

CHAPTER IV

Conclusion

With such a long journey from the indentured servitude to the occupying place in the White Palace, Black Americans have entirely changed the notion presupposing them as subhuman, illogical and irrational. Now it is remarkable that blacks have played a significant role in shaping America. As the introductory part of the present research unfolds, the allegations of incapability of creating or producing any art or science have been surfaced in the early 18th century. They were considered as inferior, subhuman and having the lacuna of cultural norms. In order to prove all these allegations as nothing but false notion, literature appears as the medium of their assertiveness. By this medium, they reflect their own literary and cultural heritage showing as much significant as other's cultural norms. While discussing the Afro-American history, it becomes evident that they have struggled a lot to prove their own values in the marketplace of so called dominant whites. The concept of blacks conceived as a matter of denigration, exposes the race based discrimination and imposing insufficiency in the eyes of whites. But later on, this imposing insufficiency leads blacks to challenge the societal norms which regard them inferior to the mainstream society.

As it is never easy to establish one's standpoint, blacks have faced so many difficulties in making their identity in a world that is hostile to them. Here, the first chapter of the present research is all about the struggle of the Afro-American. It explores history from the period of slavery to the post racial era. Even during the time of Reconstruction, blacks are not able to bring themselves out of the trauma of slavery. With the tormented psyche, they feel embarrassed by facing the political changes such as Jim Crow segregation, Ku Klux Klan and Lynching etc. One of the significant movements led by blacks is Harlem Renaissance which causes a great change in the lives of blacks in America. Later on Black Arts Movement provides a sense of pride among Afro-Americans. It brings literature to the height where black studies become a part of teaching in colleges, universities and other institutions. The literary giants receive due respect and honor in the country. They have the opportunity to give the best output of what they can do.

In the post-racial era, the disparity based on the racial prejudices seems to lose its presence. The victory of Barak Obama in 2008 as a president is a landmark in the history of United States

which makes it step away from the biases of race disparity. The economists call it a post-racial triumph and consider that Obama seems to embody the hope that America could cross its racial divisions. Several high profile endorsements received by Obama pave the way for making America as one nation in case of race. Nobel Laureate Toni Morrison hails Obama's victory by sending him a letter which dictates ' "In addition to keen intelligence, integrity and a rare authenticity, you exhibit something that has nothing to do with age, experience, race and gender. And something I don't see in other candidates. That something is a creative imagination, which coupled with brilliance, equals wisdom" (Mcgeveran, n.pag.). But at this point of time, the pertinent question arises --- Has really US cast off the racial garb? Or is America still suffering from the racial discrimination? Does Obama's victory bring the change in America? Is the country really on the verge of multiracial country in 21th century? These are some questions which are yet to be answered. By observing the ascendance of Barack Obama as a presidential candidate, NPR Senior News Analyst Daniel Schorr thinks whether the US is entering a new "Post-Racial" political era. He states, "The wish for a post racial politics is a powerful force and it rewards those who seem to carry its promise" (Schorr, n.pag.). But one cannot clearly claim that America is now a non-racial country. The incident of Obama's apology reveals "post racial America is yet to be dawn" (Hurst, n.pag.). Once Obama is heavily criticized for the 'Beer Summit'¹ to mediate between a black Harvard Professor and a white policeman who arrests the respected scholar for disorderly conduct. Obama calls the two together for a beer after saying the police has acted stupidly. Later he admits he should not make that judgment without knowing all the facts. Nonetheless, the shifting paradigms in Afro-America history somehow raise a ray of hope for the better future of blacks.

As Helen Cixous states, "Fiction does speak a sort of reality" (546), the sufferings of blacks have been portrayed by the literary giants very significantly. Here, the proposed research is an attempt to explore the shifting in literature especially in the fictional world of Nobel Prize Winner Toni Morrison in accordance with reality. The background in which the writer writes does really affects. Morrison's debut novel *The Bluest Eye* is all about the 'Black is beautiful' movement. Here, Pecola Breedlove represents the community which is fraught by the trauma of white standard of beauty. This community all the time tries to overcome the white supremacy, but fails. This shows the novelist's perspective of how the values and norms of mainstream society ingrained into the psyche of the community people that in spite of doing all the efforts they cannot disregard these values. They are not able to consider themselves as beautiful. To them, the skin of color becomes

more important than the spiritual beauty. They all the time pray for the beauty of others. At this time they are not in the position that they can evaluate their own beauty or they can completely get rid of the standard beauty i.e. white estimation. They look themselves from the outside gaze. This gaze is so pertinent in the novel that the characters suffer more from it. This leads to the psychic disintegration of the individuals. It happens in case of Pecola Breedlove who gets insanity after bearing all the ill- treatment from the people as well as from her family. Such characters are not secure even at their home. They find themselves cut from the mainstream society all the time. Society becomes more considerable than the individual which wastes individual potentiality. At this juncture, racism puts a curtain on the individual's eye which makes them unable to realize the truth. The blindness to the reality and the lack of self confidence forces the black people victims of racial prejudices. The conflict between community and the individual surfaces at one point of time and ultimately community holds its position over the individual. This way racism perceives the black individual as nothing but a subject of dominance.

Furthermore, Morrison deals with these racial prejudices in her works like *Beloved*, *Song of Solomon* and *Sula*. But with the passage of time, she changes her perspective and is no more interested in talking about racism. In an interview, she frankly admits that she imagines America as non- racial country. Her latest novel is published at the time (2008) when the trumpet of Obama's victory is buzzing. In this work, she presents a different perspective by separating racism from the slavery. To her, slavery is not a matter of race; but it affects the people of all communities. It visualizes those who consider themselves as not able to be independent for their survival. In *A Mercy*, Jacob Vaark is a ratty orphan who faces such circumstances that he may be the slave of anyone. But his zeal to gain better from labor leads a life full of pride and honor. Such zeal for living is invisible in the characters portrayed in *The Bluest Eye*. They surrender before the norms of the dominant culture.

After observing the incisive details of the chapters, it is easy to notice the changing dialectics in the proposed novels--- *The Bluest Eye* and *A Mercy*. While *The Bluest Eye* deals with the discrimination on the basis of race, *A Mercy* gives no space for racism. Here, the evil of slavery relates the characters belonging to different communities—Native Americans, Africans, whites and other strata of society. By portraying a black as a freedman, Morrison tries to erase the conflict between black and white communities which has been a pertinent theme in her works for a longer period of time. The white is not presented as dominant and the black not subordinate; rather the

line of discrepancy disappears between them. As far as slavery is concerned, it is not the matter of black and white but all the cultures residing in 17th century America. The abandonment of a child has not been considered a sin but reflects the sacrifice of mother love where mother is very anxious about her daughter's life. The emphasis shifted from physical to psychological one presents the changing perspective of the novelist. This psychological shift brings maturity and womanhood into the characters which present positive sign for survival. On the other hand, the idea of physical beauty in *The Bluest Eye* ruins one's spirit and forces her into insanity.

Moreover, the concept of home has been depicted with a new dimension. In the earlier novels, living with their own parents, children do not feel at home. They have the sense of alienation and fail to get the parental love. The idea of being put 'outdoors' is very significant in the first novel. It makes Pecola live nowhere in this world. In the other sense, it reveals that home requires no blood relations but the intimate relation among its members. For instance, Florens however strange for Jacob Vaark, finds the homely condition at his house. She gains what she loses at D' Ortega's plantation farm. She is treated like a daughter and appears as a trustworthy fellow for the characters residing in Vaark's house. Though she fails to win Blacksmith's heart, she does not lose her spirit. Rather his rejection leads her into maturity and gives a sense of self-realization. In the world of Jacob, the four female characters—Lina, Rebekka, Sorrow and Florens have full opportunity to relish their lives. When they are out of Jacob's world, they feel a sense of insecurity in the harsh society. By constructing the new world, the novelist frames the story in a different way which delineates the change in her perspective. Keeping in view all these incidents, the present research fulfills its aim in reflecting the changing dialectics in a new world created by Toni Morrison.

END NOTES

1. On July 24, 2009 President Barack Obama along with Vice President Joe Biden called for the Professor Henry Louis Gates, Jr. and White Policeman James Cowley for the beer in an attempt to calm racial tensions. During this summit, both Professor and Policeman expressed respect for each other and thus calmed down the uproar over racial profiling in America. After this highly anticipated 40-minute chat on the Rose Garden Patio, Obama said, “I have always believed that what brings us together is stronger than what pulls us apart.” This way he tries to assure people in case of race.

WORKS CITED

- Cixous, Helen. "Fiction and its Phantoms: A Reading of Freud's Das Unheimliche (The Uncanny)." *New Literary History*. 7.3 (1976).
- Hurst, Steven R. "Post-racial Era Yet to Dawn in America." *The New York Journal*. Jan 12, 2010. Web. 22 July 2011.
<<http://www.tnj.com/news/black-american/post-racial-era-yet-dawn-america/>>
- McGeeveran, Tom. "Toni Morrison's Letter to Barack Obama." *New York Observer*. Jan, 2008. Web. 22 July 2011.
<<http://www.observer.com/2008/tonimorrison-letter-barack-obama/>>
- Schorr, Daniel. "A New Post Racial Political Era in America." Natl. Public Radio. Jan. 28, 2008. Web. 22 July 2011.
<<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/phd?storyid/>>