and sexual politics. Morrison was brought up under racial and male domination. She got more experiences about race and gender. She expresses the black women's voice in her works. 1964 is the most important date for her in the sense of feminism as she divorced her husband, Harold Morrison protesting the male domination. She declares herself to be a black woman writer concerned with focusing on hitherto hidden or misrepresented lives of Afro-American people.

As a black woman writer, Morrison provides particular focus on woman's roles and the burden of African American woman, offering critiques of stereotypes and opportunities for women to develop self-identity. Her black female characters suffer more than her black male characters. Morrison has better knowledge of the

torture of the black women. On the one hand, they become the victims of white society; on the other hand they have to tolerate the domination of black male characters. Her novels are crowded with female characters. She depicts southern black experiences through her characters. In her view, south is the ancestral home of black Americans. *Eva Peace* is a southern woman from Virginia. Likewise, *Jazz* deals with three female characters in particular are wounded not only by sexual but also by racial and economic division within American culture.

Toni Morrison believes that the primary function of black history and arts reinterpret and rediscover the black life as lived. Afro-American life and art has been defined by the outsiders. She wants to set up the Afro-American art, life and every value they attached to as inherent current of mainstream.

The mainstream narratives of Anglo-American have ignored the black people. Mainstream fictions have misrepresented the presence of black people and made them alien in their own home. She depicts the black south as the background of her fiction. Her novel depicts that America is the indisputable home of Americanized African. They have given their blood, sweat and tears for the betterment and prosperity of America. Her novels can be read as cultural documentaries that record Afro-American fables, folktales and humors. She negates the Eurocentric discourse that marginalizes black people. According to her, the Afro-American people just be portrayed as the subjects rather than objects to position them at the center of fictional world.

Morrison humanizes the black characters in her fiction that strive to overcome and excavate enforced invisibility of Afro-Americans social reality. Either in her critical writing or in novels, they are charted with complexity or multiplicity of blacks. She shows her preoccupation of black culture and art.

Morrison's positive attitude towards women can be observed in what she expresses in her collection of essays *Playing in the Dark whiteness and Literary Imagination*, she writes about her primary responsibility:

My work required me to think about how free I can be as African-American woman writer in my gendered, sexualized, wholly radicalized world. To think about (and wrestle with) the full implications of my situation leads me to consider what happens when other writers work in a highly and historically radicalized society. For them, as for me imagination is not merely looking or looking at, nor is it taking oneself intact into the other. (4)

Here, through this statement, she shows her concerns towards the black women and determines to work for them. Morrison shares her experiences of being a black woman writer in historically specialized society. She feels that women are still restricted in her gendered and sexualized society.

Being a woman of the black ancestry, she brings the attention of the world to the black women writers and their contribution in literature. Morrison is conscious of her primary focus on the black cultural traditions. For this, she chooses her protagonist from black community. Basically, she exploits her childhood memory of Lorain, Ohio, and sets her characters on that ground.

In *Beloved*, she has depicted the badly oppressed female characters and their miserable life. Though there is the pathetic condition of women, her novel *Love* also delineates the voice of women characters and their emancipations towards freedom and dependents. The major character Mrs. Heed fights for the ownership for the property. The context of her work is clearly linked to race and gender and she traces the female history under slavery.

By presenting the black female characters in her fiction as Sethe, Sula, Heed, Pecola etc, she remains successful to depict the life of black women, their experiences and their trail to violate the Western patriarchal norms regarding the feminine norms and values in the fully racialized society. Morrison does not only reflect the pain of Blacks but also displays the suffering of human beings in her novels. Morrison in *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and literary Imagination*, further remarks:

Silence from and about the subject was the order of the day. Some of the silences were broken, and some were maintained by the authors who live with and within the policing narrative. What I am interested in is the strategies for the maintaining the silence and the strategies for breaking it. How did the founding writers of young America engage, imagine, employ and create an Africanist presence and persona? (51)

In this way, Toni Morrison has secured her most significant position as a Black female writer in American literature. Her literary creations have revolutionized the black feminist approach in the mainstream literary discourse. She has been renowned because of her most accountable black feminist literary genres.

In this sense, this researcher has tried to find out way the black are subjugated and marginalizes in the Afro-American society. What are the factors that encourage them to realize their situation in the society? So, the researcher tries her best to explore the novel through the lance of black feminism.

In short, this study discusses that black females are doubly marginalized in the male dominated patriarchal society. The male orientated patriarchal society creates the artificial rules and regulations to discriminate the black female. After a long time domination and victimization, they develop the sense of resistance against the patriarchal bias rules and regulations.

Chapter II: Theoretical Modality in Morrison's Love

The term 'Black' is often used to refer to a variety of non-white ethnic groups. This form has taken on more political connotations with the rise of Black activism in the USA, since the 1960s and now its usage implies solidarity against racism. The ideas of Black have been reclaimed as a source of pride and identity. The term Black Feminism is directly related to the activities of the Black women who are racially and sexually dominated by the white people as well as Black male. They try to seek their identity and existence through literature.

Barbara Christian is the renowned feminist writer in American literature. She is the first woman who historically traces the origin of Black feminism. In her revealing essay "Shadows Uplifted", she has depicted the origin and development of the black feminism. She says that it began with the publication of Frances Ellen Watkins Harper, were certainly aware of the image of Black people that had developed during the slavery. So, the black abolitionists were particularly important in the development of Black feminism.

Black feminist literature came in to mainstream literary trend after the feminist movement of 1960s. The Black literary texts and Black female writers were dominated by the great hegemony of western as well as white dominant literary trends. About Black feminist literary theory, Christian Barbara writes:

Black critical theory is quite different from western form of abstract of logic, and it is often in narrative form, in the stories we create in the riddles and proverbs, in the play with language, since dynamic rather than fixed ideas seem to our liking, my folk in other words have always been a race theory- through more in the form of the

hieroglyphs, a written figure which is both sensual and abstract, both beautiful and communicative (275-76).

Christian calls Harper an abolitionist and a Black feminist, and considers her to have been one of the leading figures on the nationalist struggle; “to free blacks from slavery, as well as long time spoke person for many black women who were not yet free to speak” (28). Since Black women were brought to America as slaves to fulfill specifically female roles and to work in the fields, they were described as Black mammy or the loose Black women. In his book *Black Abolitionists*, Benjamin Quarles writes:

Orator like Frederick Douglass, William Brown, Frances Harper were concerned with countering southern images not only of black men but of black women as well, since many of their supporters were white women involved in the struggle for women’s rights, also, black abolitionists had proclaimed themselves on the side of female equality when the Abolitionist Movement spilt over the women issue (178).

Virginia Woolf and Simone de Beauvoir contributed greatly for the worldwide emergence of feminism in the first half of the twentieth century. Kate Millet, Marry Ellman, Elaine Showalter, Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar are the main feminist writers. The Black feminism is derived from their feminist literary creations. Because of low economic condition only a few Black women were conscious of this secondary position and only a few of them participated in women’s liberation movement. The most important voice against patriarchy was raised by Mary Wollstonecraft. Though she never meant to Black women but it could be applied as well in the case of Black women. But, during the decades of 1960s, within the new condition of women, Black women found their position unchanged. Afro-American women were placed in a dark

continent of cooking and childbearing. Unlike white women, Afro-American women realized they weren't only subjects to sexual role in patriarchy. Among the flood of feminist diction, many Black women writers appeared with their imaginative tales reconstructing Afro-American history as well as Black subjectivity.

Alice Walker in her famous essay *In Search of Our Mothers Gardens* shows :
 “ The political, economic and social restrictions of slavery and racism have historically stunted the creative lives of black women”(62).

Zora Neale Hurston stands as one of the most important figures on the Black female literary tradition. Though she is often criticize for having no politics, she was like Johnson and Locke, against protest writing. Alice Walker's writings display the Black feminist approach of the Afro-American literary tradition. In her most accounted novel, *The Color Purple*, “she depicts the abused life of a young Black woman” (qtd. in Wisker 82). Margaret Atwood is widely regarded as feminist writer whose novels carry live issues in American cultural debate of the 1980s and 1990s – feminism, women's reproductive rights and, of course, African-American culture. Nella Larsen's *Passing*(1929), Maya Angelou's *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* (1970) , NtozakeShange's *Cypress, Sassafrassand Indigo* are the most accounted literary genres which have paved the trend of Black feminism in Afro-American literature.

The Black women do not have significant position in literature. They are marginalized because of sexual as well as racial discrimination. They make the literature main tool to protest racism and sexism existed in the contemporary society. On the way of defining of Black feminism, a famous critic Deborah E McDowell asserts about this:

It is a voice of the Negro woman with her head erect and spirit undaunted, is resolutely marching forward, ever conscious of her historic and noble mission of doing bit toward the liberation of her people in particular and the human race in general. (187).

Black feminism is the strong voice of Black women for their personal rights. They step forward for their liberation and emancipation. They protest against patriarchal norms as well as for all Black people. The Black women fight to maintain their dignity and reputation in the contemporary society they want to be identified as full women, free race and a new world. Deborah writes:

Upon her shoulders rests the big task to create and keep alive, in the breast of black men, a holy and consuming passion to break with the slave traditions of the past, to spurn and overcome the fatal insidious inferiority complex of the present which bobs up ever, to arrest the progress new negro manhood movement, and to fight with increasing vigor, with dauntless courage, unrelenting zeal and intelligent vision for attainment of the stature of a full women, a free race a new world. (187).

Feminist theory helps us to reveal the importance of female's personal and common experiences and struggles. It analyses how sexual differences is constructed with male created discourse in different patriarchal societies. The phrase 'feminist theory' suggests only one unified theory ignoring a range of several feminist theories or perspectives. Feminist theory is not one but many theories or perspectives.

The Black feminists usually focus on the interconnection between races, gender and class. Besides racial and sexual Black feminist critical theory demands the inclusion of historical and philosophical issues.

Black women's movement made up of working class and middle class Black women came to counter racism and sexism for both economic improvement and social equality with whites. Combining every inspiring elements of feminist movement, Black feminists raised the political and psychological issues. The allegation is that the mainstream of western feminism includes the concerns of white, Christian and middle class minority women and puts aside the voices of minority women- black, Jew and others. Unlike white women, Black women are not only subject to sexual role in patriarchy but have to deal with second set of problem compounded by their particular ethnic status and circumstances. In other words, they are oppressed as women again oppressed as minority.

In patriarchal society, men control conceptual area and determine social values as well as the structures of institutions. It is man who explains, analyzes and describes and directs the female since he has the power to define everything else. In the society women are perceived from the masculine perspective. They attend male dominated schools and colleges and read books prepared by the white men. Women are controlled and cultivated through social institution. They are subjects to such social institutions and naming system and ultimately they adopt the images made by white male power.

Another aspect of Black feminism is the oppression of Black women in terms of race as it is complicated by sexism. Black women's movement, it is generally thought, is entangled with black men's liberation and their emancipation depends on the emancipation of the whole Black race. They have to struggle against racism with white women. White feminists think that feminism belongs to the well-educated and wealthy white women who have enough time and money. Bell Hooks in his essay, *BlackWomen* : “ Shaping Feminist Theory, comments that no feminist speaks of those

“ women without men , without children, without homes” (33). The existence of all nonwhite is ignored in both critical and literary works. Thus, feminist movement is made one dimensional for white women’s sexual oppression.

Mary Helen Washington, in her introduction to *Midnight Birds* says that Black women are searching for the specific language, specific symbols and images to record their lives. Morrison, in her *Unspeakable thing Unspeakable (1998)* says that “ the distinguishing feature of black writing lies in its language, its unpolished , seditious , confrontation manipulating, inventive disruptive, masked and unmasking language” (qtd in Lauret) 39. In Black women’s writings, concept of the self or the presence of assertive speaker, the presence of father is denied through the creation of a double voiced textual address.

Both Black male and female writers share the common racial marginalized position and therefore critics find commonalities in their literature. We can explore the ways in which the commonalities manifest differently in Black women’s writings. In Black men’s writings, the negative images of women are depicted due to their conscious superiority. Hortense Spillers offers a more sophisticated approach to this and according to him Black women writers must assert the Black female myth or say things. In other words for the purpose of liberation, black women writers have to insist on their own space.

To think about literature written by Black women writers, we need to establish a different frame of reference. Black women’s existence, experience and culture are shaped by the complex and it needs to revision the traditional practice. For Afro-American women, the situation is even more difficult since the cultural definition of the gender. The white feminists never applied to Black women in the first place and they have always excluded from the definition of feminism.

The Black feminism is not a monolithic static ideology and there has been considerable diversity of thought among Afro-Americans. In the essay *Black Feminism* in the United States, Beverly Guy Sheftall mentions some premises which help us to characterize the Black feminism. According to her black women experience a special kind of oppression and suffering in the country which is both racist and sexist because of their dual race and gender identity.

This “double jeopardy” has meant that problems, concerns and needs of Black women are different in many ways and distinct from those of both white women and Black men. For her, black women must struggle for gender equality and Black liberation. She further argues that there is no inherent contradiction in the struggle to eradicate sexism and racism as well as the “isms” which plague the human community such as a classicism and heterosexism. Black women’s unique struggles with respect of racial and sexual politics, their poverty and marginalized status have given them a special view of the world.

Black feminist criticism protests the massive silence of feminist criticism about women writers and call for a Black feminist aesthetic that would deal with both racial and sexual issues. Black feminists have been especially helpful in revealing the political and theoretical limitations inherent in white mainstream feminists’ neglect of cultural experience different from their own. For example, Black feminists have observed, not just because she is woman but because she is a Black woman. The logic was circular and deadly, a woman whose racial economic situation forced her into hard labor and made her the victim of sexual predators was defined as womanly and therefore unworthy of protection from those who exploited her. This view was widely held by men, both Black and White, and by White women as well. Black women, therefore, were in double blind. They could expect neither gender solidarity from

White women nor racial solidarity form Black men, the two groups on whom they should have been able to count for help.

While mainstream feminism, while it has tended to marginalize Black women because of their race and encourages them to prioritize gender issues over racial issues.

On the other hand, some Black women feel that feminism is a decisive force in Black community. As a result, some have either abandoned feminism or sought ways to reconcile it with the concerns of the Black community, as Alice Walker did when she called herself a “womanist” because she works for the survival and wholeness of her people, men and women both. Similarly, CerolynDenard points out many African American women “advocate what may be called ethnic cultural feminism” 172. It is “concerned more with the particular female cultural values of their own ethnic group rather than with those of women in general” 171. Drawing of the novels of Toni Morrison to illustrate this approach, Dennard explains that ethnic cultural feminism acknowledges the damaging effects of sexism on women of color, both inside and outside their ethnic community, but it “doesn’t advocate as a solution to their oppression..., political feminism that alienates Black women from their ethnic group” 172. Furthermore, ethnic cultural feminism celebrates the unique feminine cultural values that Black women have developed in spite of and often because of their oppression.

Whatever theoretical preferences Black feminist critics bring to their analysis of literature, their interpretations often demonstrate the importance of understanding gender issues in cultural context. Depending on its theoretical orientation, literary criticism that addresses women’s issues may fall under one or more different headings. Among of them are feminist criticism, African American criticism, lesbian

criticism, Marxist criticism. Of course, women's issues will also be addressed in any literary criticism that focuses on women writers from a particular ethnic group.

Black feminist critics argue it is inappropriate to say that white liberal middle class feminism can define the range of experiences, the validity of those experiences. Such approaches to feminism miss out the cultural and economic differences black women face. Many African women are both aware of constraints of idealizing mothering, relegating women to one specific role. Other Black women have insisted that white feminist criticism ignores the erotic, the sensuality, of some black women's version of feminism, and also ignores differences in economic position suffered by black women. White feminists make statements and choices which themselves depend upon a certain standard of living not enjoyed by black women. In the early 1980s, black feminist criticism started to become clearly established. It recognized different cultural and subject positions occupied by white and black women and expressed by black women writers. Black feminist critics also recognized specially women centered an African oriented form of expression and narrative such as oral storytelling, circular forms and personal testimony.

The development of black feminist criticism by Barbara Smith and Barbara Christine, led to further recognition of Toni Morrison's work. Barbara Christine sees Toni Morrison's central theme in the *Bluest Eye* to be a search for beauty in a world which lacks beauty. Pecola lacks a sense of her own value. Like society around her that has copied white values and versions of beauty, she fails to develop a sense of her own individual worth or to recognize beauty in her blackness.

Black feminist critical approaches usually focus on portrayal of strong women characters and on her interest in self-definition and self-development among young girls such as Pecola, and Claudia (*The Bluest Eye*), Sula (*Sula*) and Hagar (*Song of*

Solomon). The comment on mothering and motherhood, such as Sethe's Protection of her children as a fierce, loving mother which results in her attempts to kill them rather than letting them be taken back slavery.

In *We Was Girls Together* (1982), Anna Shannon sees Black women writers' fiction as 'separatist involving characters' journeys towards identity. As early as 1974, Barbara Smith's emphasis on Black feminist critical approaches to link between Black women and a concentration on Black experience in the novels. In 1979 in *Towards a Feminist Criticism*, Smith defined a 'second wave' of Black Feminism, the first having begun with Francis Harper in the 19th century. Smith's function as a critic is political and propagandist, attacking the assumption of the Black community that sexist oppression against women either does not occur or does not matter. In earlier movements, such as the Harlem Renaissance and Civil Right Movement of the 1950s and 1960s, Black women's rights were ignored. Smith argues that literary theory which can deal with Black feminist literature must recognize that Black women writers 'constitute an identifiable literary tradition'(37). Gender is an important critical issue as race and class, and dispassionate friendships including lesbian relation must be recognized with in text.

Feminist critics see *Sula* as a crucial novel in the development of Black women's writing. Morrison and Smith's work, alongside Alice Walker's *Brought African-American and Black women's writing into the lives of millions*. They also emphasize and celebrate how such writing and vision differs from works in the literary cannon.

The writing experience and culture of Black women are invisible in the eyes of critics. They are unknown to them. In America, feminists like Alice Walker and Barbara Smith realized that they needed to open up the space for the extrapolation of

Black women's lives and to redefine the goals and strategies of the white feminist movement. Thus, before, we study the works of Black women; we need to look at how Black women writers have viewed critically by the outsiders. Because of racism, the Black literature is placed outside the mainstream and Black women writings are still outside the Black literature. The literary creations of Black woman writers contain stunningly accurate records of impact of white /ale values and practice upon the lives of Black, even male, critics seem to be unknown about women's literature. In their eyes Black women's works hardly exists because they lack the ability to comprehend Black women's experiences. Both the sexual and racial politics and Black and female identity are interlocked in their writings. We find commonalities among the works of Black women writers. For instance, we can take the literary works of Toni Walker and Zora Neale Hurston where these writers have depicted protest feeling against racial and sexual oppression.

In both critical and literary work Black women writers oppose the ways the male centered and social system have constructed the stereotype women. In other words, the poetic attitude is developed if one gets leisure; economic independence and other opportunities, cultural, educational and economic difficulties and problems within patriarchal society have suppressed the roles of Black women and prevented within patriarchal society have suppressed the roles of Black women and prevented them to realize their creative possibilities. They are always confined in a dark country cooking and childbearing. The economic and social discrimination are the main obstacles of their creativity. They must have a room of their own to involve in artistic creativity. How do we expect Black women " who owned not even herself (Walker 34) to write literary work? Not only the social and economic division but also the

male / white made literary genres prevent them to express their concerns or Black female body in literature.

Another aspect of Black feminism is the oppression of Black women in terms of race as it is complicated by sexism. Black women's movement, it is generally thought, is entangled with black men's liberation and their emancipation depends on the emancipation of the whole black race. They have to struggle against racism with white women. White feminists think that feminism belongs to the well-educated and wealthy white women who have enough time and money. Bell Hooks in his essay, *Black Women* : "Shaping Feminist Theory, comments that no feminist speaks of those " women without men, without children, without homes"(33). The existence of all nonwhite is ignored in both critical and literary works. Thus, a feminist movement is made one dimensional for white women's sexual oppression.

The writings and experiences of black women writers are unknown to male critics both white and Black and female critics. These segments of literary world do not know whether black women writers exist or not. Their differences towards black women show that they do not know the real environment of black women. Black women existence, experience and culture and the complex system of oppression are invisible to them. Many books, magazines and articles have been written at separate pages neglecting them categorically. Before holding any theoretical framework of black feminist approach, we must be aware of history of black literature and black culture. Thus, black feminist critics realized the need to discover the black feminist perspective I cultural and literary discussion. Barabar Christine, in her "*Black Feminist Criticism*" emphasizes on the search for black experiences and self." 'Discovery of self' is the central theme in her work. Barbara Christine elaborates that black woman's experience and culture from that of white ones.

The black feminist critical theory would be less practical and narrow if it rejected the tools of critical analysis simply because they are male and western. Some black feminists found criticism useful and supported to study the texture of sentences, choice of metaphors that are related to black background. They are indebted to Julia Kristiva in their critical orientation. Critics like Barbara Smith recommended isolation thematic, stylistic and linguistic commonalities among Black women writers.

The commonalities among black women writers are the result of their sharing the common social experiences. The research on gender specific use of language like that of Cixous and Kristiva might be helpful aid for black feminist critics. Julia Kristiva and Helene Cixous maintained that female sexuality is directly associated with the female poetic creativity. In her essay, the Laugh of Medusa calls for women to write about women and bring women to writing..put herself into the text in as into the world and into history by her own movement” (320).

The Black feminists play the vital role for the sound development of black feminism. In the context of black social and cultural scenarios, the black feminist writers have raised the issues of feminism in literary level rather than political level. There are racial and sexual issues in the literary genres composed by black women rights. Black feminist writers like Toni Morrison, Zora Neale Hurston, Maya Angelou and Alice Walker have played the dominant role for the uplift of black women who are sexually and racially deprived from using their personal rights. They make the literature main medium to protest the racial and sexual suppression. Most of the Morrison’s works are based on racism and sexism. In her literary genres, most of the characters belong to the black race. They are valiant and full of woman centered psychology. The black feminist writers portray the male characters as passive, immature and have least role. In her novel *Love*, Morrison has portrayed such black

female characters who are valiant and have sense of revolutionary thoughts and feelings. The women are on the top. Feral autonomy is the basic literary tenant in *Love*.

Feminism is a school of thought which tries to dismantle the patriarchal social norms and values to liberate women against the natural law of equality. As a movement, it assumes that women are also human beings like men. It takes the voices against the inadequacy as well as ideologies of the males.

Therefore, feminism is a complaint against patriarchal monopoly and is a commitment to eradication the ideology of domination to establish a health and equal society for both male and female. As such, feminism is a movement for the creation of new society in which there will be no forms of discrimination.

So, the major focus of feminism is on political, economic, psychological and religious equality. It opposes gender stereotypes and discrimination against women based on the assumption that women are passive, weak and physically helpless. In this context, British author and critics, Rebecca West has the following opinion on feminism;

I myself have never been able to find out preciously what feminism. I only know that other people call me a feminist, whenever, I express sentiments that differentiate me from a door mate or prostitute to that of a woman of voice and status. To be called feminist is ok, but what actually it stands for, is a challenge that has been a query to me (219).

Here, for Rebecca, the term feminism itself is very vague. It is difficult to define “what feminism is” and who are the feminist. According to her the person who stands for the female rights and in favor of female sentiments is actually the feminist. But feminism has a lot of challenges to be faced. Feminism has been often focused on

what is absent rather than what is present, reflecting concern with the silencing and marginalization of women in patriarchal culture- a culture organized in favor of men unlike the other approaches for their false assumption about women.

The above mentioned characteristics are the most important tools to analyze the black feminism in literature. The feminist as well as black feminist tools are used in this research to depict black feminism in *Love*. Black feminist issues are so widely across cultural, social, political and psychological categories. The ultimate goal of black feminist criticism is to increase our understanding of women's experience, both in the past and present and promote our appreciation of women's value in the world.

Chapter III: Repression and Resistance in Morrison's *Love*

The present research work excavates on Toni Morrison's *Love* through the light of Black Feminism. In the novel, the black female characters are under the clutch of male made norms and values of the American capitalist society which is bias towards the female. The female characters such as Heed, May, Christine, Junior and Vida are victimized and traumatized by the contemporary male dominated patriarchal society in general and by the influential male character Mr. Cosey in particular. These women idealize William Bill Cosey as their own perfect man. Only L, the former cook of the hotel, knew him truly whereas the others were blind to his duality, only seeing what they wished in him. Mr. Cosey, the owner of the Cosey's hotel and resort, is more dominant who suppressed women mentally, physically and sexually. As the story moves forward, it is revealed that William Bill Cosey, around whom the story is written, has been dead for twenty five years. But he is still a very real presence to the women who shared his life. Though the female are victimized by the patriarchal ideology, Morrison has presented her characters more conscious for their rights and they develop the sense of resistance against male dominated patriarchal society. In the novel *Love*, Mrs. Heed and Christine struggle for the property of Mr. Bill Cosey. Here, Morrison's characters are heading towards the freedom and emancipation.

William Bill Cosey, the protagonist and the central figure in the main plot of *Love* has been dead for twenty years but, he is still very present to a number who had shared his life in the past. His influence in their life is very important. All female characters- May, Heed, Christine, Vida, Junior, Celestial and L (the former cook of the resort) surround Bill Cosey. All these women have their own individual relationship with him. A mysterious woman named Celestial becomes an important

part in his life. L, whose real name was never known, is the omnipresent narrator through whose speech the novel begins and moves ahead.

The women characters, creating their own individual relationship with William Bill Cosey, stick with him. They, vie for his affection and attention when he is alive and even after his death, are traumatized by his memory. All the women are obsessed by Bill Cosey. Bill Cosey is mysterious both in his thought and action because more than a wealthy owner of the famous Cosey Hotel and Resort, he shapes the yearning of almost all the female characters in different forms and relations as father, husband, lover, guardian and friend. He plays a dominant role in the lives of all female characters that all take him to be the most dominating and fascinating male figure and long to be closer to hi even after his death. In this context, Cosey is portrayed as the void in , and the center of their stories. Though dead for twenty five years, he is yet a very real presence to the women who once shared his life or those who becomes closer to his family. Even after death, he dominates the lives of women who had been emotionally and economically dependent on him during his life time.

The women ae now haunted and traumatized by memories of his powerful presence even as they quarrel over his inheritance. The chapters of the novel are named as portrait, friend, stranger, benefactor, lover, husband, guardian, father and phantom. They are pointed to the many roles played by Bill Cosey and what he meant to the women around him, all these indicated roles are painted in the individual consciousness of the women characters in *Silk*. Bill Cosey inherited money from his father and during the 1940s, becomes a millionaire as the owner of Cosey's hotel and resort " the best and the known vacation spot for colored folk on the east coast"(6). But now, Bill Cosey is dead and when the story moves forward, we do not find only yearning of the past good times but also a portrait of Bill Cosey's power in the

present. Unusually for black at the time, Bill Cosey enjoyed power, both economic and social. In this context, Heed, Bill Cosey's wife, realizes:

We were the first colored family in silk and not a peep out of one white mouth. Nineteen forty-five. The war just over. Everybody had money but papa had more than most. So, he built this house on land as far you could see. Its Oceanside now, but then it was a run-down orchard full of birds (1924).

At the beginning, in the novel *Love*, the black females are in pathetic condition in the patriarchal American society. The females are presented as weak and the mere followers of male. They revolve around Mr. Bill Cosey who exploits them mercilessly. Women are victimized physically, mentally and sexually. Mrs. Heed, now the Cosey's widow, is one of the dominant female characters in the novel, who faces all the difficulties that a woman can endure. She is exploited severely during her life time. She was sold by her father for hundred dollars and a new pocket book for mama to Bill Cosey.

Bill Cosey, a fifty two years old widower, marries Heed, then an eleven years old semiliterate ghetto girl. She even did not know about her role as wife of a man. In this regard, Christine, her childhood friend and now her grand-daughter says:

My grandfather married her when she was eleven. We best friends. One day we were built castles on the beach; next day he sat her in his lap. One day, we were playing house under a quilt; next day she slept in his bed. One day, we played jacks; the next she was fucking my grandfather. One day this house was mine; next day she owned it.
(131)

That is, the given extract shows how the females are exploited sexually even in their childhood days. Heed was only eleven years old when she married with a three times old man Cosey without any resistance. Morrison further portray the abusive character of Bill Cosey saying:

He touches her chin, and then-causally, still smiling-her nipple, or rather place her swimsuit where a nipple will be if the circled dot on her chest ever changes. Heed stands therefore what seems an hour but is less than time it takes to blow a perfect bubble. He watches the pink ease from her mouth, then moves away still smiling. Heed bolts back down the stairs. The spot on her chest she didn't know she had is burning, tingling. (191)

This statement shows the real plight of females in the Cosey's family. Christine, the granddaughter of William Bill Cosey, while searching for her friend, sees her granddaughter masturbating in a room and is ashamed of him. As a widower, he seems to be sexually dissatisfied and wants to get his sexual desire fulfilled anyway possible. Before Christine finds William Cosey masturbating in a room with the window open, Heed has been caressed, molested by the same old man. Though very close friends, they can't share their experience and sham each other even in the language they had invented for the special purpose.

The plight that Heed and Christine developed and continue to have throughout their lives is shown in their psyche by Cosey's irrational activities that these female characters can never overcome it and be happy in life. It is Mr. Cosey who has robbed them of their happiness, comforts and best friends as well as and left them suffer in solitude, growing hatred and rivalry between each other.

May William Bill Cosey's daughter-in-law and Christine's mother too, suffers a lot because of Cosey's ignorance towards females, his irrational activities. He often thinks that he is not restricted to do anything he wants and does the same. But the female characters mostly L, the cook of Cosey's hotel and resort and May, are overburdened with excessive works. In this context, L narrates the position of May in her family:

Mr. Cosey was alarmed at first, not being privy to his son's selection, but was made easy when the bride was not only impressed with the hotel but also showed signs of understanding what superior men require. If I was a servant in that place, May was its slave. Her whole life was making sure those Coseymen had what they wanted. The father more than the son; the father more than her own daughter. (102)

Here, May works like a slave in her own house. At the same time, she is deprived of her right to property. She is even robbed of her motherhood that she cannot breastfeed her small child at the age of three months. Though May is pregnant, she works heavily in the hotel. In this regard, Morrison states: "Every pregnancy did not slow her down. May, was first mother I saw who weaned her baby at three months" (137).

May and L borne the entire responsibility to run the hotel after Bill Boy's death that Mr. Cosey finds himself free to think about money and play but does not let May, a pregnant woman take rest.

William Bill Cosey is a woman hunter that even his employee, Sandler is very much afraid of the fact that his grandson Roman may end up like Bill Cosey. He does not want his grandson to end up being surrounded by women, be with them, no matter even if he does not remember even their name. But he never feels connected with any

of them. Regarding Sandler's fear about his grandson and William Bill Cosey's nature, Morrison writes:

He might end up like bill Cosey had, wasting hours between the elbows of the women whose names he could not remember and whose eyes he avoided. Except for one, other than her, Cosey had said he never felt connected to a woman. His adored first wife thought his interest tiresome, his appetite abusive. So, he chose the view he saw in the eyes of local women, vacations, slightly tipsy vocalists whose boyfriend had not joined them on the four. (110)

Sandler thinks even after mating with many women, the bachelor behavior of Bill Cosey has not changed "which after years of eligible widower hood, he hoped to end by marrying a girl he could educate to his taste.

The price of May's hard work is rewarded by Bill Cosey, her father-in-law, by marrying an eleven year old girl, his granddaughter's friend, who has been now her mother-in-law. May is shocked by his irrigational activity that she feels betrayed badly. L, the cook of Cosey's hostel and resort, who is also an omniscient narrator in the novel, speaks of Cosey's cruel treatment to the women. In this sense, L says:

For the next seven years she put all her energy into the hotel's business. Even years of hard work was rewarded with "I'm taking a wife. You know her. Christine's little friend". Rewarded by watching her father-in-law marry her twelve- year- old daughter's playmate and put that playmate ahead of everything, including herself, her daughter and all she had worked for. Not only was that he supposed to teach and train the playmate to take charge of us. (138)

Mr. Cosey is a pedophile that he is sexually attracted to children. He brings Heed home, not because he loves her but he thinks she will soon grow up and be able to fulfill his desire of having sex with physically immature girl. This fact also makes May suffer. She finds herself emotionally disturbed and hurt. Though, May wants to prevent her daughter from unsuitable use, her father-in-law stands on the way as an obstacle. She cannot even get any time to instruct her daughter about menstruation.

Males consider female as commodity and pleasurable objects in the contemporary white dominated African-American society. They use them whenever they want, they do not care about the female emotions and needs. In the novel too, the females are considered as an object for the use of male. In the very beginning of the novel, when Sandler Gibbons sees junior, he likes her as an object rather than a human being. Morrison writes:

Sandler Gibbons scanned her legs and reckoned her knees and things were stinging from the cold her tiny skirt exposed them too. Then, he marveled at the height of her boot heels, the cut of her short leather jacket. At he had thought she wore a hat, and fluffy to keep her ears and neck warm. Then he realized that it was hair-blown forward by the wind, distracting him from her face. She looked to him like a sweet child, fine-boned, gently raised but lost. (14)

Here, in the capitalist American Society, black females are commodified and behaved as if they are not human beings rather lifeless things. Women are judged not in terms of their values but they are judged based on their job they have adopted, their appearance and their use for the help of males' daily work. Patriarchal norms and values try to confine women within the boundary which takes women as things, used

for the convenience of males. They give attributes to women as the consumers give the objects produced by capitalist.

The Cosey's hotel and resort is the center for black female domination and victimization. It is the symbols of male superiority. All the black female characters are involved in this hotel and resort directly and indirectly. They are used mercilessly for the sack of male or particularly Mr. Bill Cosey. Once, Sandler Gibbon says: "Go on that way you cannot miss it, less you try to. By as a church, or a jailhouse" (14). Here, the Cosey's hotel and resort is jail for the female which confined them without right to violates its rules and regulations.

Mr. Bill Cosey imposed the male hegemony upon the helpless women in Cosey's hotel and resort. He wanted to hold and captured all the characters around him. Once, he comments about his son sayings: "You are right. Still I was so caught up with him. I never took the trouble to know him. I used to wonder why picked a women like May to marry. Maybe he was somebody else and I made him my shadow. And now I'm thinking I don't not understand anybody .So why should anybody understand me". (43)

Here, Bill Cosey imposed his power upon the black females pathetically. He is selfish man who thinks only of himself and not anyone else. He ignores the fact that May is also responsible for his success. By marrying Heed; he has slapped her because he has forgotten what May has done to him. May's struggle is only meant for Cosey's success and prosperity and Bill has forgotten this side and thinks only of himself, his life and happiness. For Bill, May is just a machine, a heartless object that he does not intend to pay respect and reward. So, after marrying Heed, he leaves no property for May and she suffers a lot after his death to survive. At the early part of their life, the black females suffered a lot because of their ignorance and helplessness.

But after the death of the Bill Cosey, they know about their position and try to search their separate position in the society.

The sense of resistance in the novel *Love*

Though all the female characters are subordinated and submissive in the novel *Love*, there is also the sense of resistance against the rigid forms of patriarchal norms and values. Morrison's characters used to be. Her characters are conscious for their rights and role in the society. They are on the way of freedom and emancipation from the traditional male dominated rules regulation. In the novel, Heed, the wife of Mr. Bill Cosey, is searching of her ownership on the Cosey's property. So, she goes up to court for her inheritance in the property. Similarly L, Christine, Vida and May are also the major female characters who also conscious for their female rights, duty and responsibility and try their best to become independent in the society.

Junior, another important female character is free to choose her profession and in the way to search here job freely. She goes to Cosey's house for job. "I came about the job" (19). Junior is one of the most enjoyable characters in the novel. Though, she endured a lot suffering her childhood, not at present, she can do anything read, write and so on. Here, she got proper education to understand the phenomenon around her. She is on the way to establish her identity in the society. She is in the search of a job and finds it on the Cosey's house as a personal secretary to write a book about Cosey's family. In this sense, junior says:

Look, Mrs. Cosey . I can write, okay? I am a smart as it gets. You want hand writing, you want typing, I will do it . You want your hair fixed, I will fixit. You want a bath, I will give you one. I need job and I need a place to stay. I am real good, Mrs. Cosey really good. (27)

Here, junior presents her as perfect woman in the society. She is able to do all the things smoothly. She is in the search of stable identity and space to develop her identity independent. Here, her statement shows that females, in the novel *Love*, are not only deprived of basic needs but also conscious for their individuality and subjectivity.

After the death of the Mr. Bill Closey, all the female characters get freedom to constructs their identity as a respective member of the society. Here, symbolically, the death of Cosey and his Hotel and Resort represent the collapses of the patriarchal domination in the capitalist American Society.

Vida Gibbon one of the female characters is happy after being released from the Cosey's Hotel and Resort. She was also the former employer of the hotel. Now, after the close of resort, she is with her husband having sound relation with him. They have their own house and garage for economic support. They are free economically, emotionally and socially to conducts whatever they like. In this sense, Morrison writes: "Vida knew she was lucky to have the hospital job. Slight as it was, her psyche had helped fill her house with the sounds of gently helpful bells: time up in the microwave oven, the washing cycle, the spin dryer (35). Here, Vida Gibbons is also on the way to identify herself in the male dominated patriarchal society. In her childhood days, Vida suffered a lot and experienced a lot of difficulties and problems. She is helped from Cannery by Mr.Cosey. Now after being released from theCosey Hotel and Resort, she makes her own house and remains happy with her husband and grandson. Morrison further writes:

When he entered the kitchen, Vida was folding clothes and singing
Alone to some bluesy country music on the radio. Thinking, maybe, Of
those cracked glass eyes rather than the one in the painting; he

grabbed her shoulders, turned, her around, and held on while they danced. (46)

In the novel *Love*, other male characters excepts Bill Cosey , are presented inactive and in minor position. Sandler Gibbons, the husband of Mrs. Vida is given fewer roles than his wife Vida .

Heed is the protagonist of the novel *Love*. Though, she exploited physically, sexually and mentally, she feels the sense of freedom after the death of her husband Mr. Cosey, similarly all the black female character victimized by the patriarchal norms and values in society . But in the time being, they got united and realized their condition in the society. So, they started to search their identity in the society. Other characters like May, Christine and other women from Cosey family face different difficulties by their husband, father in law and grandfather respectively. But after Bill Cosey death all the black females in Cosey house realized their right and position in the society as they started to search their identity and individualism.

Females are dominated by reacting by creating different negative stereotypes as emotional, weak, fantasy , impatience and so on . For them, language, which exists in present time, is discriminatory. So, females need to create new types of language to express their emotions freely. In the novel, Christine wants to create a separate language for her to understand only. It is great sense of resistance against the existing bias convention in the patriarchal society. Morrison further writes:

Christine threw her head back and scanned the ceilings as though searching for a new language to make her understood. What to say to this lawyer woman should not be all that hard. After all, Miss East had up Beach history was the granddaughter of a cannery girl. (94)

Here, Christine is presented radically. She thinks that the existing rules and regulations of the society are the obstacles for the betterment of women. So, for here, for the betterment of female, such obstacle should be terminated.

Similarly, Christine is also conscious for her right to property. She argues that she is only the blood relative of her grandfather William Cosey. Here Christine is not a passive girl here rather she is conscious for her leading role in the family and its property. That is, she is no more ready to serve Cosey's family and his home without any guarantee of her participations. In this sense, she further says:

I am the last, the only , blood relation of William Cosey. For free I have taken care of his home and his widow for twenty years. I have cooked, cleaned, washed her underwear, and laundered, her sheets, done the shopping...she is that has been her whole life, don't you get it? Replacing me, getting rid of me. I am always last, all the time the one being told to go get out. (95)

Here, after long time domination and victimization, Christine searches her role and her part in the property. She is now no more a submissive girl rather determined for her aims. She struggle for inheritance in the Cosey's property.

In this way, women are conscious for their right and role in the family and the society. Christine further says: "That is my place; I had my sixteenth-birth day party in that house. When I was away at school it was my address. It is where I belong to and nobody is going to wave some liquor- splashed menu at me and put me out of it" (91).

Here, Christine strongly states her feminist vision about her role in her family. She is the only blood relation of Mr. Cosey because there are no other male or female

relative directly born in the Cosey family. Both Heed and Christine feel sorry for what have happened to their lives .More, Heed confesses Christine and asks her to forgive her. “Hold my... my hand he took all my childhood away from me, girl. He took all of you away from me” (194). Heed, at last realizes that Bill Cosey is responsible for the ruin of their life. She complains Christine that bill takes away her childhood by marrying her at an early age. That is, at the end of the novel, these female realize the reality and get united against the male domination.

The two major characters in the novel Heed and Christine, hated each other until they both realize that they had been betrayed and exploited by William Bill Cosey as they wanted to be closer to him when he was alive. That is, the reason that Christine is hurt more by her grandfather William Bill Cosey than by Heed. Her pain and anguish are expressed in the following lines: “He was dead. The dirty one, who introduced her to nasty and blamed it on her. He was dead. The powerful one who abandoned how own kin and transferred rule to her playmate. He was dead. Well good. She would go and view the wreck he left behind ”(165). That is, Christine is convinced that all the damage that has been done to both herself and Heed has been done by William Bill Cosey. The hatred changes into scared feeling of concern and love as Heed falls through the rooted wood and Christine runs to her. When it is too late, the realization comes there that they had been manipulated throughout their lives. They now feel that it is Mr. Cosey who brought more suffering than happiness into their world.

Chapter IV: Domination as the Causes of Resistance in Morrison's *Love*

Toni Morrison's novel *Love* includes the black women's experience from their plight to sense of resistance. Toni Morrison's novel, the first black women writer to win Nobel prize in literature, is a prominent feminist who raises the issues related to women in her novels.. In her novel *Love*, she brings the issues related to the black female identity, motherhood, mother- daughter relationship, domination, victimization and exploitation of women in the hands of their male relatives. Morrison, as black female writer, supports the belief that black women should have the same rights and opportunities as other white women in the contemporary American society. She attacks the notion of patriarchy that females are secondary. She aims at elevating the equal rights, all human rights and the status of women, their language and religion, in order to achieve equality with men in general and with white women in particular in all spheres of human enterprise and to eliminate all discrimination against black women.

Black feminism is a form of feminism which strives to overcome sexism and class oppression. According to black feminist, to secure the rights of black women, the end of racism, sexism and class oppression is needed. Black females are doubly victimized by the white mentality in the society and by the concept of male superiority on the other hand. Black feminism assumes the idea that the females are dominated physically, sexually, and mentally throughout the history. They are treated as the cattle and deprived the basic requirements to conduct their life smoothly. Black feminism slightly differs from feminism, in the sense that it states the voice of the particular African- American woman faces racial as well as gender discrimination at the same time. They are doubly marginalized and victimized.

The novel *Love* captures the situation of black women who are heading towards emancipation from long time domination and victimization both by the male and the white women in the society. The black females, in the contemporary patriarchal society, are doubly marginalized by their male relatives on the one hand; and by the white mentally on the other hand. They face the pathetic condition in the society and later realize their guilt and develop the sense of resistance against the patriarchal hegemony. All the black female characters such as Heed, Christine, May, L, Vida and Junior suffer from the male domination and the bias ideology develop against the black females. Later they realize that their poor status is the result of the bias mentality of the male and the white superior ideology rather than own fault.

Mr. Bill Cosey , the owner of the Cosey Hotel and Resort is the male character in the novel. He is one of the representatives of male in the novel, who tries his best to capture all the authority and make female as puppet. In the beginning all the female characters revolve around him. He performs the role of father, husband, lover, guardian, friend, and benefactor and so on. He marries an 11 years old child Heed and abuses her sexually. He is five times older than Heed, a playmate of his own granddaughter Christine. Heed never feels satisfied with him; she is behaved as if she is not human being rather a machine to run according to his desire. She is the means to entertain her male relatives. But at the end of the novel, she realizes her marginalized position in her family and starts seeking her own identity.

May is also treated mercilessly by Bill Cosey. He is her father-in-law. All the responsibility of the Cosey's Hotel and Resort are fulfilled by her. Later, she is rewarded by the marriage with Heed, a friend of her daughter , Christine. Vida and Junior are also victimized by the than male dominated patriarchal society. May is also victimized sexually mentally and physically. She loses her husband in her childhood

days but she never gets chance to express her inner feelings and emotions. She endures a lot of sufferings that one can ever tolerate. Vida and Junior are the other black female's characters in the novel *Love* who are also the victims of the contemporary female biased society. Vida is rescued from the Cannery where females were treated mercilessly. Junior is slightly different from other female characters in the novel. Though she also one of the victimizers in the novel, she realizes her position in the society. So, she is in the search of a job which helps her to be independent.

In the novel *Love*, Morrison has given the sense of resistance along with the suffering of the females. Although, they are treated severely, at last they realize their position in the society. Christine and Heed struggles because of the males in the family. But later both of them realize the cause of their plight and get united. For them, the cause of their suffering is not themselves but Mr. Cosey. Vida one of the influential female characters in the novel *Love*, is also happy after her marriage with Sandler Gibbons. She has her own home, a garage and is happy with her husband. L is another character in the novel who realizes the cause of women suffering in the society. For her, male is the only cause who creates different norms and values to dominate and discriminate females in the society. L encourages other females to get united and fight against the male domination.

Christine, the granddaughter of Bill Cosey, feels the need of her own language to understand herself. Here, the feeling of the need of the separate language is the sense of resistance against traditional conventions which are bias towards female. Juniors are another influential character who loves to remain independent. At the very beginning of the novel, she is in the search job that helps her to independently

economically. She is well known that it is the economic condition that empowers women to revolt against the patriarchal society.

All in all, by portraying the female plight and resistance, Toni Morrison promotes the concept of black feminism in her novel *Love*. The black females are dominated doubly. To be free, they must fight against the patriarchal norms and values on the one hand on the other hand they must struggle against the white women who consider black females not the human beings. That is, in the novel *Love*, Toni Morrison has captured the essence of black female who are heading towards the way of freedom after the long term domination and victimization by the male and white too.

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