



**Sudan University of Science and Technology**  
**College of Graduate Studies**



**Suffering of African American Women as Portrayed in Toni Morrison's Works" Beloved and The Bluest Eye"**

معاناة النساء الافريقيات الامريكيات كما تم تصويرهن في اعمال تونى  
موريسون محبوبة والعيون الاكثر زرقة

**A thesis Submitted In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for M.A in  
English Literature**

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# *Dedication*

*To my beloved family*

## **Acknowledgments**

I am grateful to Allah who granted me a brain to learn . Special gratitude to my supervisor Dr. Wigdan Yagoup for her adequate supervision and invaluable help that she kept extending to me throughout the period of this study. Also my great thanks to doctors in Sudan University for Science and Technology ,who offered me this opportunity to do the M.A program. I thank my teacher in Omdurman Islamic University Awadia Ahmed for her grateful pieces of advice.

# Abstract

This research discusses the suffering of whole women in America, and the African ones in particular. The black women have and still been encountered by different problems since quite along time and up to date. Troubles like slavery affect them physically and psychologically. Toni Morrison's novels displayed that suffering in the real life. In "Beloved" Sethe suffering under slavery until she prefers to kill her children and lives with her daughter spirit, than watching them go under the humiliation of slavery .In The Bluest Eye dangerous of racial separation affects the black society and makes the families un related or unconscious. Pecola seek hope in her prayers for beauty, which she feels will lead her to being loved. If she has blue eye and be pretty. Unfortunately, her drunker father destroyed both her life and her innocent dream, by raped her that led her to become crazy.

## المستخلص

هذا البحث يناقش معاناة النساء في امريكا خاصة الافريقيات . فالنساء السود ظللن يواجهن مشاكلًا مختلفة منذ فترة ماضية و حتي الآن . هذه المشاكل مثل العبودية التي تؤثر عليهم جسدياً ونفسياً. توني موريسون في رواياتها عرضت تلك المعاناة في الحياة الواقعية ففي رواية "محبوبة" عانت (سيث) بشدة من الإستعباد لذلك فضلت ان تقتل أبنائها وتعيش مع روح إبنيتها علي ان تشاهدهم يعانون من ذل العبودية. وفي رواية "العيون الأكثر زرقة" خطر التفرقة العنصرية اثر علي المُجتمع الأسود مما جعل الأسر غير مترابطة او غير واعية. سعت (بيكولا) وتمنت في صلواتها الجمال الذي تحس انه سيقودها إلي ان تكون محبوبة وإذا كانت تمتلك عيون زرقاء ستكون رائعة وللحظ العاثر والدها السكير دمر حياتها وحلمها البرئ بإغتصابها مما قادها إلي الجنون .

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# **Chapter One**

## **Introduction**



# **Chapter One**

## **Introduction**

### **1-0 Introduction**

This study highlights the problems that faces the African –American women in America by new-founded field of writing. It has a significant impact on the field of literary studies .Its emphasis is on the importance of the attention to the issues of race ,sexuality ,gender ,social classes ,and slavery in Toni Morrison's novels( The Bluest Eye and Beloved) The two novel are in contrast to the traditional readings that often neglected such issues that did not pay attention to the oppressed and the marginalized people .This type of writes consider these groups were engagement with literary text ,thus opening a new approach to reading literary text and literary criticism .There for, the focus of feminist issues that have been discusses from long time.

Toni Morrison is a great Twentieth-century writer to whose writing we can know the problems of African-American women. Shea gave inspiration to black women writers and generated a new kind of readership that was more alert about issues of race and gender and also more eager to achieve a fuller understanding of these matters.

### **1-1 Statement of the research problems**

This study is an argumentation that the suffering of women exist from the beginning of life, until the modern age, but that suffering is changes through out the generation development. Slavery life and family life don't go hand by hand , because of slavery the parents' and their children could not live together .Also it highlights or exhibit the affect of racial separation on black people . And

Discusses a new standard beauty which had been add to the society as another side of social class.

### **1-2 Questions of the study**

- 1- What are danger faces the black women inside American community and how they have struggle against that danger ?
- 2- What are the sufferings of African-American slaves women ?
- 3- How the standards of beauty affect on Pecola?

### **1-3 Hypothesis of the study:**

- 1-The African American slaves women have suffer a lot from slavery and racism.
- 2-Slavery affects on Sethe emotionally and mentally.
- 3-The standards of Beauty affect on Pecola in many ways ,even she dreams about having ( blue eyes).

### **1-4 Objectives of the study**

- 1- To Send message through out Toni Morison's themes. And explain how far the women suffering especially those who are working in the white society .
- 2- To see the real meaning of suffering from some sacrifices that found in Beloved novel.
- 3- To speak about unspoken issues like slavery and racial separation through the two novels The Bluest Eye and Beloved.

### **1-5 Significant of the study**

The research highlights on the suffering of black who are living in American society specially women and children. This study reflects the important role of

family and community on the people lives specially the black people. So the readers will be aware about such important issues.

### **1-6 Methods of the study**

The research adopted the feminist criticism, historical, social, psychological and analytical approaches.

### **1-7 Limitation of the study**

This study discusses the suffering of black women in America from slavery and racism,

# **Chapter Tow**

## **Historical Background and Previous Studies**

## **Chapter Two**

### **Historical Background and Previous Study**

#### **Historical back ground**

##### **2-1 Creating Slavery**

The business of capturing and trading enslaved people was a fundamental part of human society through out recorded history. Prior to the Atlantic trade of enslaved Africans to the Americas, Muslim traders out of the Middle East and Northern Africa purchased, sold, and captured millions of enslaved Africans and central Europeans in a slave-trading net work that extended from present - day Hungary to Southern Asia and the far east.

There was nothing especially new about slavery as a system of labor and the exploitation of people when the Spanish and the Portuguese first began bringing slaves in 1503 from Western Africa to replace Native Americans in the gold mines of the Caribbean and Central America. The extent and impact, however, of the vast number of enslaved Africans thereafter brought to the New World to work the sugar, coffee, tobacco, rice, and cotton plantations was simple phenomenal. This transatlantic trade created a new global economy and an international world. This new Atlantic World was unlike anything ever known before-linking the Americas to Africa and Europe in ways that resulted in the development of Europe and North America and the un development of Africa and the rest of the Americas. We can not deny that, the profits which made by slaves from 1600 to 1860 greatly contributed to the emergence of Western Europe and the United States as the dominant nations of the world.

The Portuguese, Spanish, and Dutch controlled most of the slave trade to the Americas from 1500 to 1700, English and North American traders moved aggressively into the business after 1730. It is estimated that around 310,000 slaves

were bought and sold through Liverpool alone in the eighteenth century. New York, Boston, and Charleston also thrived as homeports for slave trading vessels.

The image of sugar plantation and mill looks being compared to the reality of the industry. By the mid-1700s as much as 200,000 tons of sugar was exported annually from the Americas. This in turn created a high demand for African slaves in English and Dutch Caribbean colonies to grow the sugarcane and work the mills. The work was grueling and dangerous.

Slavery in North America differed significantly from slavery in the rest of the Americas. In the first place, far fewer slaves were brought into what became the United States, only around 500,000 compared to perhaps 12 to 13 million imported into the Caribbean and south and Central America. Most of these imports to North America ended by 1770, moreover, except for a burst of activity by a few southern states after the American Revolution. Secondly, the fact that the English people had little experience with slavery in comparison to the Spanish and Portuguese meant that little historical reference existed for them to draw upon in the early years. Initially, the first slaves in the Virginia colony were looked upon as workers rather than as property, and some of them were treated much like white indentured servants. The enslaved Africans often worked along side the indentured European laborers in the tobacco fields of the Chesapeake region. Nor were the Africans especially valued. It was cheaper in the early years to bring in white laborers from England as indentured servants than to pay for slaves. And most whites looked upon Africans as morally and intellectually inferior, in any case.

## **2-2 Surviving slavery**

At the foundation of this enslaved culture stood the African-American family. Because of the nature of the work performed in slavery and the scarcity of labor, slaveholders usually allowed their human chattel to live in family cabins and to

observe family connection. Slaveholders did this for simple economic reasons and to make it easier to control the slaves. Whatever the reasons, slaves took advantage of the opportunity to use the family environment as refuge and as a source of cultural endurance. Although slave marriages had no legal standing, most slaveholders allowed slaves to select their own mates. Enslaved men usually courted their girlfriend and married them in ceremonies conducted by enslaved "jumping the broom," a ceremony more Old World European than African.

Perhaps as many as 15 percent of all enslaved Africans were church members by 1780--usually attending the churches of their owners, many more practiced their own version of Christianity out of sight of whites. African-American funerals reflected the African perspective on death as moment of transcending life in which the dead returned to their homelands to be reunited with their ancestors.

Within the world of slaver, African-Americans taught themselves a new language, practiced new art forms, and played a new kind of music that enabled them to endure the horrors of their bondage. Although most slaves had lost their African languages over the generations, some managed to hold onto parts of their old ways of speaking. The Gullah and Geechees dialects, which are still spoken today, employ American words and grammatical elements within a basic English structure. The Creole English (or Enslaved English) enabled African-Americans to communicate with each other in ways not easily understood by their white overlords.

## **2-3 Escaping Slavery**

Almost from the beginning of slavery in North America, southern masters struggled to cope with the constant problem of runaway slaves. It is impossible to know how many slaves actually ran away because no exact count was ever made.

Some historians contend that up to 50,000 African-Americans ran away each year of slavery, especially from 1830 to 1860. However, most of these runaways were not attempting to escape slavery by fleeing to free states. Rather, they ran for a variety of reasons, and the vast majorities either returned of their own accord or were captured. Among those who broke for freedom in the American south were African Americans who lived for years with groups of runaway slaves in independent, outlaw communities. These maroon communities existed everywhere in the Americas and especially, In Jamaican, Surinam, St. Dominguez. and Brazil.

## **2-4 Position of African-America Slave Women**

Sociologists used to theorize that slavery taught women to be self-reliant, whereas white women of the time were dependent socially and economically on men. This theory was analyzed and revised to say that male slaves were dominant, but directed women to be seemingly self-reliant. Indeed, slaves valued two-parent homes for all their difficulty in achieving them.

On plantations, men and women did equally difficult work and very often did the same jobs. Not all labor by women was traditionally "women's work" though men did not usually perform tasks traditionally done by women. Women worked in the fields alongside the men, but most of the hard labor performed by the men or the women past childbearing age, Pregnant women and nursing, mothers were often given lighter work, such as the "trash gang" a gang of field hands consisting of pregnant, nursing, and elderly women. This group was also the one to which a young girl of twelve or so years would be assigned to be acclimated to the hard labor of slaves.

Several positions were open to female slaves that were considered skilled labor and so quite respected by the slave community. One of these was the cook, who prepared food for the master's household and for the slaves themselves when they



came back from the fields. Most slaves ate communally, and the women hands did not have the time or means to cook, so those who did were prestigiously skilled among slaves

The ability to sew was much the same. Most slave women were not taught to sew, nor had they the materials to do so. Some women, however, did know how, and they were responsible for sewing the clothes for the entire slave community and, if they were quite excellent, for the master's family, too. The skill of midwifery also was strictly for female slaves, and like cooking and sewing was considered highly skilled labor. Learned usually from the mother or other relative, such as an aunt, midwives catered to blacks and whites alike, and continued to be prominent job among African-American women well into the twentieth century.

Many times slave women were looked up to for leadership because of their occupation, their age, or their number of children, and the fact that the work done by the majority of women was done in groups, the existence of skilled and therefore respected labor strictly for women, and the control of child and medical care by women points to the idea that black females slaves were able to order their own community among women.

## **2-5 Female slavery in the United States**

The institution of slavery in North America existed from the earliest years of the colonial period up until 1863, president Abraham Lincoln freed slaves in the rebellious southern states through the Emancipation proclamation. The Thirteenth Amendment, taking effect in December 1865, permanently abolished slavery throughout the entire United States, including the Border states, such as Kentucky, which still had about 500,000 slaves. It was also abolished among the suffering Indian tribes in Indian Territory by new peace treaties which the US required after the war.

For most of the seventeenth and part of the eighteenth centuries, male slaves outnumbered female slaves, making the two groups' experiences in the colonies, distinct. Living and working in a wide range of circumstances and regions, African-American women imported African women, as well as those born into slavery in the colonies, slaves sex ratios leveled out between 1730 and 1750. "The uniqueness of the African-American female's situation is that she stands at the crossroads of the most well-developed ideologies in America, that regarding women and that regarding the Negro".

## **2-6 Virginia**

From 1740 an estimated number of 43,000 slaves were imported into Virginia, and almost all but 4,000 were imported directly from Africa. Recent scholarship suggests that the number of women and men imported in this period was more or less equal and included a high number of children. Virginia girls, much less black girls, were not educated, and most were illiterate. African and African American female slaves occupied a broad range of positions.

## **2-7 New England**

Historian Ira Berlin distinguished between "slave societies" and "societies with slaves". New England was considered to be a society with slaves, dependent on maritime trade and diversified agriculture, in contrast to the slave societies of the south, which were "socially, economically, and politically dependent on slave labor, had a large enslaved population, and allowed masters extensive power over their slaves unchecked by the law". New England had a small slave population and masters thought of themselves as patriarchs with the duty to protect, guide, and care for their slaves. Enslaved women were given to white women as gifts from their

husbands, and as wedding and Christmas gifts. The idea that New England masters treated their slaves with greater kindness in comparison to southern slave - owners is a myth.

## **2-8 Notable enslaved African American women**

Lucy Terry (1730-1821) is the author of the oldest known work of literature by an African-American . Margaret Garner (called peggy) was an enslaved African - American women in pre-Civil War United States who was notorious - or celebrated - for killing her own daughter after being captured following her escape, rather than allowing the child to be returned to slavery.

## **2-9 Previous Studies:**

Toni Morrison's *Beloved* and *The Bluest Eye*; A cultural Materialistic Approach By Mina AghakhaniShahrezaee University of Isfahan. This article aimed to investigate two novel of Toni Morrison *Beloved* and *The Bluest Eye*, by a cultural materialistic approach . Cultural materialistic emphasize on the cultural aspects and elements of literary text .The study issues such as race, gender, sexuality, social class, and slavery. In other words, they put under investigation, the marginalized people of society, like black people with cultural issues. As most of the main characters of Toni Morrison's novels are black people, so it can be concluded that for her marginalized people of society especially females, are at center. Therefore, in this paper, it is aimed to emphasize on cultural elements of Toni Morrison's two novels, and determine what extent she takes toward such minorities.

Toni Morrison is a great twentieth-century writer to whose writings we can apply matters of race ,gender, sexuality, social class and rape. As a celebrated

American writer, she is greatly concerned with life and problems of African American. She won the Pulitzer Prize in 1988 for *Beloved* and Nobel Prize in 1993. Morrison gave inspiration to black women writers and generated anew kind of readership that was more alert about issues of race and gender and also more eager to achieve a fully understanding of these matters. The center motif of most of Toni Morrison's work is the race plays in American life. Among the issues she addresses.

In *Unspeakable Things Unspoken ; The Afro-American Presence in American Literature* "Toni Morrison argues that For three hundred years black American insisted that 'race' was no usefully distinguishing factor in human relationship. During those same three centuries every academic discipline, including, history and natural science, insisted 'race' was the determining factor in human development. When blacks discovered they had shaped or become a culturally formed race ... suddenly they were told there is no such thing as 'race' , biological or cultural ,that matters and that genuinely intellectual exchange can not accommodate it .It always seemed to me that the people who invented the hierarchy of 'race' when it was convenient for them ought not to be the ones to explain it away , now that it does not suit their purposes for it to exist. But there is culture and both gender and race inform and are informed by it.

In Morrison's novels it is realized that the character's self-esteem and self-worth have been denigrated or even eliminated by racism, marginalization oppression. Their skin color or more clearly, their degree of blackness shows their value. For instance, the light skinned blacks had better position in society than darker ones. It was not an idea just annoy from the white majority but even blacks treated one another differently based on the degree of their blackness. These opinions were transferred from one generation to the next. Therefore, considering Morrison's characters, it becomes clear that racism and oppression are not limited to an individual's life , but also influence other generations .

One point about female selves frequently appearing in many slave narratives is the vulnerability of their bodies. They cannot protect themselves. In addition to the severe and hard work that exceeded the physical ability of female slaves, black women were also slaves to the whims of their owners. Their bodies did not belong to themselves, they were forced to grant it to their owner whenever he wanted it. They were regarded as the property of their masters, which indicates female slaves' powerlessness. We can say that they were viewed and treated like sexual objects by their masters and, even sometimes, by their family members. Therefore, many instances of rape and sexual abuse appear in literary works about slavery.

In her works, especially *Beloved* and *The Bluest Eye*, Toni Morrison intends to remind readers of the history of slavery and its horrible issues and effects, something that she thinks has been avoided and forgotten in traditional slave narratives. According to Holden-Kirwan's article, in an interview with Bonnie Angelo of *Time* magazine, Toni Morrison stated that the American nation tries to forget the memory and history of slavery. She mentions that even the characters in *Beloved* do not want to remember the history of enslavement in America. Furthermore, Morrison notes that "I don't want to remember, black people don't want to remember, white people don't want to remember". On the contrary, Morrison's novels remind readers of the crime of slavery preferred to be forgotten by some.

In these works, Morrison emphasizes the dehumanizing effects of slavery on slaves. Her focus is on the miserable condition of slaves, especially female ones of whom Sethe is a perfect representative, since she is raped, mistreated, and violated in *Beloved*. Sethe mentions that;

"After I left you, those boys came there and took my milk. That's what they came in there for. Held me down and took it. I told Mrs. Garner on me, she had that lump and couldn't speak but her eyes rolled out tears. The boys found out I told on

me .Schoolteacher made one open my back and when it closed it made a tree It grows there still"

In *Beloved*, Morrison reinvents the past and wants the reader not to forget what happened in African American history. Morrison critically acclaimed novel *Beloved* probes the most painful part of the African American heritage, slavery, by way of what she has called "rememory".

Throughout *Beloved* it becomes clear that Sethe has killed her daughter to keep her away from slavery and its consequences Fuston-White stated that it was not Sethe that killed her child, but it was the effect of slavery that caused Sethe to commit the crime "It was not madness, but the reality of slavery, that drove Sethe to kill her child fully aware of the act and its brutality as well as compassion".

One of the experiences that most of the female slaves shared was being raped. In *Beloved* too, the main figure of the story, Seth, was raped and her milk was stolen .Some poets, such as Jayne Cortez, NtozakeShange, June Jordan consider rape as a battle and women's bodies as a battleground. Black women as the second class citizens of America were forced to tolerate so many sufferings .Greatly vulnerable, their bodies were a site for white men's representation of power and oppression .Unlike other people, black women could not think of freedom, let alone enjoying it.

The them of rape and child abuse that has been used by Morrison in her novels is a point that some writers have investigated .In Toni Morrison(1990).Wiford. Samuels and Clenora Hudson-Weems mention that although now child abuse, incest, and rape are highly publicized topics and people can speak about them, in the past they were not as today. These topics once were socially un nameable and unaddressed though secretly known .It was Morrison who readily explored them in her pioneering rarest novels, *The Bluest Eye*.

Narrating the hazards of slave life, Morrison's novels illustrate the history of enslavement and the condition of slaves. Morrison uses marginalized characters as the protagonists of her novels. This attention to marginalized people, their problems in a white dominant society, racial discrimination and issues of gender and sexuality has made Morrison's novels great sources for cultural materialist studies.

Another focus of attention for cultural materialists is the social hierarchical system. Issues concerning social class distinction have always been important for cultural materialists and critics interested in cultural studies.

In the two novels under investigation in this study, *Beloved* and *The Bluest Eye*, social class plays a very significant role. Besides other factors like skin color, gender ancestry, and wealth that create a kind of borderline between people, social class also generates some prejudices. In other words, for Morrison, the ancestry and history of characters are greatly significant, since they caused different social classes and unequal conditions, Morrison argues that a distinctive characteristic of African American writing is its focus on the ancestors. According to her, these ancestor are not just parents, they are sort of timeless people whose relationships to the characters are benevolent instructive, and protective, and they provide a certain kind of wisdom.

As the elements of race, social class, slavery, and sex are so significant in Toni Morrison's novels, cultural materialists and critics interested in cultural issues investigate her novels from several perspectives, Taking advantage of the above mentioned issues in her fiction, Morrison has made readers aware of the calamities that African American face in their life. Morrison has pierced into the minds of her characters, revealing their thoughts perfectly. Her works can be a great help to move the position of blacks and especially black females from margin to center. Furthermore, the significance of Morrison's fiction falls on its capacity to combine

issues of race, gender, sexuality, and social class simultaneously. The point about her novels is that although matters of racism and slavery are central, she has not disregarded other issues. That is, Morrison's novels demonstrate universal truths about the human condition and that is why her fiction is appealing to both white and black audiences.



# **Chapter Three**

**The methodology of processing Data  
collection**

## Chapter Three

### The methodology of processing Data collection

#### 3-1 Introduction

for long time African-American slaves women, suffer too much under the slavery, they worked hard, separated from their families, raped, and humiliated. I will take some quotes, which exhibit the suffering of women from different things.

*"I did not see her but a few times out in the fields and once when she was working indigo"*  
*Beloved p.60 said by Sethe.*

In a moment together, Sethe question her mother as to when she will able to have a mark similar to her mother's not understanding the circumstances surrounding the branding. She simply loves mother and wishes to mimic her in every way. Later, Sethe explains that she "would have been (a good daughter) if my ma'am had been able to get out of the rice long enough before they hanged her and let me be one". Sethe explains that she never really knew her mother she was taken from her as an infant to be raised communally on the plantation. she was nursed by " a woman whose job it was" . Sethe's mother was work in fields from down to dark and had no time to raise her children. Denver asks why they had hanged her mother. Sethe says she never knew the reason, but there were several slaves hanged at the same time. The loss of her mother and her own family as small girl , motivated Sethe to love her children more than Baby Suggest, Paul D, and even Ella.

" Mina Aghakhani in her study mentioned that; the effects of slavery on slaves. Morrison focus is on the miserable condition of slaves, especially female once, of whom Sethe is a perfect representative, since she is raped, mistreated, and violated. One of the experiences that most of the female slaves shared was being raped. In Beloved too, the main figure of the story. Sethe, was raped and her milk was stolen.

Some poets consider rape as a battle and women's bodies as a battleground. Black women as the second class citizen of America to tolerate so many sufferings. Their bodies were a site for white men's".

*Baby Suggest to Seethe " in all of baby's life , as well as Sethe's own , men and women were moved around like checkers .Anybody Baby Suggest knew , let alone loved , who had not run off or been hanged , got rented out , loaned out , bought up, brought back . Stored up, mortgaged, won, stolen or seized. So baby's eight children had six fathers. What she called the nastiness of life was the shock she received upon learning that nobody stopped playing checkers just because the pieces included her children".*

All the women suffering from loss their closed people. Baby suggests learned not to love anything too much after realizing her children could be able taken away from her. She did not that slave owners could be so cruel until her first child was taken away from her. The reality is that her children were marketable, and subject to being sold, was a hard lesson for Baby Suggs to learn. After words, she became cautious not to become too close when caring for people. Baby suggests talks about losing all of her children with sense of sorrow the exception of Halle.

They were taken away too young for her to knew them well enough to remember them in great detail. Slavery took away any detailed memories she had of each of them.

*"And if she thought anything, it was NO. No .No. No. No no simple just flew. Collected every bit of life she had made , all the parts of her that were precious and fine and beautiful , and carried , pushed , dragged them through the veil , out , away , over there where no one could hurt them . Over there. Outside this place, where they would be safe" .(page 5)*

Sethe murders her first born daughter in an attempt to protect her from a life of slavery at the hands of school teacher .This act ,in turn , creates an unspoken distance between Sethe and Denver , her second daughter . Because of Sethe's violent conduct, Denver fears her mother, and becomes virtual recluse. Denver's

paranoid behavior stems from metaphorical smothering of her , a love that is too "thick". Sethe regarding Denver's belligerent attitude ,Sethe refuses to " hear a word against her " (45). Instead, Sethe explains the extent a word of her love for her daughter .

*Sethe "If you go there –you who was never there- if you go there and stand in the place where it was , it will happen again, it will be there , waiting for you ...Even though it's all over-over and done with –it's going to always be there waiting for you". (Chapter 3).*

Denver remembers what Sethe once told her about the indestructible nature of the past . According to Sethe's theory of time, past traumas continue to reenact themselves , so it is possible to make in to some one else's unhappy memory.

Sethe has been treated horribly as slave . Raped and beaten by the whites who ruled her ,Sethe does not want the same thing to happen to her sons and daughter . Sethe saw the decision she made as 'simple' . She wanted to secure her children and send them" over there" into the after

*don't know what it is, I don't know who it is , but may be there is something else terrible enough to make her to do again . So I never leave this house , and watch over the yard, so it can't happen again and my mother won't have to kill me too"*

Sethe describes for Denver what 'was'. She turns to the future tense and tell her that the past will always be there waiting for you .Sethe pictures the past as physical presence, something that is "there" that fills a space. when people go through trauma , they repress the details as a defense mechanism against the pain . it is obvious that Sethe has tried to repress the details of her traumatic life. Even when she talks to Paul D about her past, she does not go into a great depth of explanation, it is simply too painful at this point in time .

The force of the past is clear even in the difficulty Sethe has speaking about it. Even in this passage , as she warns Denver against the inescapability of the past , Sethe life rather than let them be pulled back Sweet Home with schooleteacher .

Sethe's passion for her children, which infuses so much of the novel, shines through in this passage. The moment that Sethe's instinct was appeared her language broke down as well : she recalls her words as " No, No ,No", for her, the border between life and death is tenuous, nothing more than a screen or 'veil' that she hopes to place in front of her children .Sethe knows that the white men have arrived to take her and the children back to slavery . which makes her go crazy . rather than allowing her children to be taken away from her and made slaves , she attempts kill to them .

Morrison interpreted Sethe's actions , she has shown that Sethe is desperate to provide love and care for her children . She sent Howard , Buglar , and Beloved to the safety of Baby Suggs before she escaped from Sweet Home. After she gives birth to Denver, she is desperate to reach Cincinnati in order to get milk for her infant. Despite unbelievable pain, Sethe reaches her destination and saves the child .She now determined not to lose them back to slavery .She knows that if that if they are all taken back to Sweet Home, she will never see her children . After all , she was never allowed to see or know her own mother . According to this understanding, Sethe's murder of her daughter seems a less legally and morally crime because it becomes an act of self –defense. This story presented a unique relationships –within or near the confines of slavery. Slavery weakens the bond between mothers and their children. Three parent-child relationships exhibited in Beloved are the bond between 'ma'am and Sethe; Sethe and Beloved and Sethe and Denver. But for Sethe love has no bounds, her ideas of right and wrong are confused, the novel confirms that it is a prehistoric society which has caused all this inhumane view of life. This what leads Sethe to killing her daughter.

*Denver: "I love my mother ,but I know she killed one of her own daughters, and tender as she is with me , I'm scared of her because of it ....I'm afraid the thing that happened that made it all right for my mother to kill my sister could happen again .*

I enacts and illustrates the very phenomena she describes. Because of her suffering in past, Sethe repeats her warning several time in manner that demonstrates the recurrence of ideas and her inability to leave past memories behind Sethe's warnings are the main cause of Denver's fears of leaving 124 and of the community. Finally Denver venture out alone. She realizes that even if she succeeds to face her fears of the past, the past may nevertheless actively begin to come after her. Also Denver suffering from past.

Toni Morrison in her works enters very depth to the (Unspeakable Things Unspoken) Mina Aghakhani presented that in her study, which related to the existence of 'race' in America. Toni Morrison argues that:

For three hundred years black American insisted that 'race' was no usefully distinguishing factor in human relationships. During those some three centuries every academic discipline including theology, history and natural science, insisted 'race' was the determining factor in human development. When black discovered they had shaped or become a culturally formed race... suddenly they were told there is no such thing as 'race', biological or cultural, that matters and that genuinely intellectual exchange cannot accommodate it. It always seemed to me that people who invented the hierarchy of 'race' when it was convenient for them ought not to be the ones to explain it away, now that it does not suit their purpose for it to exist. But there is culture and both gender and race inform and are in formed by it.

The following quotes are an obvious evidences to the main argument that the suffering of women had took place along with my study The Suffering of Women in Toni Morison's novel The Bluest Eye

*Claudia said: "We stare at her , waiting her bread, but more than that wanting to poke the arrogance out of her eyes and smash the pride of ownership that curls her chewing mouth "*

Claudia states that when they were children they hated Rosemary Villanucci, she is next-door white neighbor, comparatively wealthy girl. She makes fun of Claudia and Frieda Mac Teer, and tries to get them into trouble, sometimes they beat her up. The novel extended of the ways in which eternalized white beauty standers deform the lives of black girls and women. Implicit messages that whiteness is superior are everywhere ,including the white baby doll given to Claudia for Christmas .She explains that her hatred of Shirley temple (the doll) turned into the hatred of false love of whiteness blonde , blue –eyed ,she is confused about why everyone else thinks such dolls are lovable.

Claudia, Frieda, Pecola, and all female knew various type of powerlessness. They face the challenges that they will encounter as they grow up .First of all the universal powerlessness of being a child, raised in place when children are be seen not heard. Next, powerlessness of being black and poor. Mac Teer family cling to the margins of society, with the dangerous threat of homelessness that was prevalent on Pecola more than fear of discrimination, racism dose affect her life. We can grasp from the above quote is that beauty is more important than any things and that is exactly what Claudia and Pocola were looking for they are dreaming of having white skin however that is clear representation of the suffering psychologically of both Claudia and Pecola but the problem remains as it is they are still black .

*"The line between colored and nigger was not always clear; subtle and telltale signs threatened to erode it , and the watch had to be constant "*

The narrator tells how Junior's mother tried to control how people saw him .she put Lotion on his face in the winters, to keep it from appearing a shine. Although Junior would have linked to have played with the black children , but his mother will let him play only with upper class "colored " people , not lower –class "niggers"

As the reaction of that , Junior tortures his mother 's cat and the children . When Junior killed the cat he put the blame on Pecola. Geraldine's hatred of dirt linked to her hatred of " niggers" of course that a kind of self hatred. Pecola is scapegoats, dark-skinned , black children. Because she hates her own blackness, Geraldine also scapegoats of poor, and the fear of suffering she sees in the eyes of black girls like Pecola made that self hatred, although that Geraldine is educated, full of natural beauty, and has a good job.

The racism has been affected on the society at that time , and the black skin of pecola became as bad thing related to her personality being black is to be blamed from all the people although pecola has no hand for her blackness, but the matter of racism is overcome the community. Another suffering is being raised here pecola started to hate the color of her skin because of the surrounding society and its pressures. We can see that pressures when the black boys harassing Pecola, they taunt her for her black skin and naked father ,they can taunt her because they hate their own blackness. This self –hatred, along with their "cultivated ignorance" is ,likePecola's ugliness, a state of being that both forced upon them and chosen.

So the suffer of race also exist between black people them selves ,the whiter skin of them treated the others darker skin in un human way . When white people treated the black in an Injustice way, to some extent can be acceptable but from black to each other, needs to psychological investigation . Mina Aghakhani exhibits this problem in her study: In Morrison's novels it is realized that the character self-worth have been denigrated or even eliminated by racism, marginalization and oppression. Their skin color or more clearly, their degree of blackness shows their value. For instance, the light skinned blacks had a better position in society than darker ones. It was not an idea just among the white majority, but even blacks treated one another differently based on the degree of their blackness



*"In equating physical beauty with virtue, she stripped her mind bound it,, and collected self- contempt by the heap – she was never able, after her education in the movies , to look at a face and not assign it some category in the scale of absolute beauty, and the scale was one she absorbed in full form she slavery screen"*

The use of popular culture provides commentary on the mass media's preference for whiteness, and the effect this preference has on the lives of young girls. Maureen recounts the plot of movie she has seen, it may be a reflection of her own life of superiority, and her own relationship with her mother a girl ( rejected her black mother but cries at her mother 's funeral. Pauline believes of the white skin definition of real Beauty. And perceived people as valuable or not that according to their color degree of whiteness. Pauline despised herself because she was not beautiful in comparison to the white standers. The emphasized of Pauline self-hatred clear in her treated to Pecola her own daughter in contrast with the white girl which she works with. Also Pauline has renounce her own black family for the family of her white employer, Paulina started to hate herself as well as her own daughter.

So the message of white superiority do not come only from white media or light skin also black like Geraldine and Pecola 's mother reinforce the superiority of whites.

The white beauty standards deform the life of black girl like Pecola, and the rest girls. Implicit messages that the whiteness is superior are every where, including the baby doll of Claudia and Maureen she is cuter than the other black girls. Idealization of white beauty in the moves, and Paulina Breed love's preference for the little white girl she works for over her daughter. Adult women, having learned to hate the blackness of their own bodies, take this hatred out of the children. The black people are ugly because they believe they are ugly.

*"It had occurred to Pecola some times ago that if her eyes, those eyes that held the pictures, and knew the sights- if those eyes of hers were different, that is to say , beautiful ,she herself would be different."*

The above lines show out the inner conflict of Pecola's desire to have the Blue eyes .To Pecola ,blue eyes symbolize the beauty and happiness, that she associates with the white and middle-class world. The complexity of Pecola's desire-she does not want blue eyes because they conform to white beauty standards , But because she wishes to possess different life and pictures. As changing eye color will change her reality. Pecola just forced to whiteness to a void violent fight between her parents, and only solution she can imagine to her passive suffering. Pecola believes that if she had blue eyes, their beauty would bring beautiful and kindly behavior from her around community. To Pecola, color of one's skin and eyes do influence how one is treated and what one is forced witness.

*"It never occurred to either of us that the earth it self might have been un yielding .We had dropped our seeds in our own plot of black dirt just as Pecola's father and dropped his own plot of black dirt .Our innocence and faith were no more productive than his lust or despair."*

Claudia said that when she recount the events of novel ,most notably Pecola's pregnancy by incest. Here. she remembers that she and Frieda blamed each other for the failure of the marigolds to grow one summer, but now she wonders if the earth it self was hostile to theme –a darker , more radical possibility. Who is blame for Pecola's suffering? this question raises continually through the novel. Are Claudia and Frieda at fault for doing more to help Pecola? To some degree, we can blame Pecola's suffering on her parents and on racism; but Pecola's parents have suffered also. The causes of suffering seem so diffuse and prevalent the life on earth it self is hostile to human happiness. The complexity of the question of blame increases when Claudia makes a balance between the healing action of their planting of the marigolds seeds and Cholly's hurtful action of raping

Pecola. Claudia suggests that the impulse that drove Cholly might not be so different after all. Motive of innocence and faith seem to be no more effective than motives of lust and despair in the universe of the novel. In Mina's study we can discover that; The theme of rape and child abuse that has been used by Morrison in her novels is a point that some writers have investigated. In Toni Morrison (1990) all the writers mention that although now child abuse, incest, and rape are highly publicized topics and people can speak about them. In the past they were not as today. These topics once were socially unmentionable and unaddressed though secretly known. It was Morrison who readily explored them in her pioneering first novel . The Bluest Eye.

*"The birdlike gestures are worn away to a mere picking and plucking her way between the Coke bottles and milkweed, among all the waste and beauty of the world-which is what she herself was .All of our waste which we dumped on her and which she absorbed .And all of our beauty, which was hers first and which she gave to us"*

This quotation sums up Claudia's impressions of Pecola's madness. She transforms Pecola into a symbol of the beauty and suffering that marks all human life and fears of her community .The community has dumped all of its "waste" on Pecola because she is convenient scapegoat. The blackness and ugliness that the other members of the community fears reside in themselves can instead be attributed to her .But Claudia also describes Pecola as the paragon of beauty ,a startling claim after all the emphasis on Pecola's ugliness .Pecola is beauty is invisible to community who have identified beauty with whiteness .She gives others beauty because their assumptions about her ugliness make them feel beautiful in comparison . In this sense ,Pecola's gift of beauty is ironic-she gives people beauty because they think she is ugly ,not because they perceive her true beauty as a human being.

## **3-2 Comparison between The Bluest Eye and Beloved**

### **3-2-1 Positive Impact of family**

In *Beloved*, we can see that the family shapes identity through the mother/daughter relationship of Sethe and Denver. When Sethe remembers her own past, we can learn of her short-lived relationship with her mother "I didn't see her but a few times out in the field and once when she was working indigo" (*Beloved* p.60). In a fleeting moment together, Sethe's mother had a brand on her body, Sethe questions her mother as age wants to have a mark similar to her mother's. Sethe simply loves her mother and wishes to mimic her in every way. Later, she reveals her failure for being a good daughter. Sethe explains that she "would have been [a good daughter] if my ma'am had been able to get out of the rice long enough before they hanged her and let me one" (*Beloved* p.203).

### **3-2-2 Negative Impact of Family**

In *The Bluest Eye*, we acknowledge that both parents of Pecola Breedlove are responsible for her suffering sense. As a young woman, Pecola's mother, Pauline, finds solace at the movie theater. A virtual newlywed, pregnant and lonely, Pauline describes her time at the picture show as, "The onliest time I be happy" (P.123). Seeing such women as Jean Harlow on the large screen, Pauline attempts to mirror the Caucasian look, "I fixed my hair up like I'd seen hers on magazine. Apart on the side, with one little curl on the forehead. It looked just like her. Well, almost just like her" (p.123). In the same manner, Pauline's daughter is obsessed with the desire to have blue eyes, an Anglo characteristic. Pecola's admiration for unattainable physical traits not only stems from her mother's motion picture influences, but also from Pauline's treatment of white children in comparison to her own. This is best exemplified in the scene with the berry

cobbler. Pauline virtually ignores Pecola. Instead, she rushes to the assistance of the distraught. "pink and-yellow girl".(p.109),the daughter of the white people for whom Pauline works. The intimacy between the white girl and Pauline, in turn, refers to the Caucasian child as "baby" (p.109).On the other hand, Pauline denotes her own daughter, Pecola, as "Crazy fool"( p.109),where asPecola calls her mother by formal name of "Mrs. Breedlove".( p.107).The dialogue represents more than just "spilled ,pie" ,it gives picture of up normal in this mother/daughter relationship. Pecola, too may bosses the love of her mother. as for Pecola's father, Cholly, that he is abandoned by his mother. Raised by his aunt Jimmy, she, too abandons him in death while Cholly is stile a child. He is less than adequate as father."Had he not been alone in the world since he was their teen...he might have felt a stable connection between himself and the children. As it was, he reacted to them ,and his reactions were based on what he felt at the moment"( p.161).Thus, one reaction Cholly chooses to engage in, the rape of Pecola ,has a detrimental effect on the sanity of his daughter. Cholly fuels the familial dysfunction instead of breaking the cycle of absent or neglectful parenting .What results is Pecola's hopelessness, pitied by the community, isolated from academic opportunities, and impregnated by her father, a direct result of the fatalistic influences of the family. In Beloved Sethe's of motherhood leads to slaying of her own daughter. She murders her first born daughter in an attempt to protect her from a life of slavery at hands of Schoolteacher. This act ,in turn, creates an unspoken distance between Sethe and Denver, her second daughter. Because of Sethe's violent conduct ,Denver fears her mother and because a recluse.

Denver's behavior stems from Sethe's smothering of her, a love that too "thick"( p.164).In conversation with Paul D, regarding Denver's attitude, Sethe refuses to "hear a word against her "( P,45).Instead, Sethe explains the extent of her love for her daughter, "Grown don't mean nothing to a mother. Achild.... I'll

protect her while I'm live and I'll protect her when I ain't"( P.45).From the life around us we learned that, any person is a reflection of his life, by one from the two ways, tries to do the opposite of what the one faced with his parents. Like Sethe in *Beloved*, she tries to be close to her child by any way. The second reaction to do the same, like Pecola's parents, they faced abandoned from their parents, so they make the same with Pecola.

### **3-3 The Impact of community**

#### **3-3-1 Positive impact:**

In the *Bluest Eye* Pecola finds shelter at Mac Teer household after her father burned their house. Not only is Pecola free from any incestuous attempts through this communal living arrangement, but also 'Frieda and...[Claudia] stopped fighting each other and concentrated on...[their] guest, trying hard to keep her from feeling outdoors"(The *Bluest Eye* p.18-19).Furthermore, this kinship with the Mac Teer girls protects Pecola from harm at the hands of her peers. While Pecola is being teased on the playground, Frieda and Claudia come to her rescue .The antagonists 'buckled in confusion, not willing to be up three girls"( P.67).A sound argument for the fact that that there is strength in numbers.

Pecola's mother, Mrs. Breedlove, also find comfort with the community."She joined a church where shooting was frowned upon, served on Stewardess Board No.3,and became a number of the Ladies Circle NO.1"( p.126).In Mrs. Breedlove's case, though ,she utilizes the community as a means of escape: escape from Cholly. the 'model of sin and failure" and her children whom she" bore...like across"( P.126-127.As for Cholly, although both his parents reject him, he is still able to find a father figure within community, a man by the name of blue Jack . In *Beloved*, for the first twenty-eight days of her "unslaved life" Sethe belongs to a community. Days of company: knowing the name of forty, fifty other Negroes, their views, habits; where they had been and what done; of feeling their fun and

sorrow along a long with her own, which made it better. One taught her the alphabet; another a stitch. All taught her how it felt to wake up at dawn and decide what to do with the day....Bit by bit...she had claimed herself( P.95).

### **3-3-2 Negative Impact of Community:**

All community feeling jealous from celebrations of Sethe and her family leads to absolute abandonment. When School teacher and his men approach 124Bluestone,"Six or seven Negroes[who]were walking up the road toward the house...stod where they were" (Beloved p.148-149).No one attempt to warn Sethe of the danger or assist in her escape Instead, the community stands by silently. The silence becomes deafening once Sethe is led away from her crimes. We realize the impact of community.

The implications are that their vital retreat is a direct result of Sethe's aloofness. As the novel continues, it becomes obvious that a family closed off from the community.

Although the Colored Ladies of Delaware, Ohio, are responsible for sparing Sethe from hanging. Sethe" made no gesture toward any lived as though she were alone" ( P.257). For eighteen years, "Nobody, but nobody visited that house" ( P.284 ) .Even Sethe's friend, Ella, "junked her and wouldn't give her the time of day" ( P.256). Sethe somehow endures, but Denver is the one who suffers "serious losses since there were no children willing to circle her in game or hang by their knees from her porch railing" ( P.12).In conversing with her mother ,Denver is evident as a direct result of the isolation, "I can't live here. I don't know where to go or what to do, but I can't live here. Nobody speaks to us. Nobody comes by. Boys don't like me. Girls don't either"(P .14). Morrison give us themes in colorful way and techniques .In the both novels we can be sure that the influences of families and communities play an important role to direct the events and the lives of people.

# **Chapter Four**

**Conclusion – Recommendations –  
Suggestions for further studies**



## **Chapter Four**

### **Conclusion-Recommendations-Suggestions**

#### **4-1 Conclusion**

Americans have still a serious problem, people believe that whiteness is the standard of beauty. The main character , Pecola, who was nine-years-old African – American, was influenced by how people view beauty .Pecola suffered and felt that she is inferior to others. Pecola believed that having a pair of blue eyes would made people think she is pretty, and would be the key resolving all the problems. What is beautiful? How do people define beauty? people view differently. Usually, we judge people, first, from his or her appearance then to their inherence. That appearance has an indirect relationship with confidence .No matter male or female or children, people want to pretty."Because each culture has its own standards of beauty, the way people choose to enhance their appearance will vary among cultures.

The Bluest Eye fits the study of the American novel because it tells the story of a group of Americans, men and women and children who are descendants of slaves, and live in a society where, the color of your skin determines who you are what privileges you are entitled to. We cannot imagine how Pecola can felt when she called "a nasty little black bitch" and accused of killing a cat when she did nothing. But, we know what it is like to feel ugly and scared. Pecola is an extreme example of a person who is treated horribly by everyone she encounters, whether it is because she is black or ugly or both. Her mother ignores her, her father rapes her , her friends betray her, little boys and girls and adults call her names, even a cat and dog are killed in her presence. All of these things are experienced by people all of the time .something that seems as trivial as name calling is something that happens to all Americans.

Morrison takes American experiences and characteristics, such as violence, growing up, love family, hatred, race, beauty and ugliness, and illustrates them in a way that is so clear, yet so painful. These American experiences are not covered up or toned down to seem less serious; they are real and they are heart-breaking. Most people associate slavery with shackles or chains. What they do not realize is the impact of slavery of the psychological and emotional bondage of slavery. In order for a slave to be truly free, they had to escape physically first, and once that was accomplished they had left to confront the horror of their actions and painful memories that a life in chains had left behind. The novel explores how slavery affects the lives of former slaves. Morrison focuses more specifically on how the women in these situations are affected. One of the main areas affected in the lives of these women is motherhood. By describing the experiences of mother in her story (primarily Baby Suggs and Sethe) Morrison shows how slavery warped and shaped motherhood, and the relationships between mother and children of the enslaved. In *Beloved* the slavery culture separates mothers and children both physically and emotionally. In the novel Sethe explains that she never really knew her mother, she was taken from her as an infant to be raised communally on the plantation. She was nursed by a woman whose job it was. Sethe's mother and all enslaved women were worked in fields from dawn to dark and had no time to raise their children. The loss of her mother and her own family as a small girl, motivated Sethe to love her children too thick. She has strong maternal instinct to see her children as a part of herself. This sense makes Sethe desperate to provide love and care for her children by sending them to the safety of Baby Suggs before she escaped from Sweet Home. Now she is determined not to lose them back to slavery. If they are taken back to Sweet Home, she will never see her children. Sethe was never allowed to that happened. According to this understanding, Sethe's murder of her daughter seems a less legally and morally crime it becomes

an act of self-defense. She prefer to kill them to let them suffer like her, Sethe treated horribly as slave, raped and beaten by the whites who ruled her, o she saw the decision she made as "simple" .

As the result of that murder, Denver fears her mother and became virtual recluse. Because of her suffering in the past, Sethe repeats her warning several time in a manner that demonstrates the recurrence of ideas and her ability to leave past behind. Denver also suffering from past, it caused her fear of leaving 124 and of community, finally she lives in isolation. All slave women tested the sense of loss their closed people, Baby Suggs learned not to love any things too much, she talk about losing all of her children that was taken to being sold, with sense of sorrow. Therefore while they are enslaved neither Baby Suggs nor Sethe really own their children. In the slavery culture both the mothers and the children are considered as property of their white owners. As property, their rights as mothers are made void and have no say.

## **4-2 Suggestions for further study**

The researcher suggests the following:

- 1- Know the real meaning of been black in white society.
- 2- The problems which faced the women and children in lower class.
- 3- The concept of the following term:

HOME – FAMIYLIFE – MOTHERHOOD-FREEDOM

## **4-3 Recommendations**

The researcher recommends the following:

1. Teacher should discuss such issues like racial separation, suffering of women , human rights , the abuse of children (unspoken issues ) With their student to determine how students are active with the society issues.

2. Student should make their own point of view to analyzes the social problems and send their own vision as solutions.
3. From the research the student can learn the technique or steps of making research, and how it must be build, discuss and analysis.

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## **Appendix**

### **- Toni Morrison**

She is an American novelist, editor, and professor. Her novels are known for their epic themes, vivid dialogue, and richly detailed characters.

#### **Early Life and Career**

Toni Morrison was born in Lorain , Ohio, to Ramah and George Wofford. She is second of four children in a working-class family. Her parents moved to Ohio to escape southern racism and instilled a sense of heritage through telling traditional African folktales. She read frequently as a child; among her favorite authors were Jane Austen and Leo Tolstoy. She became a Catholic at the age of 12 and received the baptismal name "Anthony" which later became the basis for her nickname "Toni",

In 1949 Morrison went to Howard University graduating in 1953 with a B.A. in English she went on to earn a Master of Arts from Cornell University in 1955. She taught English, first at Texas Southern University in Houston for two years, then at Howard for seven years. She met Harold Morrison, a Jamaican architect, at Howard, whom she married in 1958. The couple had two children and divorced in 1964. She worked as editor, for Random House. As an editor, Morrison played a vital role in bringing black literature into the mainstream, editing books by authors such as Henry Dumas, Toni Cad Bambara, Angela Davis, and Gayl Jones.

#### **Writing career**

Morrison began writing fiction as part of an informal group of poets and writers at Howard University who met to discuss their work. She attended one

meeting with a short story about a black girl who longed to have blue eyes. She later developed the story as her first novel, *The Bluest Eye* (1970).

In 1975 her novel *Sula* (1973) was nominated for the National Book Award. Her third novel, *Song of Solomon* (1977), brought her national attention. The book was a main selection of the Book-of-Month Club, the first novel by a black writer to be so chosen since Richard Wright's *Native Son* in 1940. It won the National Book Critics CIRCLE Award.

In 1987 Morrison's novel *Beloved* became a critical success. When the novel failed to win the National Book Award as well as the National Book Critics Circle Award,<sup>48</sup> black critics and writers protested the omission. Shortly afterward, it won the Pulitzer Prize for fiction and the American Book Award. That same year, Morrison took a visiting professorship at Bard College.

*Beloved* was adapted into the 1998 film of the same name starring Oprah Winfrey and Danny Glover. Morrison later used Margaret Garner's life story again in the libretto for a new opera. In May 2006, *The New York Times Book Review* named *Beloved* the best American novel published in the previous 25 years. In 1993 Morrison was awarded the Nobel prize in Literature. She is currently the last American to have been awarded the honor.

In 2000, *The Bluest Eye* was chosen as a selection for Oprah's Book Club. In addition to her novels, Morrison has written books for children with her younger son, Slade Morrison who was died of pancreatic cancer. Morrison's novel *Home*, half-written when Slade died, is dedicated to him. Her 11th novel, entitled *God Help the Child*, has been announced for publication in April 2015.

## **Relationship to feminism**

Although her novels typically concentrate on black women, Morrison does not identify her works as feminist. When asked in a 1998 interview "Why distance

oneself from feminism?" she replied: "In order to be as free as I possibly can, in my own imagination, I can't take positions that are closed. In the writing world, has been to expand articulation, rather than to close it, leaving the ending open for reinterpretation.

In May 2010, Morrison appeared at PEN World Voices for a conversation, with Marlene van Niekerk and Kwame Anthony Appiah about South African literature, and specifically, van Niekerk's novel *Agaat*.

## **Politics**

In writing about the 1998 impeachment of Bill Clinton had been mistreated because of his "Blackness"