T.C.
İSTANBUL ÜNİVERSİTESİ
SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ
BATI DİLLERİ VE EDEBİYATLARI ANABİLİM DALI
AMERİKAN KÜLTÜRÜ VE EDEBİYATI BİLİM DALI

DOKTORA TEZİ

THE REPRESENTATION OF FAMILY IN AFRICAN AMERICAN LITERATURE: A PSYCHOANALYTIC APPROACH

AŞKIN ÇELİKKOL

2502080449

TEZ DANIŞMANI

PROF. DR. ÖZDEN SÖZALAN

İSTANBUL - 2015

T.C.
İSTANBUL ÜNİVERSİTESİ
SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ

DOKTORA
TEZ ONAYI

ÖĞRENCİNİN;

Adı ve Soyadı	:	Aşkın ÇELİKKOL	**Numarası**	:	2502080449
Anabilim Dalı / Anasanat Dalı / Programı	:	BATI DİLLERİ VE EDEBİYATLARI A.B.D AMERİKAN KÜL. ED. BİLİM DALI	**Danışmanı**	:	PROF.DR. ÖZDEN SÖZALAN
Tez Savunma Tarihi	:	09.10.2015	**Saati**	:	11.00
Tez Başlığı	:	"The Representation of Famliy in African American Literature: A Psychoanalytic Approach "			

TEZ SAVUNMA SINAVI, İÜ Lisansüstü Eğitim-Öğretim Yönetmeliği'nin **50. Maddesi** uyarınca yapılmış, sorulan sorulara alınan cevaplar sonunda adayın tezinin **KABULÜNE** OYBİRLİĞİ / ~~OYÇOKLUĞUYLA~~ karar verilmiştir.

JÜRİ ÜYESİ	İMZA	KANAATİ (KABUL / RED / DÜZELTME)
1- PROF. DR. ÖZDEN SÖZALAN		KABUL
2- PROF. DR. BEDİA DEMİRİŞ		KABUL
3- PROF.DR. AYŞE DİLEK ERBORA		KABUL
4- DOÇ DR. AYŞE ECE		Kabul
5- YRD. DOÇ. DR. SEMA BULUTSUZ		Kabul

YEDEK JÜRİ ÜYESİ	İMZA	KANAATİ (KABUL / RED / DÜZELTME)
1- DOÇ. DR. ÖZLEM ÖĞÜT		
2- DOÇ. DR. CANAN ŞAVKAY		

THE REPRESENTATION OF FAMILY IN AFRICAN AMERICAN LITERATURE: A PSYCHOANALYTIC APPROACH

AŞKIN ÇELİKKOL

ÖZ

Bu çalışma, iki Afrikan Amerikan yazarın eserlerine odaklanarak, karmaşık ve aynı oranda tartışmaya açık olan ırk ve ulusal aidiyet konularını aile ekseni doğrultusunda ele almaktadır. Toni Morrison ve Richard Wright'ın *The Bluest Eye* [En Mavi Göz], "Recitatif" [Resitatif], *Savage Holiday* [Vahşi Tatil] ve *The Long Dream* [Uzun Bir Rüya] adlı edebi eserlerinde aile, cinsellik, ırksal/etnik benlik kavramlarının ortaya çıkış noktaları, değişimleri takip edilmekte ve irdelenmektedir. İki yazarın dört eserinde sözü edilen ve farklı ırklar ya da aynı ırkın mensupları arasında cereyan eden aile oluşumları, "düzgüsel," "geleneksel," "istisnai," "aykırı" olarak addedilen cinsel ilişkileri, kimlik yapıları incelenmektedir. Eserlerde bahsedilen ensest, pedofili, linç kültürü, melezleşme, çocuk, anne, baba katilliği, ırk/etnik köken odaklı ulusalcılık gibi olgular ile Amerika Birleşik Devletleri'nin sosyopolitik ve sosyokültürel yapılarını oluşturan kölelik, Jim Crow, Ulusal Bağımsızlık Günü ve Amerikan Rüyası gibi tarihsel dönüm noktaları ve vatandaşlık kavramları arasındaki kesişimler sunulmaktadır. Edebi eserlerde değinilen ırk, aile, vatandaşlık konularını analiz etmek ve yorumlamak amacıyla sosyoloji, tarih ve antropoloji gibi disiplinlerden ve psikanalitik edebiyat kuramından faydalanılmıştır. Sonuç olarak bu çalışma, kişiye özgü ailevi ilişkilerin, ulusal aidiyet ve kimlik yapılarının edebi ve toplumsal tezahürleri doğrultusunda ırk ve ırkçılık konuları üzerine bir tartışma sunmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Afrikan Amerikan Edebiyatı, Aile, Irk, Irkçılık, Cinsellik, Vatandaşlık, Psikanalatik Edebiyat Kuramı.

THE REPRESENTATION OF FAMILY IN AFRICAN AMERICAN LITERATURE: A PSYCHOANALYTIC APPROACH

AŞKIN ÇELİKKOL

ABSTRACT

By focusing on the literary works of the two African American writers *per se*, the present study offers to explore the complex and equally contentious issues of race and national belonging along the axis of family paradigm. Tracing the origins, and transformations of the subjects of family, sexuality, and racial/ethnic identity formations, the study focuses on Toni Morrison's novel *The Bluest Eye* (1970) and her short story "Recitatif" (1983) along with Richard Wright's *Savage Holiday* (1954) and *The Long Dream* (1958). Referring to these four literary works by the two authors, the study seeks to address the inter/intra racial dynamics of family formations, and deployments of "normative," "orthodox," "aberrant," and "heterodox" sexual identities in the nationalist discourse. Through the narrated cases of incest, pedophile, lynch culture, infanticide, matricide, and patricide, miscegenation, and racially/ethnically oriented nationalism, it is aimed to identify and study the intersecting points with the sociopolitical and sociocultural milieus of the United States, specifically, the watershed moments in the United States history such as slavery, Jim Crow, Fourth of July, American Dream, and the connotations of being a racialized American citizen. While analyzing and interpreting the literary works in light of the arguments on race, family, and citizenship, psychoanalytic literary criticism is employed along with other disciplines such as history, sociology and anthropology. Consequently, the present study aims to introduce a discussion on race and racism through the idiosyncratic familial relations, its literary representations, and through its public demonstrations in the form of national belonging and national identity.

Keywords: African American Literature, Race, Racism, Sexuality, Citizenship, Psychoanalytic Literary Criticism.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It is a commonplace in the genre of acknowledgements to write that one's dissertation or book could not have been completed without the help of many colleagues and friends, and I am not about to transgress that generic expectation here – especially since it's the truth. To begin at the beginning then, it is difficult to express sufficient gratitude for the exceptional support of my advisor Prof. Özden Sözalan, whose unwavering guidance made it possible to pull through the difficult times and situations. I also wish to express my gratitude to Prof. Ayşe Erbora for her support in carrying out this study. I would also like to thank my colleagues at the American Culture and Literature Department and Meriç Sobutay for their friendship and kind understanding. Finally, to repeat a cliché of the genre, last but not least I offer my gracious thanks to my sister, mother and girlfriend who helped me to have a quiet mental state to pursue my studies. Thank you all from the bottom of my heart and the top of my head.

CONTENTS

ABBREVIATIONS

BE	*The Bluest Eye*
LD	*The Long Dream*
SH	*Savage Holiday*

"People keep saying, 'We need to have a conversation about race,' this is the conversation. I want to see a cop shoot a white unarmed teenager in the back."
— Toni Morrison, interviewed in 2015.

"We don't know anything about race. Whenever we speak of race, or use the term racial type, we speak, in fact, of a void which cannot be filled."
— Richard Wright, interviewed in 1953.

INTRODUCTION

The term "racism" is often used in an ambiguous way to illustrate the often hostile attitudes of one ethnic group toward another, and the efforts to answer the question on the origins of the term, its first coinage and usage in public and private spheres, have been equally obscure and unstable. Many historians though agree on the greater impact the West had in world history in upholding racism more than any other hemispheres in the world (Fredrickson, 2002). In fact, a substantial number of historians channeled their intellectual rigor to come up with a systematic formulation of why certain ethnicities should be deemed inferior to the Caucasian race. The so called scientific studies by those historians held biology as an innate property to determine the intellectual capacity of not just one person, but the whole ethnic group that person represented. Conclusion: the smarter, the whiter. When "science" came short to address the reason why hierarchical structures should be laid down for discrimination along ethnic/racial lines, the historians resorted to Christianity and to the divine wisdom for creating human kind in such different pigmentations. Thus, inferiority – superiority complex turned to divinity for the justification of the colonial history of the Western hemisphere. One might be tempted to think that such "scholarly" works belong to a few, self – proclaimed racist individuals whose discrete studies may not speak for the entire discipline of history. Yet, during the Reconstruction period (1865 – 1877) of the U.S. history, a historiographic school

emerged, under the leadership of Columbia University professor William Archibald Dunning, defending the conservative roots of the United States South, and refuting the suffrage rights of the African Americans on the grounds that blacks were not capable of self – government, hence were not entitled to have a say in the policies of the nation. The Dunning school, and the followers of the school's curriculum may now be lost in the dustbin of history, yet their legacy somewhat stands. In fact, on the genesis of racism, as in the chicken or the egg causality dilemma, the discussion whether racism is the consequence of slavery or slavery is the consequence of racism still occupies the historians. The Trinidadian historian of slavery Eric Williams regards racism to be indissoluble from the history of slavery, for, according to Williams, slavery was not born of racism but racism born of slavery (Williams, 1944). The socialist historian of Haitian Revolution and a pioneering, influential figure in postcolonial and subaltern studies, C.L.R. James has different and second thoughts on strictly binding the birth of racism to slavery. He gives the ancient Greece and Rome as examples disproving the tie.

> Historically it is pretty well proved now that the ancient Greeks and Romans knew nothing about race. They had another standard—civilized and barbarian—and you could have white skin and be a barbarian and you could be black and civilized (James, 1973: 124).

Karl Marx, regarding the history of racism, views the quickly developing slave markets and the burgeoning capitalism as the co-agents in the sustainment of racism. Marx claimed that while the cotton industry introduced child slavery into England, it gave a start to a system of patriarchal slavery in the United States. When the age of industrialization hit the continent of America, and the United States waged its own war against slavery within its borders, one could expect that Marx's claims were proven wrong, that capitalism actually abolished slavery instead of feeding it. However, Marx had another insight to make, this time on wage slavery replacing the plantation model of the late 19th century. In this new phase of slavery, during which exploitation of labor went hand in hand with social stratification, American "Negroes" suffered the same fate Irish workers suffered in Great Britain. That is, they had to face the racist attitudes of the

fellow workers, who thought themselves to be superior both in mind and body to those who had lower social standing such as Irish, or the African American.

> In relation to the Irish worker he feels himself a member of the ruling nation and so turns himself into a tool of the aristocrats and capitalists of his country against Ireland, thus strengthening their domination over himself. He cherishes religious, social and national prejudices against the Irish worker. His attitude toward him is much the same as that of the "poor whites" to the "niggers" in the former slave states of the U.S.A (Marx - Engels, 1972: 293, 94).

And Marx further added that such demeaning attitude towards others who were deemed to be different in their life styles, cultural preferences, national heritage, and skin color, was strengthened by ideological state apparatuses of "the press, the pulpit, the comic papers, in short, by all the means at the disposal of the ruling classes" (*Ibid*.). Following the argument on the relation between slavery and racism, another discussion whether the phenomenon of race is peculiar to modernism without historical antecedents, or is simply a manifestation and continuation of the ancient phenomenon of xenophobia are given as the working definitions over the biological explanations of the Dunning School. However, with the onset of modernism and after the abolishment of slavery, not one, homogeneous practice of racism could be spoken of, and Joel Kovel draws attention to such different manifestations and configurations of the phenomenon in the United States. According to Kovel, the manifestation of racism in the country could be divided into three types, or rather into three fantasies: dominative, aversive, and metaracist. Kovel posits dominative racism as peculiar to South, after the abolishment, the practice of which included direct physical oppression and sexual exploitation. The aversive racism he associates with the fantasy of dirt, and contamination, belonging to the bourgeois life of the Northern states, which tried to avoid any physical contact with the other race(s). The last one, the metaracism, he places on the side of the state, on the technocracy, which shows little or no overt prejudice and vows to fight racial prejudices, yet contributes to the consolidation of racial stereotypes of the institutional racism by

economically creating a lazy and violent under – class (Kovel, 1970).[1] In line with Kovel's ideas of aversive racism, and contamination, for some critical race theorists, such as Robyn Wiegman, the subhuman and inferior position, reserved for the "colored" populations, also depended on the panoptic regulations, "the epistemologies attending vision and…corporeal inscription" (Wiegman,1995:4). Propping Wiegman's thought up, George Mosse also laid stress on the ocularcentric, visually driven exigencies of race: "the importance of the emphasis upon the visual for racial thought cannot be overestimated" (Mosse, 1978: 24–25).

From the slavery period to modernity and to the postmodern years, the phenomenon of racism has undergone some changes and resumed new shapes but could not be completely removed from the public discourse even after the "pulpit" was given to Barack Hussein Obama. The *Guardian* columnist, Chris Arnade, attests to this new phase of racism in the United States by making a differentiation between past and present racist practices. Racism in the past, in the 1960s, he comments, was "overt," "violent" and "legal," and as for today's United States, it is "subtler," "easy to ignore" and always swept under the rug, therefore more dangerous.[2] In the heyday of multiculturalism, tolerance, and empathy, scholars such as Slavoj Zizek, Alain Badiou, bell hooks, and Paul Gilroy point in the direction of such recent, "postmodern" racism. Zizek, among others, takes this new phase of racism head on and argues that today racism is practiced by multiculturalists "with a distance" in regard to the Other (respecting the Other's self-enclosed, authentic identity and even being sympathetic to its suffering) and by retaining the privileged position of "empty point of universality

[1] Kovel also asserts that "white racism" in the United States is no aberration of economic and social inequalities, it is, as Kovel believes, a cultural ingredient embedded deep within the cultural fabric of the country. And on the characteristics of U.S. culture, somehow supporting Kovel's view of the nation's exclusive cultural stance, Lacan offers his own thoughts for American culture: "factor c." *Facteur c* was coined by Lacan at a psychiatric congress in 1950, *c* standing for culture. Factor c, for Lacan, designated "the constant characteristic of any given cultural milieu," as an attempt to delineate the particular features of one culture as opposed to another. And for example, Lacan had the United States in mind, and according to the analyst, the country's culture had the irksome characteristic of "ahistoricism" and the "American way of life" was wrapped around the signifiers of "happiness," "adaptation," "human relations," and "human engineering" (Lacan, 1977: 37 - 115).

[2] For the related article, please see the following link accessed on January, 14, 2014.
http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/jan/12/america-racism-subtle-dangerous-new-york

from which one is able to appreciate (and depreciate) properly other particular cultures" (Zizek, 2011: 171).

No matter how many different changes the term racism has undergone as to its definition and meaning in its historical course, one association, as Orlando Patterson aptly observes, has remained constant: the parallel rise and development of "several of the most profoundly cherished ideals and beliefs in the Western tradition" (Patterson, 1982: viii). Among those ideals of the Western modernity, closely bound to the historical transformations of the phenomenon, Patterson includes the idea of freedom and the concept of property as the most prominent ones. Yet, it would not be incongruous to add a third, further ideal equally held in high esteem by the Western tradition: the concept of family. The concept, from the very first introduction of slavery in the United States, was used either with an aim to destroy the filial and kinship networks the slaves carried over from their mother countries, or to prevent the slaves from establishing matrimonial and patrimonial ties and thus reduce their gender roles to mere reproductive capacities. The slaves were not allowed to marry and establish a family for the obvious reason that they were the properties of the slave owner and therefore could be sold if the master wished it so. Furthermore, the marital right to husband's or wife's body as a sexual partner would be nullified, especially in the case of the slave women, as the slave owner would hold the ultimate, and unquestionable right of sexual enjoyment to the bodies in question. In their chattel like status, African American males and females were expected even encouraged to have affairs that resulted in the procreation of slave children. The slave owner, in his "benevolent" patriarchal position and in return for his "good care" of his flock, wanted nothing less than a total obedience to his paternity and expected the slaves he owned to stay as his sexually productive children. For many scholars studying the impacts of slavery, those who most suffered from the lack or disruption of the familial ties within and between the slave communities were the African American men, especially in their incapacity of owning their wives and children and thus unable to realize their authoritative roles as husband and father. Indeed, in their inability to monopolize the sexual services of their

partners, to protect them from the sexual advances and predation of other (white) males, or to materially provide for them when in need, African American men were emasculated to the point of infantilization. Similarly, African American women could not maintain their generic roles as wife and mother. If they were young they were supposed to work in the cotton and rice fields from dawn to dusk and respond to the master's, master's sons' and overseer's sexual cravings. When they became old and infirm, they were expected to look after the white master's children and tend to household chores. In other words, their roles as wife and mother were reserved for the exclusive use of the grand mansions centered on huge plantations. The end of slavery, sanctioned by the abolishment of the individual ownership of one person by another by the Thirteenth Amendment, however, did not completely remove the cultural and institutional system of slavery. Extra-legal practices of lynching and segregation, and legal restrictions on African Americans' right to vote and settle in certain states contributed to the continuation and consolidation of the conditions of servitude through the Jim Crow era. As new practices of bondage were in place, Daniel Patrick Moynihan's *The Negro Family in America: The Case for National Action (1965)* report pointed out to the ongoing impacts of slavery on the African American families. Moynihan argued that blacks were caught in a "tangle of pathology" due to the indelible scars slavery left in their souls, and thus the black families were rapidly deteriorating and dissolving as African American men would abandon their wives and children shortly after the marriage (Moynihan, 1965). In the late nineteenth and the mid twentieth centuries, the number of single mother African American families was continuously on the rise and in the process two classes of African Americans emerged: under and/or lower class and working/middle class. Among the members of the lower class, the practice of abandoning the family due to the inability of resuming the gender roles as husband and father, was especially common. W.E.B. DuBois, as early as 1880s, observed that this particular group of men somehow internalized the dehumanizing effects of slavery and vented their anger not against the Euro American but against their wives in an aggressive, and violent manner (DuBois, 1908). Better educated and

relatively well-off members of the middle class on the other hand, casting and shaking off the gender roles of slavery, imitated the white patriarchal type of managing the family affairs, fathers appearing as the strictly authoritarian and regularly disciplinarian figures who stressed the restrictive aspects of the culture.

As the concept of family constitutes the fundamental principles of social organization, the problems surrounding the black families should be also placed in the context of sociopolitical, cultural and national relations. In the case of the United States, families are posited as sites of belonging to various groups. First, it is regarded as a biological entity in which the family members relate to each other primarily through biological ties. Second, it is defined through a geographically identifiable, racially segregated neighborhoods, "hoods" predominantly painted as black while suburbs are regarded white. And lastly, families are conceptualized as a national family ultimately constituting the U.S. nation state. The word nation, derived from the Latin *natio*, literally means "birth," to be born. Perhaps, on account of its etymological origin, nations are imagined and figured as domestic genealogies. In fact, the term nation and the trope of family are closely connected as the official discourse of the nation states continuously employs symbols of familial and domestic space. Nations are spoken of as 'fatherlands' and 'motherlands', foreigners are expected to adopt (or adopted by) the countries that are not their native homes. In the United States, the president and his wife constitute the first family of the nation and the congress can enact laws defending the homeland against foreign threats. The figures who devised the first drafts of the Constitution and led the war of independence against the mother country of Britain are referred and cherished as the founding fathers. In its *raison d'être*, family trope is posited as an invented and socially constructed phenomenon depending on institutionally sanctioned differences. The differences are constituted in accordance with the masculinized/gendered notions on nationalism, on the reciprocal recognition of males from the same nation (Gellner, 1964), and as Etienne Balibar claims, on its racial structure: "Ultimately the nation must align itself, spiritually as well as physically or

carnally, with the "race", the "patrimony" to be protected from all degradation" (Balibar, 1991: 353).

The family institution, structured around the masculinist position to the point of subordinating and excluding women and 'alien' races in the national discourse, presupposes two basic relations as Edward Said observes. The filial association is concerned with the immediate, domestic space of family, usually consisting of the father, mother, and child triad. The affiliative relation, on the other hand, is established, via the filial, with the national institutions, with the nationalist vision of belonging and citizenship and the paradigms of enjoyment promulgated by the state (Said qtd. in Bové, 2000: 244). In other words, filiation and affiliation complete one another in the securing of the hierarchical structures within the society, in attributing rights to certain privileges and rights to exclude others.

Almost all literary works penned by the African American authors from the early nineteenth century to the present have addressed such complex, interwoven, and ever changing paradigms of race, family and nationality. Toni Morrison's works in particular have offered to manifest the consequences of two and a half century of slavery on African American males, females and children, and have persistently traced the traumatic effects of the period on the gender roles of the characters. Richard Wright, likewise, attempted to grasp slavery's and later Jim Crow's violent disruptions of familial ties in his works, and drew a vivid, violent and ghastly portrait of the United States. Both authors, though differing in their respective views on the matters of race and family, have excavated the internal wounds that ran deep into the peculiarities of the African American past. *The Bluest Eye* explores the vestiges of the wounds in terms of the continuing effects of slavery on the African American communities and addresses the lower/under class reality that was kept out of sight and forgotten in the closet of U.S. national history. *The Long Dream,* also dealing with the impacts of slavery, focuses on the struggles of a middle class African American family against the *de jure* and *de facto* laws of segregation of the Jim Crow era. *Savage Holiday* narrates the story of a white middle class family, rather a member of that class, and depicts the predicaments of the

white character who imagines himself to be the embodiment of white supremacism and patriarchy, notions that constituted the fundamental national principles of the United States in 1950s. “Recitatif” investigates and deliberately confounds the racial identities of the two main characters, and directs questions to the respective positions of the characters within the racial composition of the United States.

The present study purports to identify the representations of family in the works of Toni Morrison and Richard Wright and to explore how these literary texts interact and engage with the notions of racism, patriarchy, white supremacy, and U.S. nationalism through the family paradigm. In the process, it is intended to show to what extent the texts support the theories on race, the concept of family, and nationalism and to what extent they fill the gaps the theories would not dare to address. In other words, it is claimed that the studied texts reveal the underlying, inherent contradictions, conflicts and tensions in the social order. In this regard, it is appropriate to add that the dissertation is content oriented rather than focusing on form and literary technique, yet it also acknowledges the literary forms of the texts to be the social products of the milieus in which they were written. As to the predominant theoretical framework of the current study, psychoanalytic criticism is employed not because it is a befitting methodology to analyze the literary works with racial concerns but it deals with the concepts of trauma, Oedipal anxieties, and familial associations in detail, the issues Morrison and Wright frequently refer in their works. On that note, moreover, it should be added that psychoanalytic criticism is appropriated in agreement with Louis Althusser’s criticism of Lacan that “no theory of psycho-analysis can be produced without basing it on historical materialism (on which the theory of the formations of familial ideology depends, in the last instance)” (qtd. in Zizek, 2003: 60). That is to say, not an integrative analysis between psychoanalytic theory of family (which disregards the sociopolitical and material conditions that determine the institution of family) and the effects of slavery and Jim Crow on African American families in the nation of the United States is sought, it is rather intended to display how the analyzed texts engage with the discipline and expose the deficiencies of the theory in addressing the volatile issue of race. In this

regard, the concerns and drawbacks of the African American scholars in the usage of psychoanalytic criticism and Morrison's and Wright's views on psychoanalysis should be dealt with some space.

Psychoanalysis's ties to the late nineteenth century European colonial expansion, unparalleled by any other century in its violence and greed, was a well-established fact, and Freud's analogy between "savagery" and "infantilism" made it only harder to resort to psychoanalysis as a methodology to write books on race. In fact, Freud did not shy away from appropriating the colonialist phrase "dark continent", used to refer to Africa, in referring to the women's sexuality. Ranjana Khanna, writing about the symbiotic relationship between psychoanalysis and colonialism, even argues that "psychoanalysis could emerge only when Europe's nations were entering modernity through their relation to the colonies" (Khanna, 2003: 10). [3] Lacan's thoughts were also regarded as irrelevant and indifferent to the racial matters, as he was at best following in the footsteps of Freudian legacy, and his theory of psychoanalysis just like Freud's, focused on the modern European nation states, and on white subjects/citizens alone, disregarding the "colored" populations in the colonies. Thus, integrating psychoanalysis into racial texts was no easy task as it necessitated to take into account the cultural, political and social specificities of race. For Eldridge Cleaver who recalls his meetings with a prison psychiatrist in *Soul on Ice* (1968), this was indeed the biggest problem with the discipline:

> I had several sessions with a psychiatrist. His conclusion was that I hated my mother. How he arrived at this conclusion I'll never know, because he knew nothing about my

[3] In *Totem and Taboo*, subtitled *Some Points of Agreement between the Mental Lives of Savages and Neurotics,* Freud's repetitive use of first person plural pronoun "we believe," "our view," "our own development" against the "primitive man," "the savage" was more than enough to stigmatize and label him as a servant of the colonialist discourse. The postulation of a binary between savage and civilized in this manner may not be regarded as necessarily racist and colonialist, but Freud's assumption that "savage societies" show signs of irrational behavior (superstition, mysticism etc.) and can therefore be compared to children's behaviors in civilized societies further strengthened the claims over his racist and colonialist inclinations. Against the allegations, Sander Gilman pointed out, the Jewish "race" was associated with "effeminacy, disease, and criminal perversions" (Gilman, 1993: 47), and Daniel Boyarin similarly argued that Freud's shift from the seduction theory to the oedipal in the face of increasing racism and homophobia at the end of the nineteenth century proved his racialization as the Jew. (Boyarin, 1997: 189 - 220).

> mother; and when he'd ask me questions I would answer him with absurd lies. What revolted me about him was that he had heard me denouncing the whites, yet each time he interviewed me he deliberately guided the conversation back to my family life, to my childhood. That in itself was all right, but he deliberately blocked all my attempts to bring out the racial question, and he made it clear that he was not interested in my attitude toward whites. This was a Pandora's box he did not care to open (Cleaver, 1968: 11).

Practicing psychoanalysts, let alone Freud and Lacan, did not appeal much to African Americans and suit their realities for the fact that the analysts identified familial dramas, and Oedipal repressions as the cause of everything that went wrong in a life deeply marked by racial registers while ignoring the social forces that preconditioned the family environment. Claudia Tate, in *Psychoanalysis and Black Novels,* also singles out the cause why scholars who study African American literature avoid psychoanalysis: "it effaces racism and recasts its effects as a personality disorder caused by familial rather than social pathology" (Tate, 1998: 16).[4] Without complete exoneration of psychoanalysis, however, a few scholars, especially the authors who thought it possible and feasible to coopt some texts of Freud and Lacan to tackle the questions of race and (post)colonialism produced a substantial amount of works among which the recent examples can be listed as follows: *Psychoanalysis and Black Novels: Desire and the Protocols of Race* (1998), *Desiring Whiteness: A Lacanian Analysis of Race* (2000), *Dark Continents: Psychoanalysis and Colonialism* (2003), *The Death-Bound Subject: Richard Wright and the Archaeology of Death* (2005), and *The American Optic: Psychoanalysis, Critical Race Theory, and Richard Wright* (2009). Despite its shortcomings, and "myopic" interpretations of race and racialized subject, the use of psychoanalysis might still prove to be applicable and useful tool in opening the "Pandora's box."

Toni Morrison, though not openly embracing psychoanalysis, has penned literary works that invite psychoanalytic analyses. If it is not a far – fetched argument, it

[4] Ironically, although Tate identifies the cause of African American scholars' lack of interest in psychoanalysis, her work *Psychoanalysis and Black Novels: Desire and the Protocols of Race* (1998) is criticized for its excessive use of psychoanalytic theory in the analysis of black novels. Please see J.R. Saunder's book review published in **Studies in the Novel,** 31:2 (Summer 1999), 255 – 257.

can even be claimed that there is not a single critique of her works that would not touch upon psychoanalytical methodology one way or the other. [5] Her two novels in particular, *Beloved* and *The Bluest Eye*, while also laying emphasis on the political, social and cultural impacts of slavery and Jim Crow on African American communities, also deal with the personal traumas of loss, murder and rape. In *The Bluest Eye*, the character Soaphead Church is identified as the "Interpreter of Dreams" which can be seen as a subtle criticism by Morrison to Freud's legacy as the analyst of dreams. Richard Wright, on the other hand, is known to be an enthusiastic follower of the psychoanalytical theory, in whose shelf, after his death in France, books by Karl Abraham, Helene Deutsch, Otto Fenichel, Sandor Ferenczi, Anna Freud, Sigmund Freud, Ernest Jones, Melanie Klein, Theodor Reik, and Geza Roheim were found. Just like other African American writers, Wright had his reservations about the psychoanalytic methodology and had his own views about the discipline. Dreams and dream processes though had special significance for Wright's fiction, especially for his novels *The Outsider* and *The Long Dream.*

Utilizing the psychoanalytic notions of gaze, desire, mirror stage, ideal – ego and ego-ideal/superego, chapter one attempts to answer or respond to the questions *The Bluest Eye* raises in terms of whiteness, race, family and sexuality**.** The first part of the chapter traces the familial history of Cholly Breedlove, from his not too happy childhood, to his first-time traumatic encounter with whiteness in puberty and to his conjugal years in adulthood. The second part focuses on Pecola's engagement with the institutions of education and family, and her endless, yet futile desire for the bluest eye that would entitle her to the sociocultural privileges the white figures enjoy.

[5] On the examples of psychoanalytic approaches to Morrison's works, the following studies can be given: Elizabeth Abel, "(E)merging Identities: The Dynamics of Female Friendship in Contemporary Fiction by Women," **Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society** 6:3 (Spring, 1981); Eleanor Branch, "Through the Maze of the Oedipal: Milkman's Search for Self in *Song of Solomon*," **Literature and Psychology** 41:1-2 (1995); Alisha Coleman, "One and One Make One: A Metacritical and Psychoanalytic Reading of Friendship in Toni Morrison's *Sula*," **CLA Journal** 37:2 (December, 1993); Jennifer FitzGerald, "Selfhood and Community: Psychoanalysis and Discourse in *Beloved*," **Modern Fiction Studies** 39: 3-4 (Fall/Winter 1993; Marianne Hirsch, **The Mother / Daughter Plot: Narrative, Psychoanalysis and Feminism** (1989).

Chapter two attempts to read Richard Wright's contentious novel *The Long Dream* as an effort to identify the intra/inter racial dimension of neuroses, as Freud described and Wright used them, and to trace the evolvement of Rex Tucker's dreams and nightmares built on the contention between his desires, his family's teachings and the licit/illicit racist codes of his immediate, racial surroundings. The analysis brings to attention the inner conflict Rex Tucker had to contend with; the conflict revolving around the predicaments of sexuality, social mobility, and racial integration to the society, nation at large.

By making use of the psychoanalytic definition of metaphor and the metaphoric approach used by African American scholars to the so called "Negro problem," chapter three focuses on two "race neutral," or "raceless" literary works by Richard Wright and Toni Morrison. Richard Wright's novel *Savage Holiday,* specifically, the protagonist Erskine Fowler's traumatic childhood, and its suppressed transference into his maturity manifested in the forms of infanticide and matricide will be the main topics to be discussed in the first part. The short story "Recitatif" by Toni Morrison, and the narrative of the two friends, Twyla and Roberta (whose lives coincide and differ on the issues of motherhood, race, and class) is analyzed in light of the perceptions on the institution of family in the United States**.** In short, chapter three attempts to comprehend the authors' claims of deconstructing the ideological, metaphorical fulcrum upon which white identities hinge and from which those identities speak and mandate the social reality of the country. Yet, in the process of identifying deconstructive elements in the texts, which would unhinge the central, white supremacist seat of power, the concerns, posited as the concerns of the authors, whether some new paradigms of race relations are emerging and reinforcing the seat of power not exclusively painted white are also addressed.

Surely the black/white binary paradigm of race incorporates much more complex issues and calls for an extensive literary analysis of the topics the binary holds in its factious presence than the present dissertation undertakes to address. Aware of its shortcomings in covering the convoluted dimensions of the binary, and of its succinct

deconstructive efforts, the study nevertheless offers a comprehensive analysis of the notion of family as manifested in its pathological and ideological forms in the works of Toni Morrison and Richard Wright, often ignored or barely recognized in theory when the discussion is turned to the protean subject of race. The dissertation does not propose to introduce a unique approach to the phenomenon, yet, it seeks to contribute to the understudied notion of family in the inter/intra racial domain of literature and its representations, through which not the private realm of family but its public demonstration in the form of national belonging and citizenship in the United States is offered to be scrutinized.

CHAPTER ONE
The Intricacies of Race, Sexuality and Family in *The Bluest Eye*

Theorizing African American experience in the United States has procured a considerable corpus – including as many disciplines as anthropology, sociology, psychology, history and literature, and yet the study is far from being complete especially when the experience revolves around the delicate and idiosyncratic encounters with a racial other. The encounters, as commonly assumed by those disciplines, generally boiled down to a simple (nonetheless ambiguous) statement: self – identification of one racial group over and against the other via a perpetual ostracization. Ruth Frankenberg, a leading figure of the Whiteness Studies [1] (and a staunch follower of the discipline's curriculum) claimed in *White Women, Race Matters: The Social Construction of Whiteness* that "whiteness is inflected by nationhood, such that whiteness and Americanness, though by no means coterminous, are profoundly shaped by one another" (Frankenburg, 1993: 233). Toni Morrison, stretching the scope of the discriminative formations along the riffs of *melanin*, and holding them coterminous to US citizenship by any means, presumes that whiteness in the United States is generally associated with being American whereas other categories of race are hyphenated incessantly. For a more comprehensive exemplification of such split within the United States society and in literary representations as well, Morrison asserts in *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination* that the canonical works – from Poe, Twain and Melville to Hemingway – utilize the black figure as a shadow in creating "the sycophancy of white identity" (Morrison, 1993: 48). In like manner and pushing the

[1] Whiteness Studies is an interdisciplinary field, gaining momentum and importance in the late 20th century, but lapsing into oblivion in the 21st. The scholars of the field studied the cultural, historical and sociological aspects of whiteness and white privilege, claiming that the structuring of the social status of the whites in the U.S. depended on discriminatory and racial practices towards the colored populations. Likewise, the scholars also claimed that the Native/African American and Chicano identities emerged in a reciprocal interaction with the colonial and postcolonial institutions of slavery and citizenship. For a more detailed discussion on the discipline's contemporary status, please see Peter Kolchin's article "Whiteness Studies: The New History of Race in America."

wedge further, Morrison believes that the phenomenon of whiteness - if left alone to its own whims and dispensing with the shadow figure of blackness - is reduced to a "mute, meaningless, unfathomable, pointless, frozen, veiled, curtained, dreaded, senseless" entity. (*Ibid*., 59). Upholding Morrison's thoughts, Ralph Ellison voices similar sentiments regarding the materialization of whiteness (i.e. white Americans) *vis-à-vis* the African-Americans.

> Southern whites cannot walk, talk, sing, conceive of laws or justice, think of sex, love, the family or freedom without responding to the presence of Negroes (Ellison, 1995: 116).

It is appropriate to note as well that a similar blindness also affects the African-American perception of whiteness. In *Black Looks: Race and Representation,* bell hooks suggests that the word whiteness foments the reactions of "the mysterious, the strange and the terrible" in the "black imagination" (hooks, 1992: 166). Perhaps the common argument that can be gleaned from Morrison's, hooks's and Ellison's words might roughly be put as follows: on both ends of the colour spectrum – be it black or white – each group wallows in a peculiar blindness in relation to the signifier whiteness till the existence of one group confers a certain sight/visibility on the other. It goes without saying that such manifestation of identity for one racial group at the expense of the other hangs on an asymmetrical balance. The asymmetry can be claimed to be constituted on account of the fact that the whites substantialize themselves thanks to the shadowy black/coloured figures (and thus able to relate to the meta/national signifier of Americanness) whereas the coloured/black population is condemned to a permanent invisibility and left alone with the hyphenated/split identities. In *Black Reconstruction in America, 1860 – 1880,* DuBois names this process as the "psychological wage" of whiteness, thanks to which the poor whites, a.k.a. the "white trash," if not materially,

psychologically perceived themselves superior to the other "coloured" races [2] (DuBois, 1935: 700-701). On an institutional level such psychological superiority manifested itself by the ontogeny of segregation in the public spaces of hospitals, penitentiaries, prisons, churches, cemeteries, restaurants, public lavatories, and schools. Whether repressive or ideological, the institutions have their shares of the U.S. history of racism in their wakes, and yet, as Zeus Leonardo claims in *Race, Whiteness and Education*, one institution is foregrounded more than the others. For Leonardo, the correlation of race and education occupied a significant place in the racial lexicon of the country. Enumerating the attempts to severe the bond between the white supremacy and education, Leonardo, as he claims to accomplish, tries to debunk the educational system of the United States which meant enlightenment for the whites on one hand and a "burden" for the blacks on the other (Leonardo, 2009: 6). Following Leonardo's argument, it could be claimed that perhaps more than any other public spaces and institutions, education is the most crucial one, in the sense that the normative illocutions of the United States' pedagogy have also a sweeping influence over the racial constructions of the country. To that end in 1940s, in the decade during which Morrison set the plot of *The Bluest Eye*, the journal of *Natural History* published an article on two, white and imaginary figures, Norma and Normman. Claiming to be portraying the average American girls and boys, the article gave details on the acceptable norms for white and schooled adolescents.

> She is modelled from recent measurements of 15,000 women from many parts of the United States and from various walks of life, including series of college students and other thousands of native white Americans. She is slightly heavier yet more "athletic" than her grandmother of 1890 and has lost the shrunken waist induced by tight corsets. As to the beauty of her figure, tastes will vary; fashions change ideals from one generation to the next. Norma is not meant to show what ought to be; she shows what is (Shapiro, 1945: 248).

[2] Historian Philip S. Foner in *Blacks in the American Revolution*, page 38, makes a similar observation to that of DuBois. That is to say, right after the American War of Independence 1775-1782, African Americans' lowly social status was firmly established: "Negroes were set apart as objects of contempt and ridicule. The whites, even the meanest among them, always knew there was a class of men permanently below them."

Normman, the male counterpart, is given less space, but he is described in a similar tone of awe and adulation. For Julian B. Carter these figures represented the "ideal" Americans between the two world wars, and stood for "uniquely modern, uniquely qualified" citizenship (Carter, 2007: 10). Morrison, in weaving out the story, takes such elements of nationality, national belonging, education and desirability to the foreground of the novel and undertakes to write a story to pierce the silence, the shroud of invisibility engulfing the African-American community. As some things are obviously kept quiet and withheld from sight within the community and in the intimacy of sharing a terrible secret, Morrison narrates the story of Breedlove family.[3] Afflicted by poverty and "racial self-loathing," Breedloves' tragic experience (father Cholly committing the horrific crime of incest and impregnating his daughter Pecola) is one epitome of the whispered secret that is "both held and withheld, exposed and sustained...by ourselves and by the world outside the community" (*The Bluest Eye*, iii). It would be erroneous, however, to approach *The Bluest Eye* as a literary work merely striving to reveal and publicize the plight African American community had to put up with in the face of rabid racism of the 1940s. Truly, the community had to face a conundrum of not only being invisible – pushed to the periphery of American citizenship – but also to be all-too-visible to an "outside gaze" that induced an African-American in believing in her/his "immutable inferiority" (*Ibid*.). What is more, Morrison adds, from slavery onwards, a certain association of blackness and enslavement has evolved into the split of who enjoys freedom and the "not-free" – "not-me" categories, the result of which turned racial matters into a "playground for the imagination" (Morrison, 1993: 38).

The Bluest Eye is divided into four parts, each covering a seasonal cycle beginning with autumn and ending in summer. The first season opens up with the nine-year-old Claudia MacTeer's narrative of her own family, the mother and father

[3] By the choice of Breedlove for a surname, Morrison refers to an actual African American family which owned a cosmetic company, manufacturing skin whitener and hair straightener products for black women. Madam C.J. Walker (1867 – 1919), born Sarah Breedlove, ran the company and was the first self-made woman millionaire in the United States.

MacTeers working hard to eke out a living in the last years of the Great Depression. [4] A family of four, MacTeers also lodge Pecola Breedlove, eleven year old daughter of Cholly and Pauline Breedlove. After Cholly tries to burn down the house Breedloves live in, Pecola is entrusted to MacTeers' care by the county authorities. Through Claudia and the omniscient narrator's speakerly, aural, and colloquial style, we are informed of Pecola's love for the white, blonde haired and blue eyed dolls and figures. The readers are also introduced to Breedloves' miserable poverty and their immutable convictions in their "ugliness." The coming of winter only makes it worse, as the poverty and "ugliness" Breedloves suffer are augmented. Once again Claudia takes up the thread of narration and gives an account of Pecola's life at school. As can be guessed, she is picked on by the other kids for her "ugliness." Her tormentors, though, are African American boys whose families also struggle through poverty. The winter part focuses on the intra-racial violence within the black community of Lorain, as the final pages relate yet another humiliation of Pecola by a mother of a middle class African American family. Spring takes the focus back again on the Breedlove family, giving a detailed account on Pauline and Cholly, how they first met, and how their conjugal relation went down the drain. We readerly learn that Pauline cuts herself off from Pecola and the rest of the family for her love of the big white house and the silver screen while Cholly is lost in his inebriation. *Mutatis mutandis, The Bluest Eye* does not follow a linear, chronological order of narration as the story is told retrospectively by the voices and reminiscences of two narrators, and the usual course of the calendar-based seasons (i.e. spring, summer, autumn and winter) is reversed and reshuffled as the climax or rather the nadir-point of the story is set in spring during which Pecola is raped by her father

[4] Preceding the World War II, the years between 1929 and 1932 are known to be shaken up by a great economic crisis, having repercussions on a global scale. Originating in the United States on the 29th of October, 1929, (alias Black Tuesday), the depression hit the country hard, with a drop of national income by 50 percent, and unemployment rise by 25 percent of the total labor force. The unemployment rate for the African American workers doubled the overall numbers of the nation, as it soared to over 50 percent for the black communities in the industrial cities, worsening the already bleak economic situation of the African-Americans. In public assistance programs African Americans often received less aid than whites, and some charity organizations even excluded blacks from their soup kitchens.

and consequently led to a delirium in summer, thinking, imagining herself to be in possession of the bluest eyes in the world.

And in this regard, there is one more thing to *The Bluest Eye*: just as the title of the novel suggests, the problem of race in the United States is not only a case imbrued with asymmetrical class relations but also with the problematics of desire and imagination in the inter-racial domain of citizenship. Right out generalization as it is, *The Bluest Eye*'s main focus is directed on that rally point in which national belonging comes into question along the invisible/visible dichotomy of race and desire. Along similar lines, Frantz Fanon, in *Black Skin, White Masks* offers a personal account of how black subjectivity emerges in the world which he mentions as the doubly layered process of objectification. The first one occurs when he is among his people, that is, through the eyes of the other fellow blacks and the second one comes with his encounter with the whites. During the former meeting, though there are some minor occasions of brawl, there is no serious blow to his ontology. The latter meeting, however, as Fanon indicates, puts him in doubt as to his bodily existence: "And then the occasion arose when I had to meet the white man's eyes. An unfamiliar weight burdened me… The body is surrounded by an atmosphere of certain uncertainty" (Fanon, 1967: 83). Stuart Hall, commenting on Fanon's take on the ambivalent relation between racial look/gaze and the body politics, sums it best: "This "look," from -so to speak- the place of the Other, fixes us, not only in its violence, hostility and aggression, but in the ambivalence of its desire" (Hall, 1990: 233). [5]

The present chapter will take up the contentious argument, that is, by making use of the notions of gaze, desire, mirror stage, ideal – ego and ego-ideal/superego, it will strive to answer or respond to the questions *The Bluest Eye* raises in terms of whiteness, race, family and sexuality**.** The first part will trace the history of Cholly

[5] The terms gaze, ideal-ego, ego-ideal/superego will be used in accordance with their Lacanian usages. For their different appropriations in other disciplines, Laura Mulvey, the British film maker and feminist film theorist can be given as an example. Mulvey, using gaze/gender relation points out to the "fetishistic" and "voyeuristic" characteristics of the male gaze on the female, feminized body projected on the screen. For Mulvey, "to-be-looked- at-ness" versus "the bearer of the look" constituted the basic antagonism between female and male gazes. "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" (1975).

Breedlove, from his not too happy childhood, to his first-time traumatic encounter with whiteness and to his conjugal years. The second part will focus on Pecola's engagement with the institutions of education and family, and her endless, yet futile desire for the bluest eye that would entitle her to the privileges the figure of Norma enjoys. The analysis of the novel, however, will not be limited to these two characters alone even though the father Cholly and the daughter Pecola both share the puerile experiences of "violence," "desire," "despair" and "invisibility" in relation to "an outside gaze" (BE, ii). In a world reinforcing despair and destruction by "its language, laws and images" (*Ibid*.), it would be erroneous to expect that these two characters alone would suffer, hence the focal point of analysis will be directed on other characters as well.

1.1 "Father, will you play with Jane?": Cholly Breedlove and the Crime of Incest

According to Elizabeth Wilson, one tendency to explain the existence of incest taboo in the United States is the white-middle-class interpretation: "…incest does not take place in the white middle class family; it is a vice of class and racial others who lack the rationality necessary to control their impulses" (Wilson, 1995: 38). As much as the taboo is registered under the aegis of white nucleus family and civil repression proper, those who failed – African Americans in this case – to meet the criteria of normative, orthodox familial sexuality are considered to be devious others giving vent to their atavistic, pre-Oedipal cravings of incest. Turning the argument topsy-turvy, Heidi D. Nast makes a right out claim that the notion of incest is coiled in the heart of the white family itself, consisting of the happy father-offspring-mother triad while "blackness" is reserved for the incestuous, "Repressed (Bestial)" other. Giving her argument a twist of colonialism and psychoanalysis, Nast sets up an analogy between Freud's thoughts on the Oedipal family and the colonialist past of the United States. The analogy she provides combines Freud's views on the Oedipal family's being harbinger of civilization and the Southerners' obsession to defend the chastity of white women against the incestuous threat of blackness.

> In the symbolic context of the oedipal family, the white maternal is the symbolic linchpin, whiteness symbolically embodying a (non-incestuous) purity set up structurally in need of protection, geographically and bodily, from incestuous blackness or nonpurity (Nast, 2000: 218).

To ward off such foreign, luscious intruder and safeguard the family, Southerners turned to lynching as a prophylactic tool in curbing the perilous promiscousity of the racial other. The alleged reasons given for the lynch cases, including such imputations as petty crimes, insult against the whites etc., were especially concentrated on the hysteria of

sexual assault on white women, be it rape or an attempt implied by a look or gesture.[6] In this respect, Nast's claim that the lynching mob enacted a ritual, following the logic of Freudian castration – needless to say the lynch mobs actually cut off the sexual organs of the black victims charged with sexual crimes – was on account of an anxious effort of the Southerners to preserve what was regarded as "chaste," "pure," and "civilized" (*Ibid*.). Such approach, however, brings in its wake some contentious issues regarding race and sexuality. The binary Nast provides in terms of civilized, heteropaternal Southern family versus the "bestial, repressed" and castrated African American might ring true for addressing some aspects of the sexual violence that has been an integral part of the United States history. Nast falls short, however, of touching on the stark reality of incest within the African-American community itself. Treated extensively by the African American writers from mid 1950s and onwards, authors such as Ralph Ellison, Alice Walker, Sapphire and James Baldwin tackled the existence of the taboo within the African-American communities and strove to come up with answers – or rather with complications – in their works.[7] Toni Morrison, among others, was criticized for her mild treatment of the subject as she was believed to be tip-toeing around the crime. For Trudier Harris, "the trend among black writers has been to leave the subject of incest alone" (Harris, 1991: 495). Holding James Baldwin an exception, Harris believed, in particular, that the tone of incest was muted down in Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* with the taboo occupying an insignificant place in the novel. James Baldwin, however, maps out a different sexual history of the United States than the one Harrison had in mind; an inter-racial interpretation rather than an intra-racial concentration.

> […] no matter who says what, Negroes and whites in this country are related to each other. Half of the black families in the South are related, you know, to the judges and the lawyers and the white families of the South. They are cousins, and kissing cousins

[6] For a detailed account of the lynch cases in the United States registered in the 19th and 20th centuries, please see Orlando Patterson's *Rituals Of Blood: The Consequences Of Slavery In Two American Centuries.*

[7] Ellison in *Invisible Man* (1952), Walker in *The Color Purple* (1982), Sapphire in *Push* (1996), and Baldwin in *Just Above My Head* (1979), grappled with the incest taboo within their works which covered different manifestations of the taboo in different historical, racial contexts of the U.S.

> at that—at least kissing cousins. Now, this is a terrible depth of involvement (Baldwin qtd. in Standley & Pratt, 1989: 7)**.**

Baldwin makes it clear in the preceding passage that contrary to the views assigning it white or black roles, the incest taboo in the United States is a matter of race and family with "a terrible depth of involvement" on both sides. For Baldwin the scope of involvement should not be confined to incest alone for at such intimate level of kissing cousins other "unorthodox" practices might also be at a loose end. Just like Baldwin, Toni Morrison also traces the roots of African American racial reality to its interracial origins, yet she further includes the unutterable stories of exploitation and violence of slavery in the colonial United States. [8] Although slavery's horrors and cruelties often turn up in Morrison's works, the most resounding depiction of the unspeakable experience is given in her novel *Beloved*. Taking its cue from the story of an African American slave, Margaret Garner, who escaped from slavery in 1856, and had to kill her two year old daughter to avoid recapture by a posse acting on the authority of Fugitive Slave Act of 1850, the novel *Beloved*, narrates the story of a mother, Sethe, who likewise has to kill her daughter and whose apparition returns to haunt her home in Cincinnati, in so called "free" territory. The novel's dedication reads "Sixty Million and more," inscribed for Africans who died during the Middle Passage, also known as the route of Atlantic slave trade. *The Bluest Eye,* on the other hand, is set in and concerned with another period of racial violence in the U.S. history, Jim Crow. [9] Anxious to expose the effects of Jim Crow on African American communities, living below or above the

[8] For Morrison's thoughts on slavery in the United States and its unspeakable, paralyzing consequences for the African-American communities, please see her lecture "Unspeakable Things Unspoken: The Afro-American Presence in American Literature" delivered at the University of Michigan in 1988.

[9] The name Jim Crow was originally used for a famous minstrel show character personified by Daddy Rice. Minstrel shows, popular between 1850 and 1870, consisted of acts in which white actors painted their faces black and performed –often racist- impersonations of African Americans. The name later was used to describe the segregation laws, rules, and customs which arose after Reconstruction (1877), and continued until the mid-1960s. Mason – Dixie line, on the other hand, was no different matter when it came to racial discrimination. The border was set by Charles Mason and Jeremiah Dixon in 1767, to resolve the border disputes between four states (Pennsylvania, Maryland, Delaware, and West Virginia) and it was later used as the marker separating slave states from that of the free. It is still used today, representing the cultural border between Northern and Southern United States. The state of Ohio, however, used in *The Bluest Eye* as the setting, is above the line, still, as Morrison would have it, the state is not free from the impurities of Jim Crow codes.

Mason – Dixie line, Morrison rejects to demonize, "dehumanize" any character "who trashed Pecola and contributed to her collapse**"** (BE, iv), even Cholly Breedlove, the foremost victimizer of Pecola, who has his own story of "rape" by the white men. Moreover, Morrison adds that even though Pecola's rape is a horrible incident, it becomes almost "irrelevant" when one arrives at the rape scene:

> […] so when you get to the scene where the father rapes the daughter, which is as awful a thing, I suppose, as can be imagined, by the time you get there, it's almost irrelevant because I want you to look at him and see his love for his daughter and his powerlessness to help her pain. By that time, his embrace, the rape, is all the gift he has left (qtd in Taylor - Guthrie, 1994: 20).

It would be taking a huge leap though, delving right into the rape scene before giving a detailed account on Cholly's past. With the *modus operandi* of castration, and using the paradigms of race, family, and sexuality, Cholly's life should be reconfigured along an interracial line of thinking so as to measure how deep the aberrations of incest go.

Cholly Breedlove, born into the seething cauldron of the 1940s' United States South, and abandoned by his mother on a junk heap, is brought up by his great aunt Jimmy. With a mother gone right after his birth and a father drinking, gambling himself outdoors, Cholly has no other options but turn to Aunt Jimmy and Blue Jack as ersatz parents to make up for the absence of his biological lineage of parenthood. Cholly's relationship with his great aunt though is a complex one as she definitely does not match the ideal figure of a mother he has in mind. He even thinks that it would be good riddance, when he was abandoned by his mother, to perish right then, "down in the rim of a tire under a soft black Georgia sky" rather than being subjected to Jimmy's revulsive, old, wrinkled and sagging body (BE, 103). Blue Jack, a drayman and a co-worker at Tayson's Feed and Grain Store, fares better as a stand-in father figure. He tells Cholly stories; stories about his amorous escapades, about the Emancipation Proclamation, and about the spectre of a white, beheaded woman who bumped into everything on her way out to retrieve a comb for her lost beauty. Dear to Cholly, Blue Jack paves the way for his initiation into the forays of manhood, sexuality and the politics of race. Cholly's first encounter with "the color line," to use W. E. B. Du Bois'

diction, occurs on a July 4 church picnic.[10] An African American family, cheerful and happy, is about to break a watermelon and Cholly watching the scene from a distance witnesses something sublime. [11]

> The father of the family lifted the melon high over his head – his big arms looked taller than the trees to Cholly , and the melon blotted out the sun. Tall, head forward, eyes fastened on a rock, his arms higher than the pines, his hands holding a melon bigger than the sun, he paused an instant to get his bearing and secure his aim. Watching the figure etched against the bright blue sky, Cholly felt goose pimples popping along his arms and neck. He wondered if God looked like that (*Ibid*., 104).

He knows well enough though that it doesn't. God is a nice old white man with white hair and beard, his blue eyes looking on sad when people suffer and cruel when they are mired in sin. If the father towering right before and above him is the devil incarnate , "holding the world in his hands, ready to dash it to the ground and spill the red guts so niggers could eat the sweet, warm insides" (*Ibid*.), Cholly would definitely choose him. The guts of the watermelon spilling out, the heart – seedless, juiciest center of the melon, rolls off to Blue's feet and together with Cholly they eat the heart. Cholly's peaceful days spent in the family-like company of Jimmy and Blue come at an end when

---

[10] The Fourth of July is celebrated as the national Independence Day in the United States. Generally speaking, the date marks an important phase in the U.S. history as historian Gordon S. Wood believes it to be the apotheosis of liberty that attacked all bonds of subjugation and which "suddenly and effectively ended the cultural climate that had allowed black slavery, as well as other forms of bondage and unfreedom, to exist throughout the colonial period without serious challenge." *The Radicalism of the American Revolution*, 186. Despite Wood's laudation of the transformative and revolutionary strength of the date, some historians thinks otherwise. Eugene D. Genovese in *The World The Slaveholders Made,* claims that instead of spreading the revolutionary ideas of freedom and equality to the whole/rest of the nation, the American War of Independence reinforced the institutions of slavery and doubled the ratio of the incoming slaves to the land of the free people. Toni Morrison could be said to mention and refer to the latter aspect of Independence as she uses the de-capitalized version of the date instead of its renowned, capitalized one.

[11] Consumption of watermelons has a racist association in the United States. From slavery period and even to the 21st century, the image has remained with the U.S. society. During ante and post bellum periods, it was used as the racist justification for the simple tastes of the African Americans as one caption under a postcard from the early nineteenth century read: "George Washington Watermelon Columbus Brown, I'se black as any little coon in town. At eating melon I can put a pig to shame. For Watermelon am my middle name." Even the president Barack Obama was not immune to the racist stereotyping as when he was elected president, the lawns of the White House were photo shopped and replaced with rows of watermelon crops. For the postcard and the related news on Obama please see the following link accessed on May 20, 2014.
http://www.huffingtonpost.com/theodore-johnson/watermelon-african-americans_b_3069600.html,

the aunt dies in a chilly season of spring. During the funeral rites and for the first time in his life, he meets his extended family, uncle Breedlove and the cousins. One of the cousins particularly interests him. Jake, two years older, offers Cholly a smoke and encourages him to flirt with the girls on the back porch. Inexperienced and timid in the matters of love, he follows Jack's lead. While Jack picks up Sulky, Cholly goes for Darlene, his long-time crush. What starts off as a childish teasing and tickling play gives its place to an adult – like lust and sexual intercourse. With the taste of muscadine in their mouth, and slowly reaching the climax of love, they are startled by the out of nowhere appearance of two armed white men; one with a spirit lamp, the other with a flashlight. And the ensuing scene takes place:

> There was no place for Cholly's eyes to go. They slid about furtively searching for shelter, while his body remained paralyzed. The flashlight man lifted his gun down from his shoulder, and Cholly heard the clop of metal. He dropped back to his knees. Darlene had her head averted, her eyes staring out of the lamplight into the surrounding darkness and looking almost unconcerned as though they had no part in the drama taking place around them. With a violence born of total helplessness, he pulled her dress up, lowered his trousers and underwear.
> Cholly, moving faster, looked at Darlene. He hated her. He almost wished he could do it – hard , long , and painfully, he hated her so much. The flashlight wormed its way into his guts and turned the sweet taste of muscadine into rotten fetid bile (*Ibid*., 116).

Paula Gallant Eckard in *Maternal Body and Voice* gives a concise – though not a complete - answer as to the reason why Cholly commits the crime of incest. She sets up a link between two scenes in Cholly's life**:** "The impotence he experiences with Darlene fuels the sexual confusion and self-loathing that drunkenly coalesce in his daughter's rape years later" (Eckard, 2002: 39). Lynn O. Scott, reiterating Eckard's thesis somehow, sees Cholly's incestuous act "as a consequence of his own victimization and complex experiences" (Scott, 2006: 93). Cholly Breedlove's encounter with whiteness under the given circumstances is open to multiple interpretations. However, the usual *topos* of criticism, as is indicated by the words 'impotence,' 'sexual confusion,' 'self-loathing,' 'rape' and 'victimization,' is to make sense of the way sexuality is employed

in the service of a racist ideology. The wager of such criticism is that the African Americans, boys and men - have been subjected to a process of emasculation, or worse still *infantilization* at the hands and whims of whiteness. For that matter and tautological as it is, the Freudian take on castration, the way Nast explains it, is worth mentioning once again along with Abdul Jan Mohamed's comments on the Lacanian approach to the complex. Although their views on the respective psychoanalysts take different turns, Nast and Mohamed find yet a racialized, historicized and common ground for the deployment of castration in the context of the United States.

Freud's theory of castration is conceptualized around two frictious camps: nature and culture. The incestuous push of nature becomes almost unrestrainable unless the paternal authority outlaws the boy's maternal desire of incest and renders the construction of civilization possible. Culture (civilization) depends, to a great extent, on the son's submission to the threat of dismembering/castration that would lead to the displacement of maternal desire on other libidinal objects. For Freud, such "aim – inhibited love" is the essential component of creating auxiliary connections thanks to which the construction of normative, nucleus families becomes possible. [12] Heidi J. Nast, bringing the colonial and racial history of the United States in Freud's theory of castration along the lines mentioned above, posits a distinction – discriminative as it is – between white, maternal, heterosexual, civilized filial associations and the unbridled passion of black "boys."

> The unconscious production of black "boys" as carriers of unconscious (unspoken, for-bidden) desires for the (symbolically white) mother was arguably widespread and provided the moral and psychical impetus for creating numerous colonial segregationary practices at many spatial scales. Accordingly, the primary motivating factor for segregation has been voiced anxiously in terms of white women (positioned symbolically and "unconsciously" as an object of incestuous desire) in danger. Precisely through mobilizing and cordoning off black bodies and spaces away from

[12] On the significance of Oedipus complex in rendering the formation of civilization possible, and how civilization later takes over the libidinal energy of the members of the society in creating "aim-inhibited" connections within the human communities, please see Freud's "Civilization and its Discontents" article first published in 1930.

> the white maternal, the symbolically burdened black male body was and is prepared for exploitation (Nast, 2000: 216).

On a similar note of how African Americans are debilitated to the status of "boy," Abdul Jan Mohamed uses castration as well – though with a Lacanian viewpoint. Instead of positing it in terms of nature – culture split as Nast does, he offers two, diametrically opposed types of castration: normative and racialized. For JanMohamed, normative castration functions through the generally accepted definition, that is, the unary and incestuous identification with the mother is severed by the intervention of the Name-Of-The-Father and this Symbolic Father would then channel the fixative and libidinal investment of the infant in its mother to other objects of desire. Father would thus constitute the subject as signifier, substitutive with other signifiers *ad infinitum*: "each signifier is marked by its difference from the next, to be sure, but, as signifiers, all are equivalent and inherently substitutable" (JanMohamed, 2005: 249). What distinguishes the normative castration from the racialized is that the latter does not follow the same logic of equal signification just like the former, but sets up a barrier of "political power and control" impeding African American's attempts to become "man." Debilitated to the status of "boy," an African American would reach "manhood" only by "accepting the political "fact" that he is forever doomed to remain a boy. In other words, his identity as "boy" would be presupposed, fixed in the mirror stage as racism would insert itself between the Innenwelt (ideal-ego) and Umwelt (ego – ideal) and create a racialized imago with which "the child will predictably continue to reproduce his racialized self-identification in various and sundry relations with the world" (*Ibid*., 240).

To go back to Cholly's experience, and read it via the lens Nast and Mohamed furnish, two conclusions could be reached. The two armed white men, acting as the repressive apparatus of a power structure, define Cholly spatially. They, following Nast's argument, pre-emptively "cordone him off" from the white, maternal space and his emasculation, thus inflicted, is part of a "numerous colonial segregationary practices" (Nast, 2000, 216). Or Cholly faces a double-bind: he not only has to live with

the fact that he is racially sequestered/castrated but also to reproduce his racialized self-image/o "in various and sundry relations with the world." Seeing Cholly's crime of incest as a reproduction, or a re-enactment of the impotence and racial self-loathing he suffers with Darlene might sound a pertinent resolution. Such conclusion, however, would be too hasty and dismissive of what Morrison contrived to say in the novel. Morrison herself indeed, as the narrator, warns the reader against falling into the error of a facile and all too easy foreclosure as regards Cholly's life and draws (perhaps even challenges) the reader's attention to the strenuous task of mustering Cholly's broken threads of life.

> The pieces of Cholly's life could become coherent only in the head of a musician. Only those who talk their talk through the gold of curved metal, or in the touch of black-and-white rectangles and taut skins and strings echoing from wooden corridors, could give true form to his life. Only they would know how to connect the heart of a red watermelon to the asafetida bag to the muscadine to the flashlight on his behind to the fists of money to the lemonade in a Mason jar to a man called Blue and come up with what all of that meant in joy, in pain, in anger, in love, and give it its final and pervading ache of freedom (BE, 125).

Impossible as it is to live up to the competency of a musician in assembling the bits and pieces of Cholly's life, it should still be attempted to tune in some underlying thought. The two men push Cholly to exhibit his manhood, prove his virility and Cholly to live up to the challenge wishes "he could do it – hard, long, and painfully, he hated her so much" (*Ibid*., 116). And instead of directing his rage to those hunters, he lays it on the shoulders of Darlene for the impotence he feels in failing to shelter her off from the "round moon glow of the flashlight" (*Ibid*.). The impotence Cholly feels with Darlene, perhaps in a later attempt to re-claim his lost masculinity through his daughter's body, does not begin with the flesh and blood white men. Cholly's reaction to the flashlight shining through his back is *scotomatous.* In other words, he doesn't see the men approaching but knows it in Darlene's eyes that the 'Thing' is behind them and his

awareness of their existence consists of an opaque, white glow of a flashlight. [13] Admittedly, the scene is traumatic enough to trigger off some other chain reactions and disturbing experiences like Pecola's rape years later. But as we move on in the story, we learn that the trauma of being reduced to a "boy," in the sense JanMohamed uses the word, occurs after his failed reunion with his father. Finding or retrieving the lost father trope holds a significant place in African American literature as the lost fathers leave a mark, ineffaceable and irremediable "…the cause of a cure for black men's 'failure', his father's apparently lost, and untellable, life is the story that the son must find and narrate if he is to begin to understand how, and why, blackness has come to represent an inheritable fault" (Marriott, 2000: 96). Cholly, not an exception to the rule and not knowing what step to take after the incident (without the guidance of Blue as he probably would be too drunk to make sense and Cholly would be embarrassed to tell him – Blue the womanizer - everything as it really happened) he decides on cracking off his shell and steps off the porch to find his biological – "real" father to retell the story. He finds the man in Macon, Georgia. To his disappointment he observes his father to be a smaller, less formidable man than he imagined and an incurable gambler. Nevertheless, the moment he utters his name, Samson Fuller responds with a cuss: "Tell that bitch she get her money. Now, get the fuck outta my face!" (BE, 123). Mistaken for an errant-boy of a money broker lady, Cholly totters off the alley, straining himself, every muscle and fiber in his body quivering, and desperately fights back the rapidly welling tears. Due to the severity of the effort, his bowels suddenly open up instead of his eyes: "At the mouth of the alley where his father was, on an orange crate in the sun, on a street full of grown men and women, he had soiled himself like a baby" (*Ibid*.). Fearing that the people's gazes would turn upon him – especially that of his father- and see his repulsive being, he waits for the right moment to make for the Ocmulgee River down the road. What transpires afterwards is too intriguing to bypass, overcame with

[13] In one instance of the novel, Morrison calls "whiteness" or rather "white supremacy" as the "Thing." The word is mentioned in a confession made by Claudia, Morrison's co-narrator, that Maureen Peal is not the real enemy, the real enemy being the "Thing" that made her beautiful but not the African American girls. (p., 58).

shame at the age of fourteen, Cholly moves back in time, down to the foetal state in his mother's womb.

> He scooted down a gravelly slope to a pier jutting out over the shallow water. Finding the deepest shadow under the pier, he crouched in it, behind one of the posts. He remained knotted there in fetal position, paralyzed, his fists covering his eyes, for a long time. No sound, no sight, only darkness and heat and the press of his knuckles on his eyelids. He even forgot his messed-up trousers (*Ibid*., 124).

When evening comes, he creeps out of the snug hole he hides himself in and sees "three women, leaning out of two windows" (*Ibid*., 125). Annoying though it may be, I think another lengthy quotation should deserve attention.

> They see the long clean neck of a new young boy and call to him. He goes to where they are. Inside, it is dark and warm. They give him lemonade in a Mason jar. As he drinks, their eyes float up to him through the bottom of the jar, through the slick sweet water. They give him back his manhood, which he takes aimlessly (*Ibid*.).

Freudian father, in the shape of super-ego/ego-ideal (and Freud uses the terms somewhat interchangeably) imposes his authority thanks to two precepts. The first one "You ought to be like this (like your father)" comprises an identification with the idealized figure of the father while the second one comes as a reminder not to overplay that identification "You may not be like this (like your father) – that is, you may not do all that he does; some things are his prerogative" (Freud, 1995: 641-2). And Freud further adds that such primary though contentious identification with father is later perpetuated by figures of authority who exercise moral censorship in the form of conscience. Lacan's re-reading of Freud's castration complex, or rather his return as it is famously dubbed, introduces a split into the super-ego/ego-ideal couple and also plugs that split in with the notion of

jouissance – enjoyment sought in meaning. [14] For Lacan, *jouissance* is what must be refused to the child so that it could be reached through the winding paths of Law. Law, in agreement with ego – ideal, with those figures of authority if you will, works as the benefactor which "divides up, distributes or reattributes everything that counts as *jouissance*" (Lacan,1999: 3). For Lacan, the *right-to-jouissance*, and why not translate it into the famous dictum of "inalienable right to pursue happiness...," is an "inheritance" – unlike duty – which is passed down from father to the child and is further secured by the co-operation of Law and the ego-ideal. However, nothing forces a subject to enjoy its dowry of desire – "for it is not an obligation – except the super-ego's arousive imperative of enjoy!" [15] (*Ibid*.). Thus, instead of the Freudian conceptualization of father as an agent of repression, Lacan combines two seemingly incompatible faces of paternity. Paternity does not only secure the itinerary of enjoyment for the subject but also forces it to enjoy the bequeathed resources. If any castration trauma is sought for in *The Bluest Eye*, it should not be limited to Cholly's encounter with the two armed white men alone. What Cholly experiences with them is blind, he rather hears the obscene call behind and strains himself for a make-believe. He is, so to speak, caught in the super-ego admonition of enjoyment. What is infinitely worse in his case is that his entrapment has a racial side to it as Zizek put it forward as regards to the obscene, violent dimension of the super-ego:

> […] when I venture too close, what occurs is what Lacan calls the aphanisis (the self-obliteration) of the subject: the subject loses his/her symbolic consistency, it disintegrates. *And perhaps the forced actualization in social reality itself of the phantasmatic kernel of my being is the worst, most humiliating kind of violence, a violence that undermines the very basis of my identity (of my self-image)* [emphasis added] (Zizek, 2011: 55).

[14] The word *jouissance* is usually translated as "enjoyment" in English, but it is mostly left untranslated for the word denotes more than one meaning, including simple pleasures, enjoyment of rights and properties, and sexual orgasm.

[15] Lacan uses the term Usufruct to define the usage of one's dowry of *jouissance*. In other words, Law ensures that the subject uses the bequeathed dowry in an appropriate but not excessive measure. Lacan also associates the superego injunction of "Enjoy!" as the correlative of castration.

Cholly's derailment of his masculine position in the symbolic however, reiterating the claim of this chapter somehow, does not come about with the traumatically obscene intrusion/injunction of whiteness. Violent as it is, his encounter with his father's non-existent masculinity – Samson Fuller was not definitely the father figure he saw at July four picnic - causes the real damage. At this point, the first dimension of paternal authority Lacan invokes in the form of ego-ideal is worth mentioning once again. The subject's trail of enjoyment – in accordance with the paradigms of nucleus, normative family – follows in the footprints the father and mother pair provide. As the germ of social and cultural institutions, the family sets up an idealized, heterodoxical pattern of enjoyment. Cholly's endless effort to find fitting images for those idealized figures (ego-ideals) of paternal and maternal authorities who would indoctrinate him in the ways of non-aberrant, straight sexuality is dealt a serious blow by Samson Fuller the father. In other words, Cholly's normative castration, using JanMohamed's words, which would put him back on the track of jouissance after his painful experience with the super-ego injunction of whiteness, does not come to pass. His castration occurs when he realizes that his father is castrated, just like himself, in a racialized way. And to hide his shame, he buries himself back into the mother's womb, or at least he imagines himself to, and the three women, leaning out of the two windows and offering him lemonade in a Mason jar, give him back his manhood which we learn he takes indifferently. Cholly's journey after the "rape" by the white men, and his eventual meeting with his father not only rob him of his masculinity but he is also deprived of maternal care as three sex workers (speculatively speaking, his run away mother might also be one of those women, that is, in a different part of the country) take care of him instead of the mother of whom he has no memory and the deceased Aunt Jimmy who Cholly remembers with longing and "a bouqet of tears" In brief, he loses his final hope of retrieving the family and then he becomes unstuck in time; unmoored from family, society, morals, ethics, nation, and law, dangerously so, hassled by coexisting contradictions not cancelling each other.

> Free to feel whatever he felt – fear, guilt, shame, love, grief, pity. Free to be tender or violent, to whistle or weep. Free to take a job, free to leave it. He could go to jail and not feel imprisoned, for he had already seen the furtiveness in the eyes of his jailer… Free to take a woman's insults, for his body had already conquered hers. Free even to knock her in the head, for he had already cradled that head in his arms. Free to be gentle when she was sick, or mop her floor, for she knew what and where his maleness was. He was free to drink himself into a silly helplessness … Abandoned in a junk heap by his mother, rejected for a crap game by his father, there was nothing more to lose. He was alone with his own perceptions and appetites, and they alone interested him (BE, 125).

Goaded by conflictual impulses and without any authority or prohibition to bridle his "appetites," Cholly could be said to be slowly but surely drawn to commit the 'terrible' crime of incest. Yet, Morrison gives us another piece of evidence to pin up on Cholly's life: "… it was Pauline, or rather marrying her, that did for him what the flashlight did not do" (*Ibid*., 126).

When Cholly first met Pauline in Kentucky, she was hanging over a fence, scratching the back of her calf with her lame foot. Cholly, under the influence of alcohol and giving way to the feelings of tenderness and protectiveness, kissed the foot and that was then when it all started. The conjugal family of Pauline and Cholly follows a smooth tract for a while, but it finally comes stumbling down especially with the coming of Sam (who is named after his father Samson Fuller) and Pecola. Rendered dumbfounded and dysfunctional by the appearance of children, Cholly finds himself in the dark as to understand the nature of his relation to his offspring, for, he himself does not know of any exemplary family to guide him in the endeavor.

> Had he been interested in the accumulation of things, he could have thought of them as his material heirs; had he needed to prove himself to some nameless "others," he could have wanted them to excel in his own image and for his own sake (*Ibid*.).

Two anthropological explanations for father – daughter incest in the United States might also ring true for Cholly's rape of Pecola in some respects. Biosocial approach assumes

that the father – daughter incest could be prevented by the involvement of fathers in the early caretaking of their daughters. Contra – biosocial one, however, while acknowledging the positive effect of caretaking factor on the reduction of incest, argues that other factors fathers undergo during their puberty such as physical/sexual abuse or rejection by their own parents would annul the salutary effect of caretaking and thus increase the likelihood of incest (Meigs & Barlow, 2002). The two approaches may sound equally possible for explicating the rape scene as Cholly does not know anything about a family that would set the example before him to the 'proper' ways of dealing with his children, let alone taking care of his daughter during her infancy. Yet, the counter approach sounds more appropriate to fit in *The Bluest Eye* as Cholly Breedlove suffers both factors: sexual victimization by the white armed men and rejection by his father. The rape scene in the novel, which is traumatic in itself, should be analyzed in view of Cholly's painful memories which are re-enacted through Pecola's body.

In a "bilious duet" of guilt and impotence, Cholly staggers home one Saturday afternoon, reeling drunk. Pauline, his wife, is not at home and Cholly under the feverish influence of alcohol gives vent to his likewise frenzied and always discordant thoughts. He is first seized by the feeling of hate against her daughter as he knows she loves him (She loves a speck of dust though, a socially dead nonentity who cannot return her love) and by a feeling of pity mixed with love when he sees Pecola – her back turned to him, washing up the dishes - scratch "the back of her calf with her toe" (BE, 127). The same gesture Pauline did when he first saw her in Kentucky, her legs dangling over a fence. Forasmuch as the incestuous part is one of the central parts of the novel, it would be proper to quote the event with some space.

> The tenderness welled up in him, and he sank to his knees, his eyes on the foot of his daughter. Crawling on all fours toward her, he raised his hand and caught the foot in an upward stroke. Pecola lost her balance and was about to careen to the floor [....] The confused mixture of his memories of Pauline and the doing of a wild and forbidden thing excited him, and a bolt of desire ran down his genitals, giving it length, and softening the lips of his anus. Surrounding all of this lust was a border of politeness. He wanted to fuck her—tenderly. But the tenderness would not hold [....] His soul seemed to slip down to his guts and fly out into her, and the gigantic thrust

> he made into her then provoked the only sound she made—a hollow suck of air in the back of her throat. Like the rapid loss of air from a circus balloon (BE 127-128).

As mentioned before, Morrison rejects to dehumanize any character in the novel, especially Cholly the father. In fact, she wants the readers to see him not as a cruel monster but as a powerless father who cannot help his daughter's pain except for his painful gift of love. Though Morrison refuses to brutalize Cholly, in an animal like movement, he approaches his daughter and while "his soul" seems to "slip down to his guts and fly out into her," Pecola's soul bursts like a balloon. Regarding the rape scene, Cholly's conflicting feelings, and his traumatic past, some conclusions can be drawn by once more seeking the aid of psychoanalysis.

Abreaction or acting out is originally a Freudian term to define the difference between repeating and remembering. It is, so to speak, "contrasting ways of bringing the past into the present" (Laplanche and Pontalis, 1973: 4). If past events are banished from memory, they return by manifesting themselves in actions; when the subject suffers a possible anorexia of the past, she/he is condemned to restage it by acting out. And the aim of the pscyhoanalyst is just the opposite, namely by breaking the repetitive cycle, the analyst helps the patient to remember. Lacan, as can be guessed easily, refutes Freud's assessment on the grounds that the claim excludes the intersubjective dimension of recollection and the presence of the Other. In other words, he posits that recollection does not merely involve recalling something to consciousness, but also communicating such awareness – no matter how traumatic it is - to an Other by means of language/discourse. Hence, acting out results when remembering is made impossible by the refusal of the Other to listen. When the Other becomes deaf, the subject cannot convey a message to it in words, and thus pushed to pass the message through in actions. In *Race, Trauma, and Home in the Novels of Toni Morrison*, Evelyn Jaffe Schreiber mentions an already familiar approach in trauma studies which focuses on the significance of verbalization of trauma and the need for an avid witness in overcoming trauma's undesirable symptoms. (Schreiber, 2010: 13-6). Traumatic experience, after all,

according to Judith Herman, leaves people in the lurch of abandonment and loss of both human and divine "systems of care and protection that sustain life" (Herman, 1997: 52). And the need for verbalization becomes almost indispensable in providing "a minimal sense of safety and integrative intactness… and producing an enduring change in the psychic organization" (Cooper, 2010: 99).

In Cholly's case verbalization of his traumatic experiences and the need for the presence of a witness become just as important in eliminating the symptoms of a traumatic past. However, verbalization, putting his painful experiences into words, is impossible, thus Cholly is forced to express them through his actions, through the acting out of his repressed memories. Indeed, there are two instances of reminiscence during the incestuous rape scene: one remembered and the other repressed. First, as it is mentioned a few pages back, he comes across the same gesture his wife made years ago (giving way to sentiments of "tenderness" and "protection") in his daughter; the same gesture of naivete, smacking of desolate helplessness. And the second instance of recalling occurs as hidden, between the lines, the tender love-making scene with Darlene, disturbed by the two armed white men. Cholly's oscillating feelings of murderous hate and tender protectiveness, even after the rape of his daughter, point out to those two different and conflicting experiences with the women he loves and hates at the same time: "Again the hatred mixed with tenderness. The hatred would not let him pick her up; the tenderness forced him to cover her" (BE, 129). Paul Gilroy, supporting Judith Herman's and Arnold Cooper's views on the significance of verbalization in overcoming trauma and keeping a minimum level of sanity, also posits the ineffable experience of trauma outside one's individual history and claims that the African American narrative is not about love *per se* but about love and loss.

> Yet these narratives of love and loss systematically transcode other forms of yearning and mourning associated with histories of dispersal and exile and the remembrance of unspeakable terror (Gilroy, 1993: 201).

From the outset of the novel to its end, Cholly's story, as Gilroy asserts, is one of love and loss, as he first loses his mother, then his aunt, Darlene, his father Samson, his wife Pauline and finally his daughter Pecola. Perhaps in a desperate attempt to reinstate his place, and amend his carved out roles as son, lover, husband, father and finally as an African American man, Cholly deploys the unutterable truth through Pecola's flesh, whereby she is meant to be the carrier, the avid witness to his unspeakable past. It fails though, it fails tragically for the Symbolic is not only deaf and callous to Cholly's message but it is also the very locus from which the 'perverse enjoyment' trickles down to him. To further explicate Cholly Breedlove's interaction with the Symbolic, and with the sociopolitical milieu of the United States in terms of rape and incest, Molly Anne Rothenberg's and Dennis Foster's thoughts on the psychodynamics of the political and social spaces should be taken into consideration. For Rothenberg and Foster, each individual participates in the political and social spaces in accordance with her/his idiosyncratic fantasies, yet, while political space offers the *jouissance,* the fantasy of "wholeness, omnipotence, linear causality, and/or the recovery of lost essence," the social space separates the individuals and keeps them "sufficiently separate to function as subjects" (Rothenberg, Foster: 2003, 9). Rothenberg and Foster also add an interesting argument that behind the façade of civilized, normative delights "in bodily movement, in song and rhythm, in the patterning of words, in looking, in eating […]", perverse desires lurk. And the authors even direct a rhetorical question: "If the meaningful activities of social life would be possible without their perverse foundations" (*Ibid*.,3). Rothenberg's and Foster's perceptions of the political and social spaces, in which subjects can enjoy the "fantasy of wholeness" and normative, orthodox enjoyments (supported by "perverse foundations") presuppose an ideological structure that would stand at equal distance to all the segments of the society regardless of ethnicity, race, gender, or class. However, as Michel Foucault suggests in his "plague town" analysis of the panoptic exercise of power, the ideological structure, in exclusive rituals of containing the contagious leper, singles out the individuals with the disease, the *personae non gratae* – if you will - so as to maintain a biopolitically healthy society.

In doing so, the state, the ruling ideology conflates the political and the social spaces and creates a sociopolitical space of discipline based on regulative mechanisms of surveillance. (Foucault, 1995: 195 - 200). [16] Cholly Breedlove is not only left out of the political and social fantasies of subjectivity as Rothenberg and Foster assert, he is also winnowed out of the white sociopolitical spaces as though he has a disease. His 'disease' begins at the level of his skin color, obstructing his access to the normative pleasures and shared social fantasies and his skin also places him in the foundational perversity of the political and social spaces. Instead of bequeathing his gift of love to his daughter, Cholly passes down to Pecola his 'disease,' the broken chain of signification/language, unfulfilled desires, and his traumatic past.

[16] According to Michel Foucault, the production of the delinquent as "a pathologized subject," in a "marginal" yet "centrally supervised milieu" contributes to the creation of a politically and economically less dangerous type, useful in the sustainment of illegal practices. The figure of the delinquent, in the sense Foucault employs the word, serves ultimately the dominant ideology in keeping line those who are regarded as the target populations, that is, as biopolitically regulated citizens. (Foucault, 1995: 277) Following Foucault's views, Cholly Breedlove could be posited as the delinquent figure, neither excluded nor included within the society, yet paradoxically situated on the threshold through his excluded inclusion.

1.2. "Hereisthehouse": A Genealogy of Rejection and Dislocation

Here is the house. It is green and white. It has a red door. It is very pretty. Here is the family. Mother, Father, Dick, and Jane live in the green-and-white house. They are very happy.

Here is the house it is green and white it has a red door it is very pretty here is the family mother father dick and jane live in the green-and-white house they are very happy

Hereisthehouseitisgreenandwhiteithasareddooritisverypretty
hereisthefamilymotherfatherdickandjaneliveinthegreenandwhitehousetheyareveryhappy

Created by William S. Gray, Dick and Jane primers were widely used as basal readers at primary schools in the United States in the 30s until their loss of popularity in the 70s.[17] Consisting of two main characters (Dick & Jane), the primers basically reflected an idealized (or even fetishized), middle-class, suburban, white family with the supporting characters of Sally the baby, Mother, Father and Spot the cat. Perhaps the most interesting characteristic of the primers - apart from their obvious racialized content – was that they were structured on the sight reading or "Look and Say" method in which the repetition of whole sentences such as "Oh, see. Oh, see Jane. Funny, funny Jane" were usually accompanied by illustrations of blonde haired, blue eyed children's re-staging of what the phrases indicated. Phyllis R. Klotman, in her reading of three different versions of the primers Morrison used as epitomes in *The Bluest Eye*, throws in an argument that the always simulated "here is the house" quotation offers a synopsis of the tale to follow as well as providing a "subtly ironic comment on a society which educates-and unconscionably socializes -its young with callous disregard for the cultural richness and diversity of its people" (Klotman, 1979: 123). James Baldwin, however, without mincing his words, points out to a much more direct lack of attention regarding

[17] The primers, as expected, caused great controversy. Straining under the mounting criticism, the first African-American figures were introduced into the primers in 1960s, but such attempt at ameliorating the racial composition of the primers did not work out and they were taken off publication in 1970s and have not been used again in the curriculum since then.

education, language and race: “It is not the Black child's language which is despised: It is his experience” (qtd. in Lippi-Green 1997). Contrary to Klotman’s view that the U.S. education overlooks the rich multiplicity of the country, Lynn O. Scott holds different views as regards to the novel and believes Morrison’s use of incest as an attempt to explore and expose the “darker” aspects of “racial othering” to which the U.S. education turned blind eye in its prosperous diversity. Scott further asserts that some ineffable issues are also presented in the novel but obscured and pushed to the background by the presence of the incest taboo: “other ‘tabooed’ subjects that are, in fact, more ‘unspeakable’ than incest” (Scott, 2006: 84). Scott, in her attempt to highlight those “other” taboo subjects, attaches some importance to Cholly’s story along with Pecola’s and she even sees Pecola as one of the most “poignant victims in all of American literature” (*Ibid*., 89).

Morrison’s appropriation of the primers is more than a subtle remark on the indifference of an education system which overlooks the stark realities of other populations within the society. Her personal experience, during her elementary school years, with an African – American classmate, who was hooked on the seemingly nonsensical desire to possess blue eyes goaded Morrison to think over the reasons of a wish of “so radical an alteration” (BE, xi). Morrison’s encounter with the mentioned friend occurred around late 1930s and early 1940s, when the primers were at its prime in the indoctrination of its racialized content. The personal experience, we are told, found expression in the novel *The Bluest Eye* (set in 1940 - 1941 and covering the four seasons) which was published in 1970, need one say, during a period when the United States was swept by the Civil Rights Movement of the 60s.[18] The year 1941 holds a special place for Morrison, especially the fall of the same year, just before the U.S. decided to play an active role in the Second World War. For Morrison, the significance

[18] After 1954, with the Supreme Court’s *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* decision that ruled segregation at public schools unconstitutional, the Civil Rights Movement picked up speed thanks to other anti-racist boycotts as 1955-6 Montgomery Bus incident and 1968 March on Washington led by Martin Luther King. Whether the “separate but equal” doctrine that formed the core of the state-sanctioned discrimination before 50’s and 60’s was totally wiped off the US political landscape, especially after Barack Obama’s election and in the face of recent police brutality against the African Americas, is still a case yet to be resolved.

of the year did not lay in the country's decision to go to war and its resolution to change the course of the world history but in the month of September *per se,* in which "a botanical aberration," "a skip in the natural order of things" went unnoticed. (*Ibid*., 170). The egression from the usual and grandiose historical run of the nation, leaving no considerable trace behind, is Pecola Breedlove's story, as the culmination point of the "implicit racial self-loathing" which Morrison believes to spill down to the sanctum of Pecola's identity in particular and to the capillary structures of black community in general.

> What then, is the Big Secret about to be shared? The thing we (reader and I) are "in" on? A botanical aberration. Pollution, perhaps.[…] When? In 1941, and since that is a momentous year (the beginning of World War II for the United States), the "fall" of 1941, just before the declaration of war, has a "closet" innuendo (*Ibid*.).

Even if it amounts to bending and twisting Morrison's distinct words concerning the elementary school friend and Pecola, *The Bluest Eye* does not only "peck away at the gaze that condemn her" (*Ibid*., iv), but also her parents, and schoolmates. Evoking Morrison's refusal to "dehumanize" other characters who were also the cause of Pecola's mental breakdown, it would be appropriate to include the title of the novel in the discussion as well. Shelley Wong's commentary on the singularity of the eye provides some understanding for the perpetual obsession of Pecola for the color blue:

> There can, after all, only be one bluest eye, not a pair of eyes that are the bluest in the world, but a single eye. The impossibility of Pecola's wish is rooted in the singularity of the superlative. In order to achieve the bluest eye, she has to sacrifice the other—the result, self-mutilation. Pecola's subsequent derangement, the splitting up of her psyche and the splitting off of herself from the world, provides the only route to the superlative (Wong, 2007: 61).

What Wong misses in her analysis is the fact that Pecola is always-already a "self-mutilated," split subject. To borrow Abdul Jan Mohamed's words once again, she has to

reproduce her (just like the father) "[...]racialized self-identification in various and sundry relations with the world" (JanMohamed, 2005: 240). And of course, with the "racialized self-identification" comes constant knitting or unknotting of her identity in relation to a society/community in which not a single individual is exempted from the taint of the singular, superlative, and ocular mirage. From the shopkeeper Mr. Yacobowski in whose eyes Pecola sees disregard and distaste flicker, to a white schoolmate, Maureen Peal, who as a matter of fact peals her with odious insinunations as to her father Cholly's nakedness, to Pauline Breedlove, shut off from Pecola in her love for the big white house and the silver screen, to Soaphead Church, the pedophiliac who grants Pecola's delirious wish for blue eyes in a cruel fashion, not one but all characters take part in Pecola's derangement. Yet, this would be a quick summary of the novel as such unknowing victimizers might themselves be victimized by a gaze both exterior and interior to their sight scales.

In one of Cholly's regular bouts of lawlessness and his ending up in jail to serve a short- term sentence, the Breedlove family finds itself outdoors. During his term in prison, Pauline Breedlove stays with the big white house she works for, Sammy with another family and Pecola is placed with the MacTeers by the county deputy. Pecola's lodging with the MacTeers, especially her befriending the two daughters Frieda and Claudia, is the time when we first learn her incipient fascination with the eye. Pecola's insatiable thirst for milk, or rather her excuse to see the dimpled, cute face of Shirley Temple etched on the exterior of the cup she drinks from, bothers Mrs. MacTeer as she mistakenly takes Pecola's desire for avarice. The two daughters, however, cognizant of Pecola's real motive do not share the mother's blind assessment; Frieda joins Pecola in her adoration of Shirley Temple while Claudia is torn between her estrangement in the face of Shirley Temples of the world and her ravenous search for the element eluding her understanding, the thing that makes the white, blue – eyed figures desirable:

> I had only one desire: to dismember it. To see of what it was made, to discover the dearness, to find the beauty, the desirability that had escaped me, but apparently only me. Adults, older girls, shops, magazines, newspapers, window signs – all the world

> had agreed that a blue-eyed, yellow haired, pink skinned doll was what every girl child treasured. "Here," they said, "this is beautiful, and if you are on this 'worthy' you may have it (BE, 14).

Towards the end of Pecola's stay with the MacTeer family, we are introduced to another detail – albeit a private one – as regards her sexual maturation. When the blood starts running down her legs, all three of the girls are seized with panic until Frieda the eldest cottons on to the reason why Pecola bleeds between the legs. "That's ministratin" she steps in with the authority of an adult and then the siblings proceed to a hasty cleaning and diapering process of Pecola in the bushes. Claudia, sent on an errant to bury Pecola's soiled pants, happens to encounter Rosemary, a white neighbor, her "fascinated eyes" peeping out a "dough-white face." As is her wont to attack whiteness, or rather whiteness in the persons of white characters, Claudia attacks Rosemary and scratches her face. And Rosemary, in pain, calls out to Mrs. MacTeer giving away the whereabouts of the girls. The mother, in a frenzy, and thinking that the girls are doing something dirty in the bushes, slashes at Frieda and then turns Pecola violently around, the napkin pinned to her privacy falls off and Mrs MacTeer learns the truth. That night, the three girls, sensing that something significant happened on the day, lay quiet in their beds. After a long interval of silence, the first to break words is Pecola, now a "little-girl-gone-to-woman."

> "Is it true that I can have a baby now?"
> "Sure," said Frieda drowsily. "Sure you can."
> "But… how?" Her voice was hollow with wonder.
> "Oh." said Frieda, "somebody has to love you" (BE, 23).

Pecola's second question however, more sorrowful and unanswerable than the first one lands on silence as Frieda falls asleep and Claudia does not know the answer.

> "How do you do that? I mean, how do you get somebody to love you?" (*Ibid.*)

After Cholly serves his short term imprisonment, and the county officials decide to return Pecola to her family, Breedloves resume their lives dipped into oblivion, their

dwelling place also sharing the fate of invisibility of its dwellers. On the southeast corner of Broadway and Thirty – Fifth Street in Lorain, Ohio, stands an abandoned store. The store, neither receding into the background nor blending in with the gray frame houses and black telephone boots of the foreground, sticks out conspicuously in the neighborhood. Once housing a pizza parlor, the structure was also used as a baker, real estate office and a home to a group of gypsies. Breedloves, huddled together in the storefront of the dilapidated building, follow a similar trajectory of oblivion, fluidity and overt disgust the structure invokes in the passers-by. Just like the not too austere façade of the store, the family also does not count in the annals of the neighborhood, in the labor force and in the registers of the mayor's office. Morrison's depiction of Breedloves' living quarters also points out to a rather common experience among the low-income African – American families. Especially during the decade of the 1940s, in which the United States got involved in the second World War, the common experience Morrison mentions in terms of the anxiety of dislocation caused by renting and the desire to own a patch of land they could call their own was a prevalent tendency amid the African – American communities working in the booming states of the United States. The Rust Belt, as it was called in the 1960s, once covered a whole area of the burgeoning industrial states of West Virginia, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, Wisconsin and Michigan. The Mid-West urban centers such as Detroit (and the city was famously dubbed "The Arsenal of Democracy")[19], Chicago, Toledo, Pittsburgh, Cleveland and Lorain became the war time manufacturing centers. Although the industrial growth and the output of wealth in the form of owning private property were on the rise, segregational practices in housing, hiring and education were also paralleling the vertical upshot. African Americans, especially the fathers of the families, were given the most menial, unskilled jobs in the service sector and the most dangerous ones in the

[19] Once one of the four wealthiest cities in the country, nicknamed "Motor City" or "Motown", the city of Detroit officially declared its bankruptcy in 2013. After big automotive companies decided to shut down their factories and sought cheap labor in Latin America after World War II, white workers followed the route of deindustrialization, leaving the immobile African-American workers as the sole owners of the city. Deindustrialization, afflicting other towns located in the Rust Belt area augmented the plight of unemployment and drug related crimes and thus added up to the negative, racist views on African-Americans, inhabiting the ghost towns.

stokeholds of the gigantic factories. The payroll was of course the lowest compared to the rest of the labor force which consisted predominantly of white workers. The low – paid African- Americans had no other choice but to rent in the cheapest, overcrowded, unsanitary black enclaves. Sometimes, the renters had to accept boarders into their houses to cut down on the rent expenses which robbed them of more than the 35 percent of their overall income.

The discriminatory hiring and housing practices re-created or rather re-designed "the slave markets" of the antebellum South: unemployed or underemployed black males could be seen to be hanging around the street corners of the Mid-West cities, waiting for a job opportunity to come their way. The image of African Americans standing on the sidelines of the streets, already crystallized into that of "underclass", helped to reinforce and redefine the racist stereotypes. As historian Thomas J. Sugrue claimed, the "slave market" was not simply a place on the city map that the white workers could easily ignore but it also stood for something else. The something else stood for the metaphor of "[…] the slave market, the rehabitated and perceived racial difference" (Sugrue, 205: 121). In other words, white workers of Detroit created a cognitive map of the city shaped by those perceptions and their racial geography of the city became, in part, the basis of their decisions about "where to live, what areas to avoid, and what federal social policies to support and to contest" (*Ibid*.).

It would not be hard to imagine Cholly Breedlove as one of those shiftless, jobless street corner "slaves" of the market who suffered from a "pathological sense of self-defeat, personal failure and hopelessness" (*Ibid*.,156). Though her portrayal of the Breedlove family's living conditions could be taken as an apt representation of the overall politico-economic and social oppression the African – American community had to contend with, Morison yet draws attention to the micro level consequences of such oppressive mechanisms of race and class. The improper, make shift eating and lavatory facilities, the salvaged pieces of trunks, chairs, a small end table and a cardboard of spare furniture, and the constant threat of finding themselves outdoors prevented

Breedloves from establishing stable familial attachments to their nests, with what they owned and with the other members of the family.

> No one had lost a penny or a brooch under the cushions of either sofa and remembered the place and time of the loss or the finding. […] No one had given birth in one of the beds—or remembered with fondness the peeled paint places, because that's what the baby, when he learned to pull himself up, used to pick loose. No thrifty child had tucked a wad of gum under the table. No happy drunk—a friend of the family, with a fat neck, unmarried, you know, but God how he eats!—had sat at the piano and played "You Are My Sunshine." No young girl had stared at the tiny Christmas tree and remembered when she had decorated it, or wondered if that blue ball was going to hold, or if he would ever come back to see it (BE, 25-6).

For Breedloves there would be no such cherished memories, no mutually shared and spent good times binding Cholly, Pauline, Sam and Pecola into the happy unity of being family. Instead, they saw ugliness caving in on from every direction, from the billboards, movies, and glances, reminding them of their "ugly" existence. Pecola's second meeting with the blue eyes happens to transpire during one of the fights between Mr. and Mrs. Breedlove. Pecola, plugging her ears in with her hands and trying not to hear the commotion, prays fervently to disappear. Her arms, hands and legs are first to go, then her stomach, and her face – though with some difficulty - but her eyes would always remain, they would never disappear. And Morrison, vocalizing Pecola, asks a rhetorical question: "Try as she might, she could never get her eyes to disappear. So what was the point? They were everything. Everything was there, in them" (*Ibid*., 33). And it occurs to Pecola that if she could get a pair of eyes, beautiful and loved by everyone, life would be different. Her teeth and especially her nose were cute, so it was only a matter of obtaining the eyes, "Pretty eyes. Pretty blue eyes. Big blue pretty eyes" (*Ibid*., 34). If she could have them, she would have the magic wand, making Mrs. Breedlove and Cholly different, even stop them in their fight and instead make them adore Pecola's pretty eyes.

> "Maybe, they'd say, "Why, look at pretty-eyed Pecola. We mustn't do bad things in front of those pretty eyes" (*Ibid*.).

The closest she gets to her wish for the eyes to be granted is the moment when Pecola munches on her favorite candy bar, Mary Jane. Sold in pale – yellow wrappers and with a picture of a blonde, blue eyed girl, the candy bar is her fantasy of transmutation that would render her identity indistinguishable from the image on the wrapper: "Pecola eats the candy, "and its sweetness is good. To eat the candy is somehow to eat the eyes, eat Mary Jane. Love Mary Jane. Be Mary Jane" (*Ibid*., 43). However, the thing that cuts her off from the fantasy of total identification with Mary Jane is another pair of blue eyes, those of Mr. Yacobowski the shopkeeper. Looming up over the counter of his candy shop, Yacobowski's "blear-dropped", blue eyes slowly but indifferently perceive Pecola's existence. Utterly absent of human recognition, Morrison discerns something bizarre wavering in Yacobowski's "vacuum-edged" ocular globes.

> Somewhere between retina and object, between vision and view, his eyes draw back, hesitate, and hover. At some fixed point in time and space he senses that he need not waste the effort of a glance. He does not see her, because for him there is nothing to see (BE, 36).

Thus passes by the turbulent season of Autumn, seemingly smooth and undisturbed until the year coagulates into the hateful cold of Winter. Faced with the frosty climate of Ohio and feeling the brunt of poverty, Claudia the narrator nevertheless mentions an acclimation to the detestable conditions of the season in which everything was knotted into an ugly but still balanced bundle of glazier chill. What disturbs, and bursts it open is a new comer at school by the name of Maureen Peal, a dream child decked with the colors of white and yellow, and a plum figure of the whole school from magistrates and teachers down to the freshmen students. Maureen Peal, in addition to her whole-scale influence on the school, enjoys as well the luxuries of coming from a well-to-do family.

Her interest in Pecola though, in the girl who is regarded the lowest of the low on the beauty scale, intrigues Claudia. Maureen Peal saves Pecola indeed, by her mere appearance on the spot where Pecola is picked up on by some black boys chanting in unison: "Black e mo Black e mo Ya daddy sleeps nekked. Stch ta ta stch ta ta stach ta ta ta ta ta" (*Ibid*., 50). Their own blackness and their fathers' relaxed habits being irrelevant, they just spit out their racial self-contempt on a scapegoat. Peal's abrupt presence though, is enough to scatter the bullying mob: "They buckled in confusion, not willing to beat up three girls under her watchful gaze" (*Ibid*., 51).

Pretending as if nothing of notice happened, and in the full knowledge of the difference her appearance made, Maureen takes Pecola's arm and chats her away. The girls, Frieda and Claudia - even Claudia, trailing behind, begin to like her. Maureen buys Pecola ice cream out of her wad of banknotes and brings up the discussion of having babies. At one point, during the conversation, Claudia, perhaps sensing something fishy up Maureen's sleeve, retorts when Maureen Peal, out of blue, asks Pecola if she ever seen a naked man. Cholly, her father, being the only naked man in her life, she blurts out the truth.

> "Nobody's father would be naked in front of his own daughter. Not unless he was dirty too."

M.Peal, though, insists on an all-out confession.

> "How come you said 'father'?" Maureen wanted to know" (*Ibid*., 55).

And it is when the two girls – Frieda and Claudia, come to Pecola's rescue not because they think that Pecola is unfairly harassed by this new girl, but also they take it personal as Peal's implicative and persistent question touches on the delicate reality of their seeing their own father naked.

> "Well, you stop talking about my daddy."
> "Who said anything about your old daddy?"

"You did."
"Well, you started it."
"I wasn't even talking to you. I was talking to Pecola."
"Yeah. About seeing her naked daddy."
"So what if she did see him?"
Pecola shouted, "I never saw my daddy naked. Never."
"You did too," Maureen snapped. "Bay Boy said so."
"I did not."
"You did."
"I did not."
"Did. Your own daddy, too!" (*Ibid*., 56).

Mauren Peal flees the fight after Claudia's missed swing, and securing herself on the other side of the street she calls out to the girls: "I am cute! And you ugly! Black and ugly black e mos. I am cute!" (*Ibid*.). Claudia's soliloquy, whether the true enemy is Maureen Peal or the "Thing", segmenting the society in the shape of 'them' – Shirley Temples, Mary Janes, Maureen Peals and 'us'; the "Thing" that made the discriminatory appraisement along the axis of beauty and ugliness, is what Morrison comes to grips with in *The Bluest Eye*. Her purpose, throughout the novel, is to deconstruct the virtual, visual complex and to lay bare the inner mechanism of the eyes (singular and superlative) which impinge on the mundane, and cognitive comprehension of the adults and children alike. The eye(s) luring Pecola to its paradigms of beauty, social mobility and wealth would very well "epitomize everything desirable in white American culture," but for Thomas Fick, the eyes hold a considerable place for Pecola *per se*, who longs for the "cosmetic change", expressing the "deeper need to reform the world the way she sees it, a transcendental rather than existential imperative" (Fick, 2007: 21).

Fick's surmise can be rendered problematic for the fact that Pecola's wish for the metamorphic change (her fervent prayer for the eyes during Cholly – Pauline fight) comes indeed from a desperate desire to transform the immediate, undesirable reality she is immersed in. Pecola's longing for the "cosmetic" touches is thus rather driven by the attempt to transform the everyday conditions than the attainment of a transcendental category which would enable her to ameliorate the way she perceives the world. And, the second problem with Fick's commentary is his ignorance of the reflexive nature of the gaze/eye vis-à-vis Pecola. For we, as readers, come to know that Pecola's perception

of the world around her depends, to a large extent, on an outside gaze. And this outside gaze, comprising myriad persons and forms, manifests itself sometimes in total disregard for her being or takes an exuberant interest in her story.

For a better understanding of gaze and how it originates and later deployed in the service of a certain ideology, Laura Mulvey's views on how "patriarchal super-ego" and "ego-libido" identifications are employed for "a number of possible pleasures" in the cinema should be analyzed with some length. (Mulvey, 2004: 806). Offering "a number of possible pleasures" in the cinematic medium, Mulvey highlights two ocular modes, "voyeurism"- "bearer of the look" and "scopophilia"-"to-be-looked-at-ness," as the prominent forms of generating pleasure in relation to a screen. (*Ibid*.) For Mulvey, voyeurism (which she associates with sadism and a linear narrative of a beginning and an end) demands "a story," forcing, pushing something to happen and "a change in another person." Scopophilia, on the other hand, is closed in on itself (falling out of the linear time) in the narcissistic auto-eroticism of the subject which is obsessed with "the look alone" (*Ibid*., 809-10). According to Mulvey, the representation of women, lacking penis and therefore posing a threat of castration and unpleasure is somehow eluded thanks to voyeuristic and scopophilic mechanisms. Mulvey's thoughts were later subjected to critical scrutiny and she had to readjust her views, but her thoughts on the manifestation of Oedipus complex and castration still have some efficiency.

> Mulvey bases her argument on the different consequences of the Oedipal trajectory for each sex whereby the little boy experiences the transition into the Symbolic comparatively easily, whereas in the case of the little girl who has to switch the gender of her first object of desire, integration and closure are endlessly postponed (Sözalan, 2000: 87).

If applied to Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*, Mulvey's thoughts may undergo another revision. Following Mulvey's views, identification of the voyeuristic and scopophilic characters in the novel should be easy. Cholly would be the voyeur in his so called patriarchal position whereas Pauline and Pecola would constitute the scopophilic end.

And what is more, Cholly's Oedipal transition into the Symbolic should be easy compared to his daughter's experience of castration. Yet, making clear cut identifications of the characters in this manner is not easy and feasible for the fact that their positions in relation to a screen are complex and problematic. Cholly's and Darlene's situation during the rape by the two white men for example could neither be called voyeuristic nor scopophilic. Voyeurism, the sadistic push on the story, belongs to the gaze of white men while Cholly and Darlene are rather traumatized than amused by being the objects of "to-be-looked-at-ness." Pauline Breedlove, on the other hand, in her infatuation with the movies and with the overwhelming images (white men taking good care of their women and the images of neat houses and lavatories) moving on the screen, enjoys herself, a bearer of her own look somehow, yet disturbed by the incongruity between what she sees on the screen and in her everyday reality. To better understand the configurations of gaze in the novel, it is necessary to say a few words on Lacan's formulations of the scopic field. On the conceptualization of gaze and the spatilialization of the subject in the Symbolic, Lacan conceives of an antinomic relation between eye/look and gaze. For Lacan, the eye which looks is that of the subject, while the gaze is on the side of the object, and when the subject looks at an object, the object is always already gazing back, from a point, blind spot which the subject cannot see. Lacan also posits an intermediary screen, between look and gaze, as an in-between space of projected and perceived images. Yet, when the subject realizes that the object is in fact looking back at her/him, the feeling of being the sole owner of the scene before one's look dissolves. Lacan's famous anecdote of sardine can, floating in the sun, and Petit – Jean's sarcastic acknowledgement "*You see that can? Do you see it? Well, it doesn't see you*!" [emphasis in the original] (Lacan, 1988: 95), points out to the disintegration of one's fantasy thanks to the returned gaze by the object. At the end of the story Lacan is gravely disturbed on account of the fact that the object (the sardine can) looks back at him, unhinging the sinews of his being by delivering the truth that he is not in the picture, excluded from the image. What transpires, in psychoanalytic terms, is that the ego – ideal, the point of identification in the Symbolic via the object reveals the frivolity

of Lacan's fantasy of loitering in the countryside. The can cuts him off not only from the idyllic scenery but also from the mental image (imago) he has of himself, that is to say, his ideal-ego. If ideal-ego can be defined as the locus thanks to which the subject idealizes its self –image, the ego-ideal would be the point of symbolic interpellation determining the situational apperception (*Aha Erlebnis*) of the subject. In other words, For Lacan, ego-ideal is the focal point from which the subject looks back at itself in a reflexive fashion to render the self-image worthy of desire. Ego-ideal, as observed by Freud, also serves a social role of horizontal affiliations, pulling in different individuals who are supposed to have similar ego-ideals: "Social feelings rest on identifications with other people, on the basis of having the same ego – ideal" (Freud, 1995: 643). Upholding Freud's thoughts, Lacan also comments on the significance of the symbolic connection in the sense that "we locate our different selves [*mois*] in relation to one another…with the law as go-between" thanks to which we place ourselves symbolically and the symbolic relation "defines the subject as seeing" (Lacan, 1988: 140). Thus, the act of seeing or being seen, and the field of gaze cannot be individual, idiosyncratic alone but social as well, depending on differences of class, ethnicity or race. Lacan does not mention, however, the nature of the political power gaze wields in social and symbolic relations. In *Black Looks: Race and Representation,* bell hooks speaks of such optical and socio-symbolic power, set between the whites and the "colored" races in the form of repressive and oppositional gazes. For hooks, the "overwhelming longing," "a rebellious desire" to look, to return the objectifying, dehumanizing stare of whiteness forms the crucial step in overcoming and changing the white version of reality imposed on the black populations (hooks, 1992: 116). [20] James Baldwin draws attention to this white version, to the dominant "European vision" in the US, but he is quick to add that such vision takes a different form in its American version: "No one was white before he/she came to America" (Baldwin, 1998: 178). For the immigrants from Europe, the

[20] Auction block and pedestal are two spatial, ocular points from which African Americans and slave owners measured their respective relations to the US society at large. For David R. Roediger, the auction block stood for many themes, and African-Americans associated them with "terror", "property" and "sexual exploitation" on the brink of sale (1998: 3).

acquisition of whiteness did not require a considerable effort as one had to be European first and then learn the word "nigger" soon after landing on the continent. It didn't matter whether one spoke English or not, or knew anything about the derogatory connotations of the *n* word. In addition to the African – American schoolmate, impelling Morrison to write about the desire for blue eyes, Morrison had another friend, an immigrant boy from Europe with whom she shared the "double-seat" and who barely could speak English (Morrison was his English teacher at the time). The friend used the word "nigger" on Morrison one day, and that was his first step towards possessing white lenses (qtd. in Roediger, 1998: 20). For Cheryl Harris, becoming white in the US also meant coming into possession of a certain property, secured and adjudicated by law, which granted certain rights of enjoyment and exclusion "…determining who was or was not white enough to enjoy the privileges accompanying whiteness" (Harris, 1998: 112). Tautologic as it is, and yet to put it somehow differently, desiring or already possessing the blue(est) eyes amounted to identifying oneself as the bluest *I*, the predicate on which racial and sociosymbolic identities and optical pleasures stood.

Mr. Yacobowski's (very likely an immigrant from Eastern Europe) callous, blue eyes, if it could be argued, can be given as one side of the eye which functions by a total blackening out of Pecola's existence. If it would not seem far – fetched an argument, Mr. Yacobowski, the shopkeeper's eyes could be given as an example to function as the sardine can in the story of young Jacques Lacan. Just like the sardine can, which does not see Lacan, excluding him from the rustic image and his fantasy, Yacobowski's blue eyes, not bothering an effort of a glance, conveys the message that Pecola is not "on this worthy" plane, not on par with Dick & Jane, Shirley Temple, and Mary Jane figures to whose images Pecola vehemently attaches her identity. In other words, Yacobowski sensitizes a fact which Pecola knows only too well, the way to being a dream child, like Maureen Peal, to be one of those idolized characters, would be available to those with a similar complexion and with similar ego-idealistic connections to the world at large, the Symbolic. Another dimension to the blue eyes could be exemplified in Maureen Peal. Her gaze – unlike the disinterested glance of the

shopkeeper – saves Pecola but later on we learn that her gaze also stands for an obscene reference to the girls' fathers. Offering another unlikely compound, Peal's and the two armed white men's gazes serve the same end of superego, namely the obscene commandment of "enjoy." Though in Cholly's case enjoyment thus ordered is a forced, brutal realization of fantasy, in Pecola's, it is more ludic and implicitly suggestive. The reference to the nakedness of the fathers could be roughly taken as a foreshadowing of future rape and incest. The problem, however, is Peal's injection of sexuality into a "friendly-like" truth shared by Frieda and Claudia as well.

Pecola's encounters with whiteness and the blue eyes can be roughly divided into two halves. Initially, her meeting with the eyes comes in the commodified forms of Shirley Temples, Mary Janes, Ginger Rogerses etc., whose white skinned, blonde haired images dominate the landscape of beauty. Pecola, conscious of her imposed ugliness, and conscious of the status of idolatry such "desirable" figures evoke, yearns for a similar standing which would enable her not only to enjoy the flicker of adoration in the eyes turned on her being but also give her the leverage to alter the everyday, social reality of her family. Of course, the impossibility of the wish is revealed by Yacobowski's gaze. And the second part of the meeting transpires by means of Peal, in whose eyes lurks a racy reference, but Morrison is quick to add that the reference is not meant for Pecola *per se*, but for the other characters who – in one way or another – engage in the imbroglios of the 'Thing.' In this regard, just as Cholly Breedlove's case with the white men cannot be thought in isolation from his later meeting with his father Sam**,** Pecola's obsessive infatuation for the blue eyes should be attached to her mother Pauline's corresponding desire for whiteness or rather what the color offers in its dazzling and elusive beauty. When asked if she had any qualms about the silenced voices of Pecola and Pauline throughout the narration, Morrison gave a rather frank answer. Pecola's silence did not disturb her much, despite the rampant criticism, as Morrison claimed that Pecola, on purpose and for a purpose, was placed right in the heart of "the void , that is Pecola's "unbeing", out of which she could only be heard to produce an amorphous sound: "It should have had a shape – like the emptiness left by a

boom or a cry" (BE, 171). As for Pauline though, Morrison suffered from an uneasy conscience for she was intimate with her story but had hard time to find the right words to weave her in the narration.

> When I got to Pauline, whom I knew so well, I could not do it. I could not make it. I didn't know what to write or how. And I sort of copped out anyway in the book because I used two voices, hers and the author's (qtd in Taylor - Guthrie, 1994: 20).

Yet, she opens the chapter on Pauline with a warning: "The easiest thing to do would be to build a case out of her foot. That is what she herself did. But to find out the truth about how dreams die, one should never take the word of the dreamer" (BE, 86). Living in a family of eleven children, and in a house sitting "on a ridge of red Alabama clay," a rusty nail she steps on rescues Pauline from slipping into total anonymity. Her slightly limping foot bestows on her a cloak of invisibility and separateness as no member of the family would give her nicknames or tell little stories about her or care to ask her food preferences. Pauline, though acquiring a certain standing within the family thanks to her deformed foot, is thus left out of the uniform structure of the domestic culture. By the beginning of the World War I, the Williamses learn that better housing and living conditions are available up north, so they set off to settle down in a five-room frame house in Kentucky. As the living conditions of the Williams family get better, Pauline also finds new occupations in the big house. With her mother and father working out, her brothers drafted in the army and after the sisters' marriage, Pauline becomes the sole ruler of the Williams mansion. Though tending to the daily chores of the house eases her mind of the sinful and carnal day dreaming about men, her eyes – after all the household tasks are done away with – would nevertheless fasten on the land stretching beyond the fence she usually perches on. Right there and then, the day dreaming called off by the mundane tasks would resume their vividness and on days like those Pauline would seek out "someone"; someone with no definite form to his shape, voice and odor.

> He was a simple Presence, an all-embracing tenderness with strength and a promise of rest. It did not matter that she had no idea of what to do or say to the Presence-after the wordless knowing and the soundless touching, her dreams disintegrated. But the Presence would know what to do. She had only to lay her head on his chest and he would lead her away to the sea, to the city, to the woods…forever (*Ibid*., 88).

As fate would have it, Cholly turns out to be the first and probably the only candidate. Befuddled, as usual, he knees down to tickle and kiss the incomplete foot to which Pauline responds with a ringing laughter and for the first time she thinks that the foot is an important asset, a significant part of her body, and worthy of desire just like the rest. If the rusty nail drills Pauline into oblivion, the memento it leaves also pulls her out. Sure enough, the relationship with Cholly later follows a bumpy route, "shredded with quarrels" and the marital union fails, inevitably. Her dreams fading out slowly but surely, Pauline turns to the silver screen to endure the tapestry of oblivion she once again finds herself wrapped in. The pictures would not only help Pauline to forget the tedious life of housewifery but revive for her the lost days of dreaming before Cholly's visit back in Kentucky. The animated images, however, also indoctrinate her in the ways of attributing scales to the phenomenon named beauty.

> 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 from the silver screen…There the black-and-white images came together, making a magnificent whole—all projected through the ray of light from above and behind. It was really a simple pleasure, but she learned all there was to love and all there was to hate (*Ibid*., 111). [21]

[21] Just like her mother's love for the movies and the white movie characters, Pecola is also obsessed with a movie icon, Shirley Temple. The child star of 1930s, Shirley Temple represented the beauty standards of the country at the time, decorating the home utensils such as drinking cups (with her blonde hair and blue eyes) from which Pecola avariciously drinks the milk. The name Pecola, given to her by her mother Pauline, is another allusion to a movie star. Peola, in *Imitation of Life* (1934), whose fair-complexion, and mixed race ancestry enables her to pass as a white woman in the film, is the interesting character of the casting, who finally embraces her "Negro" ancestry.

While devouring on the reeled images, something unpleasant occurs when Pauline nips on a candy bar. Her tooth gets caught in the gummy stuff and detaches itself from the rest leaving in its place an acute, throbbing ennui. She realizes then, no matter how hard she tries to imitate Jean Harlow's hair style, a void of ugliness would follow her to the end. Pauline, after her education in and through the movies, and after her painful discovery, does not only cut herself off from the monotonous wedlock with Cholly, she also severes the tie with her daughter Pecola as Pauline later becomes obsessively enmeshed in the economics of the big white house of the Fisher family. If the mother – daughter relationship is to be analyzed in terms of the castration complex once again, of course not in the scanty manner Freud observes for the female gender, Pauline's infatuation for the movies and for the Fisher household she is employed by could be interlaced with the eye haunting her daughter Pecola. For that matter, it would be appropriate to re-introduce Lacan's take on the complex, especially his views regarding the complex's unfolding for the child regardless of its gender.

The castration complex does not occupy a significant place in Lacan's teaching until the mid-1950s, and the term particularly comes to be of importance in his 1956-1957 seminar in which Lacan categorizes castration as one of the forms of "lack of object," the other two being frustration and privation. The lack, however, the lack of castration, assumes a different *modus operandi* when it functions not as an imaginary intervention of the father, (as an agent of lawful *jouissance*) but as the lack in mother's desire when the subject (the subject of language) realizes that the mother is incomplete in her desire and that she longs for something else other than her child. For Lacan, such cognizance constitutes the crucial moment – independently of gender – for the subject's realization that the big Other/the Symbolic itself is barred and lacking. And at this juncture, the subject is presented with a choice: it will either assume the normative influence of castration or reject it. Accepting the intervention, the offer of *jouissance* the father presents combined with Law, the subject submits itself to the symbolic plane with which it will engage via language. Rejection or rather denial of such offer and the realization that the primary agents of the Symbolic, the parents, themselves are facing a

difficulty in establishing a connection to the Other prompts another reading concerning the complex of castration.

If two receptive figures of castration –as it is discussed in this chapter – could be compared in the manner of not an active rejection/selection of the complex but as a stark denial of the offer by the parents, Cholly's and Pecola's lives should make up an interesting compound. Their stories regarding their parents, or rather their relations to the respective role models share a common fate of facing the lack, that is, they are both denied by their parents; Cholly for a crap game and Pecola for the love her mother nurtures for the movies, for Fisher family and most importantly for the little white girl in a sunback pink dress. We know that Cholly never recovers from the clout he receives at the hands of his father Samson Fuller. And we further know that he is particularly rendered dumbfounded and dysfunctional with his marriage and the birth of his offspring Pecola and Sam for he does not know of any parental figure before him to guide him in the maze of marital life and in the upbringing of his children. If Cholly's life span covers the difficulties of having his parents *in absentia*, Pecola's could be said to suffer from the symptoms – the trauma even – of having them in their flesh and blood, and exiguous presence. While Pauline distances herself away from the cloak of ugliness Pecola wears, (the garment Pauline also finds herself wrapped in) and dedicates her whole love for the "big white house with the wheelbarrow full of flowers," Cholly deals a blow of traumatic intimacy to her sanity after which we witness Pecola's effort to recover from the sexual assault by resorting to the help of pedophiliac Soaphead Church, that is, when her desire for the blue eyes is fulfilled. As much as the two characters of the novel are concerned, father in the shape of victimizer and the daughter victimized, a compromising conclusion might sound absurd let alone attaching common characteristics for the explanation of incest. However, certain underlying similarities could be said to traverse the lives of the father, the mother and the daughter.

A few pages back, it was mentioned that Cholly's manhood was given back, after his traumatic encounter with Samson Fuller, by three women, three sex workers leaning out of two windows. Likewise, Pecola, to make up for her mother's absence,

befriends three sex workers living in the apartment right above the storefront she and her family live in.[22] China, Poland, and Miss Marie are fond of Pecola as she is fond of them, and they send her out for their errands and in return tell her about their love stories, just like coworker Blue in Cholly's life. Soaphead Church though, is a different matter. Born Elihue Micah Whitcomb, alias Soaphead Church as he was known to the black community of Lorain, Soaphead has an intriguing history. "A cinnamon-eyed West Indian, with lightly browned skin" (BE, 135), Soaphead is a descendant of a mulatto family, into which first strain of whiteness was introduced by a Sir Whitcomb, some decaying British nobleman, in the early 1800s. Whitcomb family always tried to marry "up", in order to lighten the color of the progeny. Due to careless mistakes of the brothers though, the family members began to intermarry and thus could not keep the whiteness bequeathed by the declining lord. Soaphead was a man of learning, studying various fields ranging from sociology, psychiatry to physical therapy. As the skin color of the family got darker, his chances of getting a vocation in the white world also diminished and thus he found himself settled in Lorain, Ohio, in 1936. The black community took him for an educated man and gave him a moniker, Soaphead, for his "tight," "curly" hair that "took on and held a sheen and wave when pomaded with soap lather" (*Ibid.*), and Church for his self-acclaimed spiritualism. He promotes himself as interpreter of dreams and a reader of the psyche. Despite all his glamor and education, Soaphead in fact is a misanthropist and pedophile. After the rape by his father, we learn that Soaphead is Pecola's last hope for the attainment of the blue eyes she has sought

[22] In *The Bluest Eye,* one can speculate that number three has repetitive and uncanny associations. The number first springs up in Mrs. MacTeer's complaint that Pecola drinks three "quarts of milk," the amount even Henry Ford (the founder of the Ford Motor Company) would not drink per day. (24). And the second allusion to the number is when Pecola buys 9 Mary Jane candies, 3 for each penny, from Mr. Yacobowski. Three pennies offering her "nine lovely orgasms with Mary Jane." (47). Just like three "whores", China, Poland and Miss Marie in Pecola's life, we also know that the three women, leaning out of two windows give her father back his manhood. And finally, Soaphead Church, after leading Pecola to kill the dog, folds his letter to God in three equal parts. For Freud, if one comes across such unhomely repetition of a certain number by coincidence, one has the tendency to take it for a secret and superstitious message. Yet, Freud associates it with the *repetition – compulsion* tendency in the unconscious, as the recurrence of long forgotten and repressed events in one's psychic life. "The 'Uncanny'" (1919). The last speculation on the significance of number three is from Christianity. The number, according to Bible numerologists, indicates divine perfection and completion as the notion of a creator consists of the holy trinity and many significant events in the Bible happen "on the third day."

after so desperately. Madonne M. Miner sees Soaphead's act of granting her wish another instance of rape, this time on her psyche.

> Soaphead's creation of false belief is not necessarily right for Pecola, but for himself. Morrison substantiates this assessment of Soaphead's creation a few pages later, when she portrays its effect on Pecola. Imprisoned now behind blue eyes, the schizophrenic little girl can talk only to herself. Obviously, this instance of male-female interaction parallels earlier scenes from the novel: "rape" occurs as Soaphead elevates himself at the expense of Pecola (Miner, 1985: 189).

Laurie Vickroy also sees Soaphead as the ultimate cause of Pecola's psychic disintegration, for he makes her kill the ailing dog by feeding him poisoned meat and makes her watch the death throes of the dying dog. (Vickroy, 2008). Adding on Miner's and Vickroy's thoughts, Allen Alexander maintains that Cholly does not "rape her mind the way that Pauline and Soaphead do" (Alexander, 2010: 301). Though some watershed moments in Pecola's life can be identified in the shape of her victimizers, Cholly, Pauline, and Soaphead Church, and some surmises can be made as to who devastates her the most, a common experience of dislocation, and rejection, especially for the "colored" characters of the novel, can also be given. A native of the Greater Antilles, a fusion of east-west cultures and ancestries, Soaphead is one of them, like Cholly, who sets out on a journey to retrieve his parents and yet ends up in jail, and Pauline, losing her Kentucky mansion to the storefront in Lorain. The three characters suffer from dislocation and what is more intriguing is that their attempts at re-localization find a certain barrier, rejection, either by white characters or by the phenomenon of whiteness.

After her visit to Soaphead Church, and after deluding herself into the possession of the blue eyes, Pecola makes friends with an imaginary figure, whose company consists of confirming Pecola's constant questioning whether she has the bluest eyes in the whole world. Thinking, imagining herself to be part of that "exclusive club whose membership was closely and grudgingly guarded" (Harris, 1991: 112), Pecola is but seen only by her imaginary friend as everyone avoids her even more after

the rape incident. Yet, Pecola takes such evasion as a consequence of people's envy of her recently attained beauty.

> Can you imagine? Something like that happening to a person, and nobody but nobody saying anything about it? They all try to pretend they don't see them. Isn't that funny? (BE,154).

On the relationship between seeing and subjectivity, Joanne S. Frye remarks that the need for Pecola "to *see,* to participate in the culture's image of what life ought to be…become the negation of her subjectivity" (Frye, 1986: 102). Cynthia A. Davis, using Sartre's views on the experience of 'the Look', sees Pecola's case as both confirmation and negation of subjectivity: "human relations revolve around the experience of 'the Look,' for being 'seen' by another both confirms one's reality and threatens one's sense of freedom" (Davis, 1982: 324). Pecola's sense of identity, teetered on the threshold between reality and fantasy, does not depend on the blue eyes alone, on the dichotomy of looking and being seen, but also on the discourse the primers inculcate throughout the novel. The sections of *The Bluest Eye*, those focusing on Pecola and her family, open up with a line or two from the primers. The last one, dealing with Pecola's mental breakdown, is one of them: "Look, look. Here comes a friend" (BE, 152). For Gibson, the epigraphical usage of the primers, as introductory lines to the sections, reminds the addressee of "the role of education in both oppressing the victim—and more to the point—teaching the victim how to oppress her own black self by internalizing the values that dictate standards of beauty" (Gibson, 2007: 37).

In *Growing Up with Dick and Jane: Learning and Living the American Dream*, the authors, Carole Kismaric and Marvin Heiferman speak of a certain nostalgia for the primers, for Dick and Jane, the "all American" brother and sister team, and for a world "where night never comes, knees never scrape, parents never yell and the fun never stops" (Kismaric, Heiferman, 1996:3-5). As an extension of familial, socioeconomic, and national histories of an ideal US, the primers painted a sylvan family life.

Morrison's appropriation of the primer in the form of epigraphs to the sections on Pecola and Breedlove family is indeed countertextual to the flawless depiction of familial reality the primer offers. In the novel, the borrowed passages are first given in their punctuated forms and then without punctuations and finally in the compressed words and sentences, thus transforming their standardized elements into unintelligible phrases. Such change from meaning to meaninglessness, from ordered to tumultuous reality is obviously Morrison's criticism of the ahistorical and racist stance of the basal reader in particular and the nation in general. Yet, if one looks past this obvious critique, it is also possible to claim, especially in the last section of the novel, that Pecola in her hallucinative attainment of the blue eyes also comes into the possession of the language which eludes her throughout the novel. Resembling the syntagmatic structure of the primers, Pecola's monologue with the imagined friend depends on repetitions of certain words and sounds.

> See. I told you.
> *No. I told you.*
> Are they really nice?
> *Yes. Very nice.*
> Just "very nice"?
> *Really, truly, very nice.*
> Really, truly, bluely nice? (BE, 153).

For Frantz Fanon, the image racialized subject identifies with, is "*appurtenance* to authority and identity," that is, the access to the image is possible through displacement of being, and through the liminal reality of "absence/presence," "representation/repetition" (Fanon, 197: 118). The colonized subject's identification with the image the colonizer imposes on is both "metaphoric substitution," "an illusion of presence" and metonymic "a sign of its absence and loss" (*Ibid*.). As Roman Jakobson propounded in *Two Aspects of Language and Two Types of Aphasic Disturbances* (1956), the language disorders acted on these two main axes of language, those who suffer from 'continuity disorder' tend to use substitution (i.e. metaphor) and those suffering from 'similarity disorder' to use association (i.e. metonymy). For Jakobson, some literary works and genres use one axis more dominantly than the other

and *The Bluest Eye* can be said to make use of the two poles of the linguistic expressions simultaneously. If Pecola's story is to be read and concluded in Fanon's words, it can be claimed that Pecola lives in that liminal state not just in the end of the novel but throughout the narration, and furthermore she is not the only African – American character to occupy the tenuous poles of absent and present, representative and repetitive ends of existence. Laurie Vickroy's thoughts on the shared experience of rejection of the parents and the children, encapsulate the metonymic, repetitive life cycle of Pecola best:

> Cholly was rejected by both of his parents, Pauline was made an outsider because of a limp. Traumatized children themselves, they continue the trauma by denying their own weakness in their abuse of parental power, by instilling their own fears of impotence, and by calling upon their children to fulfil their own unmet needs (Vickroy, 2008: 93).

It is obvious that Pecola cannot meet the needs, and wishes her parents pile on her, on the contrary, she becomes the ultimate epitome of everything that goes wrong in Cholly's and Pauline's lives and even in the whole black community, though this time, in the manner of a metaphoric, representative displacement.

> 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. All of us—all who knew her—felt so wholesome after we cleaned ourselves on her. We were so beautiful when we stood astride her ugliness. Her simplicity decorated us, her guilt sanctified us, her pain made us glow with health, her awkwardness made us think we had a sense of humor. Her inarticulateness made us believe we were eloquent. Her poverty kept us generous. Even her waking dreams we used—to silence our own nightmares. And she let us, and thereby deserved our contempt. We honed our egos on her, padded our characters with her frailty, and yawned in the fantasy of our strength (BE, 163).

Metaphoric and metonymic axes of language, in other words, the similar and contiguous paradigms of language happen to be substantialized in Pecola's identity. Pecola Breedlove's story is both representative of metaphoric substitution in its endless search

for the blue eyes that would rectify the racial conditions of all the Breedlove family, and is repetitive of metonymic association, for the novel closes with contiguous, coinciding histories, stories of the family members. Sammy Breedlove, the brother, runs away from the family after the rape incident, Cholly dies in the workhouse and Pauline keeps on working for the big, white house. We also learn that Pecola's end coincides with that of her father's beginning, his birth and abandonment by his mother when he was four days old, wrapped in two blankets and placed on a junk heap by the rail road. Similarly, at the end of the novel, we find Pecola living on the edge of the town with her mother in exile and amidst "[…] tire rims and the sun flowers, between Coke bottles and milkweed, among all the waste and beauty of the world." (BE, 162).

CHAPTER TWO
Oneirocriticism of Richard Wright's *The Long Dream*

When *The Long Dream*, Richard Wright's last novel written during his expatriate years in France, came out in 1958, it was met with mixed reactions within the academic circles of the United States. Some critics believing Wright to have lost touch with the racial reality of the country, found fault with his treatment of the matter in the novel. An African-American critic, Saunders Redding, sensing a danger of softening in Wright's fiction of self-inflicted exile, claimed Wright to have "cut the emotional umbilical cord through which his art was fed, and all that remains for it to feed is the memory, fading, of righteous love and anger" (Redding, 1958: 329). Maxwell Geismar, while agreeing with Redding's thoughts and believing Wright's previous works of fiction (*Uncle Tom's Children*, *Native Son* and *Black Boy*) to be "solid, bitter, savage, almost terrifying fictional studies of the Negro mind," regarded *The Long Dream* as "a surrealistic fantasy of paranoid and suicidal impulses, veiled in political terminology" (Geismar, 1958: 333).

Despite the rampant criticism thus directed against Wright, some scholars defended him and found merit in *The Long Dream* to praise. Roi Ottley, regarding the novel as "a social document of unusual worth," believed it to be a realistic rendering of the lynching, police brutality and a race riot transpiring in a small town of Mississippi in the mid twentieth century. (Ottley, 1958: 327). More interesting commandment though came from a reviewer in *Best Sellers*. Paul Kiniery lauded the realistic characteristics of the novel on the grounds that Wright did not only sketch a true to life picture of racial strife in the U.S. but also gave a detailed account on the amorality of black characters' indulging in "irregular but frequent sexual relations." Kiniery, however, was anxious to add that Wright blamed such idiosyncrasy of the blacks on the white characters as well (Kiniery, 1958: 327). Whether correct or not in capturing and depicting the racial reality of the U.S. in the late twentieth century, Wright's *The Long Dream* should not be reduced to a singular interpretation of racial realism. An avid reader of psychoanalytic

theory, especially that of Freud, Wright is known to have incorporated some notions of psychoanalysis in his writings. Freud's thoughts on the subject of dreams and on the triad of ego-id-superego obviously influenced Wright's creation of his black boy characters, among whom Fishbelly of *The Long Dream* came as the last child of his psychoanalytical experiments.[1] Introducing Fishbelly as "a black human plant forced to grow and live under completely abnormal conditions" (Wright, 1993: 198), he further explained the abnormality in another dialogue: "Remember he is an African-American, speaks English, and in spite of everything is forced to look at life from a unique angle" (*Ibid*.).

Richard Wright, anxious to portray his character's development in the contrived environs and in the form of *bildungsroman*, placed racial/social reality of the U.S., side by side its fantasmatic manifestations in the shape of dreams. *The Long Dream*, just as the title suggests, is laden with such contradictory and coexisting renderings of reality and fantasy. The novel combines naturalistic writing and the bildungsroman, (otherwise known as novel of initiation) and its main concern is to portray the childhood and adolescence years of Rex "Fishbelly" Tucker. Fishbelly is born into a family of relative privilege and respectability but soon discovers that his father's cooperation with the white authorities cannot protect him from the realities of the Jim Crow, or segregated South. The novel begins with a number of experiences from Fishbelly's childhood, the most memorable of which is the lynching of his older friend and sometime mentor Chris Sims. Chris commits the crime of transgressing the taboo of being interested in a white girl, and when discovered at the hotel, he is lynched and mutilated by a white mob, and his body is taken to the funeral home for burial. In a moment of revelation for the young Fishbelly, his father takes him to the funeral home to display to him the badly beaten face of Chris Sims, as a warning and a demonstration of the power the white world has

[1] The word 'experiment' may sound untasteful. Paul Gilroy, in *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousnes*s also claims that Wright's many works of fiction consisted of psychoanalytical and experimental elements with undertones of Naturalism. Please see the chapter "Wright, France, and the Ambivalence of the Community" in Gilroy's book.

over the black. As Fishbelly grows up to be a respected member of the middle-class black community of Clintonville, he gets his first taste of whiteness after trespassing on a white property owner's land. From then on, he does his best to avoid any contact with the white world. When turned sixteen, he drops out of the school and starts working for his father, imagining for a better world. His sanguine days, however, last a short time as Tyree, his father, is shot death by the police chief, and later he himself is put behind the bars for two years on charges of an attempted rape on a white girl. After his release, Fishbelly immediately leaves the country for France in search and hope for a better life and dreams.

Rex Tucker's elongated dream beginning with his childhood years down to his adolescence and finally to his maturation ending up in France is a long trajectory of finding out whether he is still dreaming or face to face with the harsh racial reality of his country. The tell-tale chapter names, "Daydreams and Nightmares…", "Days and Nights…", "Waking Dream" mention indeed the educational process of Fishbelly, caught up in the snares of dreaming and waking life. The first part provides detailed information on him and his parents, especially on his father Tyree Tucker who owns a funeral house and buries black bodies and also runs a clandestine brothel in the black section of Clintonville, Mississippi. His mother, though, a devout Christian, and a moralist housewife, is the antithetical character to his father, as Emma Tucker tries to instruct her son in the doctrines of Christianity and the mores of lawful, normative, racial and sexual practices. Rex Tucker's first dream, which also hints at his attainment of the nickname, is crisscrossed by sexual representations, or rather, *tertium comparationis*, symbols standing for his parents and portents for the racial realities of Clintonville. In the dream, imagining himself playing baseball with Chris (who is later lynched for sleeping with a white girl), Rex sees a big and terrifying fish, flying at him in fury:

> […] it was not Chris this time but a seven-foot fish who had the ball and he was scared to death but he could not run and then the fish threw the ball and it him in the mouth wedging itself between his teeth and he could not take it out and could not swallow it and he knew that the fish had done to him what his papa did to fishes

> catching him on a hook and the fish was coming at him with gleaming red eyes and he tried to scream but could not and he could see the fish's mouth opening to swallow him[…] (LD, 10).

His mother wakes him up from the nightmare and tells him to get off the bed as his father is back from the nighttime fishing trip. Examining the fish, he associates the smell with his mother's vaginal odor and the fish bladder with a pregnant neighbor. Rex's fascination with the smell and the bladder seals his nickname as Fishbelly or shorter, Fish. [2] The first part comes to an end by a sexually charged dream, his dreaming of a locomotive and a naked body of a white girl.

In part two of the novel, the continuity of half-dreaming and half-awake state of Fishbelly could be traced, though with some significant adjustments to his perception of the racial and sexual realities of his environment. After the lynching of Chris by a white mob and the local police force, and his initiation into a race-strict sexuality by his father, Fishbelly's dreams take a different turn. He drops out of school at the age of sixteen, and makes plans to live a life like his father. He dreams of having a mulatto mistress just like Tyree, and his father makes him work by collecting the rent of his brothel and boarding houses. As Keneth Kinnamon states, in his foreword to the novel, Fishbelly undergoes an important transformation at this stage of his life.

> At this point, halfway through the novel, the emphasis shifts from Fishbelly's sexual maturation to the social dynamics of black Clintonville, Mississippi, as it responds to (*Ibid*., xi).

Part two ends with yet another dream of Fishbelly and his father's murder plotted by the police chief, Cantley. Bereft of Tyree, and all alone to face the corrupt chief and illicit business operations, Fishbelly finds himself at a loss how to deal with the brutal and racist environment. *Waking Dream,* the final and the shortest part of the novel recounts

[2] In the following pages of the novel, we learn that the nickname Fishbelly, especially the belly part, has a different connotation for Rex Tucker's school mates. Teddy relates the name to Rex's wistful wish for passing off as a white person, due to the fact that fish bellies are white and Rex lives in the comfortable environs of a middle class African-American family. Please see the page one hundred and the dialogue opening up with the question "How come they call you 'Fishbelly'?

Rex Tucker's imprisonment and his journey to the relatively race tolerant France where his childhood friends reside at the time. *The Long Dream,* the last published work of Wright before his death in 1960, exasperated and intrigued critics as Redding, Geismar, Ottley and Kiniery testify. Whether Wright found solace in exile, (just like his character Fishbelly) or not, (like the dark resolve of Bigger Thomas, a child of the country) was one side of the argument. What baffled the critics, however, was Wright's changed attitude to the grand *isms* of the Western modernity. Member of the American Communist Party in his late twenties, Wright later criticized the orthodox, Stalinist practices of the party, but in distancing himself away from the communist fraction he did not embrace any other essentialist view and positioned Bigger as "an American product, a native son of this land [who] carried within him the potentialities of either Communism or Fascism" (qtd. in Gilroy, 1993: 120).[3] Wright's expatriate works of fiction though pointed towards a different direction for he got involved in some "alien" elements of European modernism and was believed to introduce such foreign bodies in his novels as was the case with *The Long Dream*. The result was a medley: Freudianism, existentialism, nationalism, racial oppression, and what not. Perhaps that was the most controversial and praiseworthy side to Wright in the 1950s and 60s as Sartre observed as regards to his works.

> Thus, each of Wright's works contains what Baudelaire would have called "a double simultaneous postulation"; each word refers to two contexts; two forces are applied simultaneously to each phrase and determine the incomparable tension of his tale. Had he spoken to the whites alone, he might have turned out to be more prolix, more didactic, and more abusive; to the negroes alone, still more elliptical, more of a confederate, and more elegiac (Sartre, 1998: 80).

[3] After leaving Jim Crow South and taking the train to Chicago at the age of nineteen, Richard Wright became involved in the John Reed Club, an intellectual branch of the Communist party, which he joined in 1932. Finding fault with the Communist party for not fathoming the black people it relied on for support, for the same reason he wrote the novel *Native Son*, Wright left the party in 1942 and wrote about his disillusionment in an essay called "I Tried to Be a Communist", published in *Atlantic Monthly* in 1944. Paul Gilroy recounts that after severing his ties with the Party, Wright was accused of being Trotskyist and an 'intellectual.'

Wright's "double simultaneous postulation" in *The Long Dream*, referring at least to two warring states of mind; one black the other white, is surely open to various interpretations. The master/slave dialectic, based on the uneasy relation of recognition and submission, is certainly one of them as Wright, using Kojeve's reading of Hegel, openly plays out the relation in his depiction of Tyree's (later Fishbelly's) handling of the police chief Cantley. Another obvious foreign element Wright introduced in the novel, contrary to Sartre's dislike of the schism, is psychoanalysis and its use in Wright's writings.

> "Frog Perspectives." This is a phrase that I've borrowed from Nietzsche to describe someone looking from below upward, a sense of someone who feels himself lower than others. The concept of distance involved here is not physical; it is psychological. It involves a situation in which for moral or social reasons, a person or a group feels that there is another person or group above it. Yet physically they all live on the same general, material plane. A certain degree of hate combined with love (ambivalence) is always involved in this looking from below upward and the object against which the subject is measuring himself undergoes constant change. He loves the object because he would like to resemble it; he hates the object because his chances of resembling it are remote, slight (Wright, 1957: 6).

Rex Tucker's engagement with the racial reality of his country revolves around the inter/intra racial violence and the sexual taboos induced by both colors. His relation to whiteness is ambiguous though, as Wright mentions it as one of "love" and "hate." Fishbelly's dreams, including his infantile ones, are indeed fused with such indeterminate elements of whiteness, for they do not only stand as objects of fear (as is the case with Chris and the fish dream) but for an amorous, sexual yearning as well (his dream of locomotive and the naked body of a white girl).

The dreams however, his rare moments of respite from the nightmarish racial reality of his country, are confused as to their manifest and latent contents. Sigmund Freud considered dreams to be the pathways, shortcuts even, to the unconscious and repressed materials of the human mind. Distinguishing between manifest (what the subject remembers) and latent (underlying meaning, wish of the dream) contents of the dream, Freud further introduced the mechanism of the dream work, thanks to which, the

latent content is transformed and translated into the manifest, and therefore becomes decipherable. And the dream work consists of four main processes: condensation, displacement, dramatization (symbolization) and finally repression (secondary revision). Condensation brings together two seemingly unlikely thoughts or images and contracts them into a singular symbol, whereas displacement tries to evade the true addressee of the events or objects of the latent content, and projects those persons and objects on others in the manifest. And no matter how senseless the trajectory, flow of dramatization would be, symbolization of the dream in the manifest (dispensing with indicative conjunctions of 'because', 'therefore', 'however' etc.) contrives to set up a somehow logical cause-effect relation between the events shown in the manifest content. Finally, repression, secondary revision, filters out the unwanted elements of the latent content so as not to disturb the dreaming process. According to Freud's formulation of the manifest and latent contents of dreams, the manifest content is concerned with the images, words and thought processes left over from the waking life whereas the latent one hides behind such conspicuous elements and yet stands as the real and sometimes disturbing cause of the dream formations. When the latent content overflows the manifest, and thereby slips away from the dream censorship, the dreaming subject is forced to reiterate and resume the dreaming process: "After all it's only a dream…" (Freud, 1995: 168). Freud also stresses out that there is always an organic link between those processes and contents, as one surely cannot exist without the other: "A manifest element may correspond simultaneously to several latent ones, and contrariwise, a latent element may play a part in several manifest ones[…]" (Freud, 1998: 101). Lacan's analysis of dreams, especially through Zhuang Zi's butterfly dream, also deserves attention, for it sheds light and complements Freud's views not on the dream(ing) itself alone, but on the waking life as well. In recounting Zhuang Zi's dream, Lacan postulates that when Zhuang Zi wakes up, he is perplexed if it is/was him dreaming of the butterfly or the butterfly dreaming of him. In *Ethics after Idealism: Theory, Culture, Ethnicity, Reading,* Rey Chow offers a germane interpretation of Lacan's views on this particular dream.

> The conscious identity of Zhuang Zi, the "I"/eye of waking life, in other words, is the result of butterfly's "causing" him to exist or marking him with the grid of desire. Waking from this dream back into the fact that in one life's as *cogito*, one is a captive butterfly, captivated by nothing but the inescapable law and structure of human cognition (Chow, 1998: 93).

In other words, the waking impression of the dream is so powerful that, for Lacan, Zhuang Zi's confusion over whether he is the butterfly or Zhuang Zi gives him a glimpse into the truth of his identity, that is, it enables him to understand the root of his identity. And the truth, as Chow describes it, is the consciousness that the predicate to be full in possession of one's *cogito* is a lie and one is always, already caught in the net of other cognitions. Wright makes a similar observation as regards Fishbelly "He lives within a dream which is itself nourished by his own dreams" (qtd. in Kinnamon & Fabre, 1993: 98). He is, so to speak, like Zhuang Zi, caught in the fish net of white perception, and has to live with the perpetual confusion whether he is still dreaming or wide awake. Fishbelly's sleeps are indeed constantly disturbed and he cannot resume his dreams for the fact that the disturbing, traumatic element is too much for him to handle. And what is worse, the racial reality he wakes up to constitutes the disturbing latent content itself and thus he lives in a constant nightmare. In the final chapter of the novel and on a plane *en route* to Paris, Fishbelly attests to the division: his travel companion, an Italian - American, whose father supposedly finds his "…Wonderful Romance" in the United States makes him realize (perhaps for the last time) the border separating dreams from nightmares.

> Would he ever find a place that he could call "My Wonderful Romance"? That man's father had come to America and had found a dream: he had been born in America and had found a nightmare (LD, 380).

As the novel is freighted with dream elements, and for the author's obvious use of Freud, the present chapter cannot help but offer a psychoanalytic reading of Wright's *The Long Dream,* and it is proper to add that in doing so, it draws from Wright's own interpretation of Freud. Wright's interpretation, as he makes it clear in "Psychiatry Comes to Harlem," is one that turns "Freud upside down" (Wright, 1946: 49). Contrary

to the customized clinical practice Freud held with his patients, Wright believed in extending the realm of psychiatry to the masses, especially to the 400.000 black residents of Harlem which made up the 53 percent of juvenile crimes registered in Manhattan. Such extension however, would not prove useful in resolving the idiosyncratic problems of the residents, but help the African-American population of Harlem in dealing with neurosis.

> […] and that the powerful personality conflicts engendered in Negroes by the consistent sabotage of their democratic aspirations in housing, jobs, education, and social mobility creates an environment of anxiety and tension which easily tips the normal emotional scales toward neurosis (*Ibid*.).

The story of Rex Tucker should stand as the epitome for the "powerful personality conflicts" inculcated in the African-American community by the licit and illicit apartheid practices. His life could be taken as the case study of neurosis showing itself in the shape of alienation, tension, aggression, anxiety and self-contempt, the ailments which Wright believed to be also afflicting the residents of Harlem in the 1940s. The following analysis attempts to read Wright's contentious novel *The Long Dream* as an effort to identify the intra/inter racial dimension of neuroses, as Freud described and Wright used them, and to trace the evolvement of Rex Tucker's dreams and nightmares that banked on the friction between his family's teachings and the punitive codes of his immediate, racial surroundings. The analysis will spotlight the inner conflict he had to contend with; the conflict revolving around the predicaments of sexuality, social mobility, and racial integration to the society, nation at large.

2.1 "Mama, Do Fishes Bite?": The Lure and Fear of Whiteness

Seshadri Crooks, in *Desiring Whiteness: A Lacanian Analysis of Race*, proposes an intriguing reading to the volatile issue of race by appropriating Lacan's formulation of gaze in relation to whiteness/race binary. Before unbuttoning Crooks's views further, a few words on Lacan's thoughts for the deployment of gaze should be also given. For Lacan, one of the characteristics of gaze (besides it being the object looking back at the subject) is its functioning as the lure, the screen that induces the subject to search for the 'Thing' behind and beyond the veil, thus leading to the formation of *object a* in the scopic field. The story of Zeuxis and Parrhasius he recounts in *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis* exemplifies the optical illusion a picture harbours in its frame.

Renowned for their skills in painting in ancient Greece, Zeuxis and Parrhasius are summoned to a contest to determine which of the two has greater artistic abilities. Zeuxis paints a bunch of grapes, so life-like and luscious in their depiction that even the birds are tempted to fly down and peck at them. In return, Zeuxis asks Parrhasius to brush aside the curtain that covers his painting and when he receives the answer that the curtain itself is the painting Zeuxis admits his defeat. Thus, for Lacan, the deception found in human cognition and in the field of scopic works so long as the subject asks for the object behind the veil, and then the triumph of gaze over look/eye becomes complete. (Lacan, 1998) One is tempted to identify a similar line of argument in Crooks's assumption that whiteness functions, just like the curtain of Parrhasius, as the veil that supposedly conceals and possesses the racial *agalma*. Her argument might ring true especially at the point when she claims that the racialized subject – regardless of the skin color – not only attempts at seeing the obscure kernel behind and beyond the curtain of Whiteness but also tries to retrieve the lost object of being.

> This ineffable and excluded power of Whiteness, as that which makes perception possible but is itself the blinding possibility beyond the visible, should be explored as the "lure" that fuels and perpetuates racial visibility while holding out a promise of something beyond the empirical mark (Crooks, 2000:59).

To put it somehow differently, and still in Crooks's terms, chasing after the object cause of desire would be tantamount to impossible consummation between difference (on the part of the racial subject) and lack, resuscitated by the fantasy of whiteness. And she concedes the fact that the task would be ever impossible as the very endeavour is destined to fall short of its aim on account of the fabricated, cultural origins of the signifier which would have no purchase on the corporeality of the racial subject. I think the example she provides – taken from a news piece published by the *New York Times* in 1995- could summarize her stance well on the constructed origins of the signifier whiteness. A Dutch couple files a complaint against the University Hospital at Utrecht, Netherlands about their "anguish" after the *in vitro* fertilization procedure. Although the result of the operation is successful, and a pair of twins is conceived, the couple is shocked to find out that one of the twins – Koen – is "black." And the University Hospital in answer to the couple's plight calls it a "deeply regrettable mistake" and admits that the mother's eggs were accidentally inseminated from another man along with that of the father. As Koen's skin gets darker and darker, the parents apply for a DNA test, and the result of the test reveals that Koen's father is a "black" man from Aruba (Crooks, 2000: 11). Besides some hints to the mother's sexual history from the neighbors, the parents had to face another, perhaps broader problem of discrimination: "Let's be honest, dark people have less opportunity to get a decent job in our society, They have less chance to borrow at a bank" (*New York Times,* 28 June 1995: A3).

Crooks uses the above given example to acknowledge the fabricated nature of race in creating differences and she directs two jump-off questions to race's nonsensical but viscous characteristic: "Why do we hold on to race? What is it about race that is difficult to give up?" (*Ibid*., 4). And she comes up with the answer of "Whiteness" as master signifier in elucidating the irrational yet still potent presence of the epidermic evaluation. The question that needs to be raised at this point is: constructed as it is,

would the master signifier whiteness still engender substantial results that would stick to the everyday reality of the racial subject? My contention is that besides the veil-like allurement of whiteness (offering "wholeness," "unity," even "humanity" etc.), one should bring up its libidinal, sensually charged aspect as well, involved in not only creating anxiety ridden differences but also providing the very paradigms of enjoyment. If, as Crooks aptly puts it, "Race is fundamentally a regime of looking" (Crooks, 2000: 2), generating the very antagonistic kernel of racial stratification via the perpetualization of racial difference in the scopic field, it is likewise proper to mention gaze/look's function in inter/trans subjective interactions. Just like whiteness, gaze (Crooks uses the two terms correspondently) is also a constructed phenomenon and not a neutral activity in defining the social relations. As Marita Sturken and Lisa Cartwright, in *Practices of Looking: An Introduction to Visual Culture*, have written: "Through looking we negotiate social relationships and meanings. Looking is a practice much like speaking, writing, or signing. Looking involves learning to interpret and, like other practices, looking involves relationships of power" (Sturken - Cartwright, 2009: 10). Besides having such influence in the determination of inter/trans subjective relations and social meanings, gaze/looking also serves as the precursor to sexual pleasure. In the *Three Contributions to the Theory of Sex,* Sigmund Freud identifies such property of gaze/looking in respect to sexual instincts and sexual object choices and among the principle intermediate relations to the sexual object choices, he includes "touching and looking" as the activities leading to the act of copulation. (Freud, 1995). The sexual pleasure derived from looking, and being looked at in the form of scopophilia should be complemented with its counterpart, the morbid dread of looking, and being looked at in the form of scopophobia. The word scopophobia, if we lend ear to the wisdom of the world wide web, was first conjoined by the French psychiatrist Pierre Janet in 1903, who used the term to identify his patients ailed by the symptoms of a fear of being observed while performing daily chores of social relationships such as talking, writing, reading etc. Sociologist Erving Goffman proposed that being self-conscious of the offhand, passing glances in the street remained one of the characteristic symptoms of psychosis in

public which he associated with scopophobic inclinations (Goffman, 1972: 415). The term scopophobia, as Goffman suggested, is also used for social anxieties and syndromes for persons shying away from public spaces. Perhaps, the Dutch couple's predicament regarding their twin son Koen, is on account of such syndrome, of the fear of being looked at by the neighbors, by the public in general and not by the fact that Koen, with his black skin, would not get a decent job when he comes of age. It should also prove useful to set a similar analogy between Rex Tucker's first dream and the psychosis of scopophobia as the manifestation of social and sexual anxieties. Rex Tucker's first dream, the dream of his childhood picturing a baseball game with Chris, (Chris who was later lynched by a white mob for sleeping with a white girl) can be taken as the starting point to delve deeper into Rex's ambiguous relation with the object of whiteness, his scopophilic and scopophobic engagement with the phenomenon. Before taking such leap however, it should prove useful to have a brief look at the Tucker family and the conditions preceding the dream with some detail.

Thanks to the father's lucrative and bizarre business operations, Tuckers enjoy the affluence of a middle class African American family. Tyree Tucker's strange combination of jobs, one burying the black bodies of the town, and one sexually exploiting those yet alive surely has scarring effects on Rex and on the fate of the entire family. In the first part of the novel, *Daydreams and Nightmares…*, Rex Tucker, then 5 years old, is initiated to the legal part of his father's job. The part opens up with such legally sanctioned business affair, and a color-free, suburban depiction of the family is given. Putting his son to bed, Emma Tucker whispers the usual, comforting words of a mother whose child would not like to fall asleep surrounded by the inimical darkness. Not willing to give in to the surrounding darkness and to find answers for the father's fishing trip, Rex directs child-like questions to his mother, the questions that would haunt his dream.

> "Mama, do fishes bite?"
> "If you fool enough to put your fingers in his mouth, he'll bite you."
> "Mama, what do fishes do?"

"Fishes are busy being fishes. Now, go to sleep, Nighty night" (LD, 10).

Facing the thick darkness, Rex resolves to fight the monstrous fish image he conjures up from his picture book, the "wild, ugly, six feet tall and hankering to bite" fish image (*Ibid*., 10), with which he falls asleep. As mentioned a few pages back, the fish dream is the first one Wright introduces in the novel, therefore it constitutes a significant part to begin the tracing of Rex Tucker's engagement with whiteness. Child as he is, Wright offers Fish's dream as a portentous warning of the events that will eventually see Chris lynched. Surely, the warning can also be taken for Rex as well, embedding deep within his sub/unconscious the message that the monstrous fish will come at him if he but dares to cross the color line. The longer version of the dream is as follows:

> […]and he picked up a baseball bat and got ready to hit the fish but when he looked it was not the fish but Chris the big boy who lived down the street and who always played with him and Chris had a baseball in his hand and said: "Rex, you want to play ball?" and he said: "Yeah, Chris!" and Chris said: "Okay Try and hit this one!" and Chris threw the ball and he swung his bat: CLACK!, the ball rose into the air and Chris said: "You only five years old, but you hit like a big-league player!" and he waited for Chris to pitch again only it was not Chris this time but a seven-foot fish who had the ball and he was scared to death but he could not run and then the fish threw the ball and it him in the mouth wedging itself between his teeth and he could not take it out and could not swallow it and he knew that the fish had done to him what his papa did to fishes catching him on a hook and the fish was coming at him with gleaming red eyes and he tried to scream but could not and he could see the fish's mouth opening to swallow him[…] (*Ibid*.).

Rex Tucker's fear of the dreadful fish, coming at him and threatening to gobble him up, can be tied to the sexual anxieties and terrors directed at Chris's and Rex's beings. Here, the irresistible yearning for looking, for getting at the mysterious and prohibited bodies of white women is reversed and transformed into its anamorphic opposite of morbid fear of being looked at, in which the ardent desire for looking is reflected back by the object of whiteness, reminding Rex and Chris of the looming threat of death. And the threat, expanding to all the male black characters of the novel, is not limited to death alone but

to social stigmatization and judicial penalization as well. In the scopophilic aspect of looking, however, in Rex's fascination with the fish his father caught and his mother gutted, one can track down a trail of his sexual ontogeny. The nickname "Fishbelly" Rex earns due to his attraction to the white fish bladders may point to his bewilderment of peeping at the sexual lives of the adults and to his unquenchable desire to lay his eyes on the glittering world of the whites. For that matter, Rex's first acquaintance with the fish should be addressed in some detail.

Poked out of his nightmare, his mother Emma urges him to come down and see the fish papa brought and on their way downstairs, Tyree accosts him and asks how he is doing. Rex answers with a question: "Where the fishes?" The father points to the direction of the "white bellied objects" and commands him to touch them.

> "They bite" he wailed.
> "Aw naw," his father said, laughing.
> "Scaredy cat," his mother said.
> "Watch me," his father said, lifting a fish that flopped to and fro in his fist. "Here. Take it, Rex."
> "Naw!" Then he sniffed distrustfully. "They smell!"
> "Sure." His father chuckled. "All fish smell."
> "But they smell like…" His voice trailed off.
> His limpid brown eyes circled and rested wonderingly upon his mother, for that odd smell associated itself somehow with her body (*Ibid*., 12).

Seeing his son none too pleased with the fishes he caught, Tyree tries to amuse him by blowing into the fish bladder, making the bladder inflate and glow like a balloon. Excited, Rex tries one, but he re-names the bladder as belly and endlessly blows into the entrails. Despite the father and the mother's corrections that it is a bladder not belly, Rex associates the balloon like object, somehow unknowingly, with the pregnant neighbor Mrs. Brown. In *Totem and Taboo*, Freud makes interesting observations with regard to the totem animal, the gender of the totem, and the child's association with the ersatz animal symbol standing for the parents and the totem's ambivalent symbolic position for the child. Freud's suggestions can be interlaced with the Tucker family and especially

with Rex, alias, Fishbelly. Freud claims that the attachment to the totem animal might prove to be stronger than the ties to the family "[…] since the totem is as a rule inherited through the female line, and it is possible that paternal descent may originally have been left entirely out of account" (Freud, 1995:484-5). Keeping close to the subject at hand, it is also appropriate to highlight the connecting dots between Freud's theories in *Totem and Taboo* and Wright's novel *The Long Dream*. Sigmund Freud suggests that the totem animal is not only matriarchal but also related to the mother's pregnancy period. The male, who is in total ignorance of procreation process and dumb on the male function in such circumstance, constitutes the one end of the totem, and the mother, with her "maternal fancies" makes up the other end by identifying with the child in her belly.

> Accordingly, the ultimate source of totemism would be the savages' ignorance of the process by which men and animals reproduce their kind; and, in particular, ignorance of the part played by the male in fertilization. This ignorance must have been facilitated by the long interval between the act of fertilization and the birth of the child (or the first perception of its movements). Thus totemism would be a creation of the feminine rather than that of the masculine mind: its roots would lie in 'the sick fancies of pregnant women'. 'Anything indeed that struck a woman at that mysterious moment of her life when she first knows herself to be a mother might easily be identified by her with the child in her womb. Such maternal fancies, so natural and seemingly so universal, appear to be the root of totemism' (*Ibid.*, 487-8).[4]

The similarities between Freud's thoughts on totemism and Rex Tucker's attraction to the fish bladder are quite obvious. The fish bladder, or rather the 'belly', can be taken as Rex's choice of his totem animal which he relates with the vaginal odor of his mother and with the pregnant neighbor, Mrs Brown. The belly may also stand for the act of sexual intercourse as Tyree showcases how to blow into the bladder and encourages the

[4] Surely, Freud's attempt to correlate the pre-modern family with the maternal line of descent and the modern family with the patriarchal is open to criticism. The reality of the single mother African-American families can be counted as exceptions to the Freudian rule, among which Richard Wright's life can be included. The son of Nathaniel Wright, an illiterate sharecropper, and Ella Wilson, a schoolteacher, Richard Wright was left fatherless at the age of five. After the father abandoned the Wright family, his mother Ella had to raise him and his brother single handedly. Not so a distant past as Wright's, last year, The National Basketball Association's most valuable player Kevin Durant acknowledged his mother's indispensable role in building up his career, her unwavering effort to keep him and his brother from the streets in the absence of a father.

son to follow his lead. The analogies thus far identified between Freud and Wright are shallow indeed for they only point in the direction of the obvious. If the totem animal is matriarchal and at the root of totemism lies in "maternal fancies," the father's role in the selection and retention of the animal symbol is much less clear. In the case of the male child, Freud's favorite subject of investigation of course, the totem functions as father-surrogate, displacing the child's fears concerned with the father on to the animal symbol. The cause of such fears is sexual as the male child dreads a punishment from the father for, say, playing with his penis or harboring incestuous desires for the mother. The child's substitutive shift from the father to the animal, however, is highly ambiguous.

> His attitude towards his totem animal was superlatively ambivalent: he showed both hatred and love to an extravagant degree (*Ibid*., 494).

Once again, Fishbelly's case is analogous in many respects but this time introducing complications into the fray. Following Freud's surmises, it might be pertinent to claim that Rex's animal symbol initially represents the incestuous relation to his mother, as the vaginal odor, pregnant neighbor indicate, and later his father's intervention and exemplification of an acceptable sexual intercourse. Perhaps more fittingly, Fishbelly's dream of a giant and monstrous fish flying at him to devour his body could be said to be tied to the father's punitive and patriarchal threat. Truly, Fishbelly has such association with Tyree, bordering on reverence and trepidation. Yet, the real addressee of the monstrous fish image could also be claimed not to be his nucleus, immediate family but the taboo of miscegenation and the mock castration that would plague him and stand in his way on to becoming an African American *man*. Miscegenation, the interracial fantasies of mutual procreation, is indeed posited as an incestuous taboo in the novel, the punishment of which is staged by the police chief Cantley and his gang in the shape of mock castration. And in the Oedipal formulations of race and family (recalling Heidi J. Nast's argument of the "menacing threat" of the "promiscuous black sons" to white mothers and daughters of the South) it would not be erroneous to claim that the consanguinity cannot be locked up in the intimate sphere of the first degree family lineage alone but wired to its second and third degrees of colonial and racial kindred as

well. As Robert Young sums it up, race and family ties in the United States should not be thought of as mere "repulsion" of one racial group towards the other, but a source of attraction too:

> Racism is perhaps the best example through which we can immediately grasp the form of desire, and its antithesis, repulsion, as a social production: 'thus fantasy is never individual: it is *group fantasy*' [emphasis in the original] (Young, 1995:168-9).

Going over it once more, Rex Tucker's taking up of his animal symbol and earning the nickname Fishbelly can be said to be directed not to Tyree and Emma but to the racial milieu of Clintonville. Surely, one cannot discard the sway his parents have over Rex's maturation, especially that of his father who acts as an intermediary between him and the white world. Still, Rex has his own way of finding out about the superlatively ambiguous nature of whiteness. And the test, the first encounter with the color line begins with an errant, entrusted to him by his mother to be delivered to the father in the undertaking establishment. On his way to downtown, moving "creepingly, walking close to the buildings, trying to make himself invisible" (LD, 14), Fishbelly is picked up on by four white men, shooting dice. One of them, and probably the losing party, grabs him by the arm and leads him to the game ground where Fishbelly finds himself surrounded by four, pale and white faces.

> Holding his breath, he stared at their dead-white *whiteness*… He had never been so close to white people before and they seemed like huge mechanical dolls whose behavior he could not possibly predict (Ibid.).

Believing a "nigger" at the age of five to be unsullied and thus possess luck, his captor forces him to roll the dice for him. Frightened and perplexed, Fishbelly obeys the command, causing his captor to win a considerable amount of money in return to which he is rewarded with a silver dollar. Released from the grip of whiteness, Fishbelly runs to the father's office, lying about the coin and making up a story that he accidentally found it on the street, dropped there on the concrete probably by a white person. Giving credence to his son's story, Tyree sounds amused that the son would now have some of the white luck. "Mebbe you going to be one of them that's lucky in life" (*Ibid*., 19). The

episode, depicting Fishbelly in his first face off with whiteness, mentions an ambiguity dipped in fear. Taking the white figures to be automatons whose actions he cannot guess, he confuses the word luck his captor utters with that of the *f* word (*Ibid*., 15). If it doesn't sound inappropriate, the confusion of "luck" with that of the *f* word decides the course he would later have to face in a racial world: not only his life would be messed up in terms of his luck, the *f* word might also come to symbolize the sensuality over his intra/inter racial desires. In his second visit to the father's office, Fishbelly experiences the above mentioned sensual initiation into adulthood. Seeking for the father's presence in vain in the waiting room, he finally discovers the source of the strange humping sound in the guest room.

> […] bumpbump bumpbump bumpbump… His pupils dilated and he saw upon a bed the shadowy outlines of his naked father: two staring red eyes, a strained, humped back; and he heard harsh breath whistling in an open throat (LD., 23).

Caught by the father at his involuntary peeping, Fishbelly is ordered to wait in the office and not leave till Tyree talks to him. While waiting, and wondering about the mysterious world the grown-ups hid from him, Fishbelly's gaze fixes on the calendar photo, displaying a white, blonde girl "legs as white as bread… and rounded breasts billowing under satin" (*Ibid*., 24). Recalling the black skin of the woman, lighted up by the sun rays seeping through the window shade, Fishbelly whispers to himself "But she's black, …And he was black… And his father was black… He sensed a relation between the worlds of white skins and black skins, but he could not determine just what it was" (*Ibid*.). Wright does not provide explicit answers for Fishbelly's surprise over his father's engagement in a sexual intercourse with a black woman, and for the recognition that he too, just like the father had black skins. The speculative answer would be that Fishbelly did not know of the miscegenation taboo until then and his bewilderment as to the race-sex nexus was puerile still. And the first lesson on the color line and on the intra-racial class divisions comes from a childhood friend. Sam, whose father works as janitor, and probably the poorest kid of the gang consisting of Zeke, Tony and Fishbelly, makes his accusation general: "A nigger's a black man who don't know who he is"

(*Ibid*., 32). Frustrated that he was called nigger, Zeke growls at Sam if it was him he meant. After some back and forth altercation, the embittered Zeke lays bare the hot button topic of the discussion: "Sam says we want to be *white*…" Later, the debate takes a different turn after Zeke makes his point and comes down to the predicament of being black and American.

> "Nigger, you dreaming!" Sam preached. "You ain't no American! You live Jim Crow. Don't you ride Jim Crow trains? Jim Crow busses? Don't you go to Jim Crow restaurants? Jim Crow schools? Jim Crow churches? Ain't your undertaking parlors and graveyards Jim Crow? Try and git a room in that West End Hotel where Chris is working and them white folks'll lynch your black ass to hell and gone! You can't live like no American, 'cause you ain't no American! And you ain't African neither! So what is you? Nothing. Just *nothing*!" [emphasis in the original] (*Ibid*., 35).

After Sam's delivering the hard facts about segregation in every social strata of the South and also hinting at the deadly consequences if one happened to cross the color line, the friends obviously make it up and decide to visit a circus in town. The visit, however, only pours salt on an open wound, for while enjoying themselves, and fascinated by the ad promising "the greatest sex show on earth" (exhibiting the naked body of a blonde girl) they realize that the show is not for the colored. Such racially charged and discriminative episodes would ultimately see Fishbelly's childhood friends driven away from the country to a distant and supposedly race-free France. Fishbelly's education in the racially strict United States though would have to continue and somehow painfully. Towards the middle of the first part, *Daydreams and Nightmares…*, perhaps the most contentious section of the novel, we are introduced to a race riot, following Chris Sim's lynching. As regards to Chris's lynching, some critics place it at the center of the novel "… where the negative lesson of Chris Sim's body serves to deconstruct – or "unmake" – the evolving masculine identity of the novel's protagonist, Rex" (Geiger, 1999: 197-8). And Jeffrey Geiger also maintains that "Fishbelly's body is systematically and symbolically deconstructed through witnessing the dissection of another body's discrete parts" (*Ibid*.). The problem with such approach, however, is that it reduces the breaking point of Fish, if there is one, to the autopsy scene alone, during

which Chris's body was dissected and the fate of Fishbelly was supposedly sealed. Such reading, synchronic as it is, offers at best to freeze Fishbelly in time, and see his masculinity unmade regardless of other incidents that would befall him throughout the novel. Chris Sim's lynching and what transpires afterwards constitute indeed one of the main interludes of the novel, the consequences of which do not only affect Fishbelly, his father and the father's partner Dr. Bruce but the black community of Clintonville as well.

Chris Sims, the adolescent black man, and a figure of emulation for Fishbelly, Sam, Zeke, and Tony, gets killed for rejecting the taboo of miscegenation. Or, rather he falls victim to the predispositions on race and sexuality as stated above. Chris Sims, who teaches Fishbelly that the balloon like object he wraps around the stick he uses as a plaything is a used condom, and whose imminent death is hinted in two scenes - Fishbelly's dream and Sam's tirade - can be said to be the quintessential character, including in his racial inventory the history of the black males mentioned in the novel. The events leading up to the murder of Chris, commence with the incursion by a white mob into the West End Hotel where Chris works, and the mob finds him with a white girl in the room, not involved in any actualized sexual activity, but flirting, or merely playing as Chris tells the mob. Enough evidence to chastise him, Chris is dragged out of the room, down to the street, his body tied to the back of a vehicle driving him on the asphalt, shearing off his right ear, and finally taking him to the ground of the lynch ritual. Following Chris's death, Clintonville Police Department officially announces that Chris resisted arrest, and therefore had to face the harsh measures. The autopsy scene, undertaken in Tyree's funeral house with Fish and Dr. Bruce present, is surely one of the epicenters of the novel. Going slowly over Chris's mangled corpse, the scene initiates the reader into revolting and yet humane details on the left overs.

> "The nose is almost gone," Dr. Bruce pointed. "Because of the rope knot against the neck, the head was flung about when they turned corners and the resulting abrasion destroyed the nose." Taking Chris's head between thumb and forefinger, the doctor twisted it around. "The left cheek has been split by a gun but." Lifting Chris's

> clawlike hands, he studied the blackened wrists. "His hands were tied; in fact, I wouldn't be surprised if they hit him 'im *after* they'd tied his hands." The doctor now turned the body on its side and, holding it in position, indicated a rupture through which a blob of pearly intestine gleamed. "I'd guess," Dr. Bruce spoke haltingly, impersonally, "that a kick did that, and it must've been delivered when he was already dead. In most cases of strangulation the stomach muscles grip the protruding intestine. But in this instance there seems to have been no muscular reaction." Dr. Bruce frowned, then resumed: "I'd say the toe of a shoe did that." He rolled the corpse upon its back and carefully parted the thighs. "The *genitalia* are gone," the doctor intoned [emphasis in the original] (LD, 77).

Spanning two centuries, from slavery to Jim Crow, the history of lynching in the United States is as old as the foundation of the Republic. The termination point of the brutal practice is usually marked as the mid-twentieth century, late 1930s, with sporadic occurrences here and there till Barack Obama is elected president.[5] Not to deviate from the study of the novel, it should be interesting to cite a case that disturbingly stuck out of the country's relatively anti-racist, and tolerant twentieth century. James Byrd Jr., aged 49 then, was one of the last victims of white supremacy. On June 7, 1998, in Jaspers, Texas, Byrd accepted a ride from his would-be murderers, one of whom he was acquainted with from around town. The three men took Byrd to a desolate county road and severely beat him, after which they chained him to the pickup truck and dragged him for about 1.5 miles. The police reported that Byrd probably remained conscious during the painful dragging, and his body was terribly mutilated. His right arm and head were severed, and a trail of blood and body parts stretched for 2 miles. Byrd's murderers dumped his torso in front of an African American cemetery in Jaspers and then drove off to a barbecue. [6] The event might sound an exception to the long forgotten and

[5] It is hard to say that the lynch cases are now over in the United States. Lynching, or rather murdering of the black men (and even children) of a different kind can still be claimed to be the reality of the nation even today. On August 9, 2014, in Ferguson, Missouri, Michael Brown, an 18 year old black man was shot to death by 28 year old white police officer Darren Wilson, under the pretext of reasonable suspicion of robbery. The case, and later the acquittal of the officer, transpired into a local and nationwide protests against the police brutality towards African Americans. On July 17, 2014, in New York City, Eric Garner, was choked to death as he refused arrest for breaking up a fight. And on November 22, 2014, Cleveland, Ohio, 12 year old Tamir Rice was shot to death for playing with his toy gun.

[6] For the related news page please see CNN's web page, please see the following link, accessed on September 16, 2014. http://edition.cnn.com/US/9807/06/dragging.death.02/. On the irresistible urge of

condemned racist practices, yet there are some curious details, some recurring patterns that should be addressed as well. Byrd's murder follows the ritualistic trajectory of its predecessors during Jim Crow, and interestingly enough, it resembles the way Chris Sims was killed. The fact that the three perpetrators of the crime enjoy barbecue after mutilating Byrd's body is best explained by Orlando Patterson in *Rituals of Blood: Consequences of Slavery in two American Centuries*. Drawing on the famous French anthropologist and ethnologist Claude Lévi-Strauss, Patterson also uses the analogy of the "raw" and "cooked" meat to distinguish "nature" from "civilization," the emotional and instinctive from the cultural based on social rules and conventions. Using the adjectives of the "raw" and "cooked" metaphorically, Lévi-Strauss seeks to identify the transformation of an object from its natural, raw origins into its culturalized, socialized and thus edible state. In a synchronic analysis of the Amerindian myths stretching over the South and North Americas before the time of Columbus, Strauss is concerned to unearth the mythical and communal world of the indigenous people constructed out of superstitious and actual associations, oppositions, transformations, and conjunctions. Bringing and applying Strauss's views to the contemporary North American context, Patterson puts forth a claim that the lynching ritual, a dominant practice in the neoslavery of Jim Crow, consisted of a fusion of religion, politics and economics. The lynching mob likewise, was not just made of senseless rabble but of a highly organized community of Ku Klux Klan, acting as the sacrificial cult in an attempt to revive the South's broken social fabric through the emasculation and sacrifice of African-American males.

> Applying all this to the social and sacrificial treatment of Afro-Americans in the postbellum South, it is easy to see how the live Negro, in the Southern sacrificial and food symbolism, is uncooked nature in the raw- a beast, a savage, whose odor is to be avoided at all cost. On the other hand, the cooked Negro, properly roasted, has been

---

hunger and desire to eat meat after lynching, a reporter's account working for *Memphis News-Scimitar* is in point to Byrd's case. The reporter's testimony to a sacrifice in Mississippi is as follows: "The mob walked away. In the vanguard of the mob I noticed a woman. She seemed to be rather young, yet it is hard to tell about women of her type; strong and healthy, apparently a woman of the country. She walked with a firm even stride. She was beautiful in a way… 'I'm hungry,' someone complained, 'Let's get something to eat.'" (Quoted in White, 2002, 26).

> tamed and culturally transformed and now can be eaten, communally, in imitation of the Euro-Americans' own God savoring his burnt offering (Patterson, 1998: 200).

Bearing on the sacrificial cauterization of African Americans, odor memory and perception are distinguished from other sensory perceptions. The sensations and memories a smell evokes in the individual, according to Trygg Engen, are contextual and ecological, serving the protective "function of making sure that significant events, involving food, people, or places are not forgotten" (Engen: 1991, 81). In its literal and figurative configurations, the flames and billows of smoke issuing forth the burning, sacrificed body of the victim were one way of consuming the "savage" body of the racial other, an attempt at recollection and relief. Thus adducing olfactory science, the symbolism of Christianity on the smell of the burnt offerings, and the prevalent, popular customs of barbeque in the South, Patterson explains why lynching took hold in the region and an actualized form of cannibalism was dressed up in the garb of Christianity. Before delving deeper into the circumstances that led to Chris's lynching and the ensuing autopsy scene, it should prove useful to introduce some thoughts on the "sexualization of racism" in the United States that would uphold Patterson's thoughts. Calvin C. Hernton, in an effort to map out the reception of black men in white imagination, propounds that "[…] whites conceive of the [black] male predominantly in genital terms- that is, as a 'bull' or as some kind of 'walking phallus'" (Hernton, 1966: 3-8). Voicing similar sentiments, Michele Wallace claims that "The big black prick pervade[s] the white man's nightmare" (Wallace, 1979:71). And on the side of the white women, Amiri Baraka maintains that "the white woman [is] supposed to be intrigued by the black man… because he [is] basic and elemental emotionally…, therefore 'wilder,' harder, and almost insatiable in his lovemaking" (Baraka, 1966: 221-2).

The conversation Dr. Bruce and Tyree have over Chris's disfigured body might point in the direction of Patterson's thoughts between "uncooked," "repugnant" presence of the black men and their "cooked" and thus rendered edible, domesticated presence. Or, as Hernton, Wallace and Baraka draw attention, Chris Sims posed a sexual threat to the already cringing white heteropaternal masculinity. Though it is equal to state the

obvious, to say that the name Chris was picked up by Wright on purpose to refer to the sacrificed and sacrosanct flesh of Jesus Christ, a black Messiah, if you will, slaughtered for the pains of black Clintonville, it is also inevitable to focus on the details of Chris's dead body. Rolling Chris upon his back and announcing that the genitalia are missing, Dr. Bruce goes on to intone that murdering him was not enough for the mob.

> You'd think that disgust would've made them leave *that* part of the boy alone… No! To get a chance to *mutilate* 'im was part of why they killed 'im. And you can bet a lot of white women were watching eagerly when they did it. Perhaps they know that that was the only opportunity they'd ever get to see a Negro's genitals […] [emphasis in the original] (LD, 78).

Taken aback by his partner's words, Tyree protests, and claims that there is no such way of loving someone. And Fishbelly, overcoming the initial shock of seeing Chris's corpse, immerses himself in the words of Dr. Bruce.

> You have to be terribly attracted toward a person, almost in love with 'im, to mangle 'im in this manner. They hate us Tyree, but they love us too; in a perverted sort of way, they love us— (*Ibid*.).

In Wright's oeuvre, the theme of violence surges up often, and it usually turns on the fulcrum of racialized death and sex. The two terms of death and sex are somewhat used interchangeably in the racial discourse as James Baldwin observes that "violence fills in the space in which sex is expected to be" (Baldwin qtd. in Gilroy, 1993: 175). Tyree's admonishment to Fishbelly after Chris's murder "NEVER LOOK AT A WHITE WOMAN!" testifies to the symbiotic existence of the death threat and the sexual cravings for a white woman. Yet, Tyree's warning falls on the deaf ears of his son, for Fish, enchanted by the reason that caused the death of Chris, comes upon a half-naked picture of a white girl in a pile of newspapers. He tears off the page and stuffs it into his wallet, hoping to solve the mystery and allurement behind such prohibited object-cause of desire. The picture, however, Fish keeps as a namesake and a reminder, would later plague him when he has to face the local police force. Arrested for transgressing a private property, Fish and his friend Tony find themselves in the face of the dreaded

local police force and Fish is signaled out as the primary target of the white supremacist state officials. In handcuffs, and waiting to be taken to the police station, Fish lays his eyes on a white waitress serving his arresters. Unable to take his eyes off the white waitress's blue eyes and inviting body, Fish is harshly warned by the tall officer, who threatens to castrate him and carries out his intent in a mock display.

> I'm going to fix you so you won't *never* look at another white gal," the white man vowed through bared, shut teeth and moved to the rear door of the car and flung it open. "Nigger, I'm going to *castrate* you! [emphasis in the original] (LD, 111).

Seeing the gleaming blade swaying in front of his eyes, everything goes blank on Fishbelly and he faints much to the amusement, and bewilderment of the officers. The tall law enforcer, his tormentor, is particularly vexed that Fish passes out so easily, and it can be said that Wright intents here a reference to the slavery's view of the African-American people as pack animals, not capable of human traits as fainting.[7] As Keneth Kinnamon identifies Fish's dropping out of school as the turning point in his life or as Jeffrey Geiger claims Chris's death as the climax of the novel, it would not be wrong to introduce his arrest as another decisive instant that would change the tide of the events.

> A clap of white thunder had split his world in two; he was being snatched from his childhood. The white folks were now treating him like a man… (*Ibid*., 110).

Before releasing him, the white officer reiterates Fishbelly's grown up position, though somewhat cynically: "They made a man out of you today…" (*Ibid*., 121). After the first scene of fainting, there is another rehearsal of mock castration before the unbelieving colleagues in which Fish passes out a second time, seized by panic and fear when he remembers that he still carries the picture of the white girl in his pocket. Not knowing what to do, and afraid that the officers could see through him, and his secret, Fish decides to eat the piece, gulp it down where it could not be seen in his black depths, forever invisible. "Yes; he had eaten it; it was inside of him now, a part of him, invisible" (*Ibid*., 114). Before resuming the synopsis of the plot, I think it would not be

[7] Please see Eugene D. Genovese's book *Roll, Jordan, Roll* for the association of slaves with being chattels and pack animals in the eyes of the slave owners, stripped off their human qualities.

impertinent to seek out an analogy between Fish's eating of the picture and Patterson's comments on *raw* and *cooked* bodies of African-Americans. While the 'heathen' propinquity of the blacks are tamed, 'civilized', and domesticized by lynching and murder, the presence of the whites could be said to be having a similar role for African-Americans, at least in the case of Fishbelly. By eating the picture, he performs a similar ritual of cooking, thus turning what is strange and alien about the other race into a somewhat familiar form. And it is proper to add that the act of eating also includes a process of repression, as Fishbelly gives ear to the "reproving voice" of his would-be castrator and "[…] forces the photograph to descend slowly into his stomach" (JanMohamed, 2005: 246).

Brutal as his imprisonment is, Fish's stay at the police station is also short thanks to his father's business relations with the police chief. After a trial at the children's court, he and his friend Tony are released, and on their way back to the black section of the town, they agree not to speak about the shameful incident to anyone. Then, Tony departs from the scene and heads down the road while Fish is left with time on his hands to mull over what had happened. His thoughts though are disturbed by a yelping sound coming out of the woods and he finds out that it is a puppy, wounded in the neck by a shard "sharp as a knife blade" (LD, 132). While attempting to help the dog, he sees its broken and death-bound body, and he decides to let him go. What follows is a reenactment of the autopsy of Chris, examining "…the dog's corpse as though trying to detect some secret that it harbored."

> As he knelt, the dog's dying associatively linked itself with another vivid dying and another far-off death: the lynched body of Chris that had lain that awful night upon the wooden table in his father's undertaking establishment under the yellow sheen of an unshaded electric bulb…His father had buried Chris's broken black body and had called it "a black dream dead, a black dream that could not come true" (*Ibid*., 134-5).

After acting out Chris's autopsy on the dying dog, Fish leaves the woods and gains on the highway. As he quickens his pace towards the town, he hears a help call coming out of an overpass and when he nears the source of the call, he sees an injured white man,

stuck in his overturned Oldsmobile. At first, Fish rushes to help the man but when he hears the following sentence, he has second thoughts.

> "G-goddammit nigger, q-quick nigger!"….He stood undecided. Stifling panic, he approached the man again, his arm lifting slowly (*Ibid*., 137).

The man calls him "nigger" many times, and each time he does, Fish has to withhold the pent-up anger and listen to his conscience. The racial slur is not what ultimately overrides his decision to help the dying man, it is rather the confession that taunts him to leave the white man to the angels of death.

> "I-I was d-driving and tried not to r-run a d-dog… Maybe I hit the d-dog…I don't know. M-my car went out of c-control…I smashed into the b-bridge, t-turned over, and rolled d-down here…All 'cause of that goddamned d-dog.." (*Ibid*.).

Once he leaves the scene, he feels a certain epiphany of reconciliation "…to the sky, the trees, the dusty road, and sensing his body as once more belonging to him" (*Ibid*.). To explicate what and how Fish feels, it is proper to borrow from Derridean terminology. Derrida's use of the word *ontopology*, to exist in a specific point in time and space, and within the cone of social and cultural paradigms of a certain country, includes both individual and national anxieties of belonging: "All national rootedness, is rooted first of all in the memory or the anxiety of a displaced – or displaceable – population" (Derrida, 2006: 103). Derrida's definition of the word *ontopology* in *Specters of Marx* deserves a quotation at length.

> By ontopology we mean an axiomatics linking indissociably the ontological value of present - being [on] to its situation, to the stable and presentable determination of a locality, the topos of territory, native soil, city, body in general (*Ibid*.).

By avenging himself and the dying dog he autopsies, projected on the white man jammed in his overturned car, Fishbelly finds his temporal and spatial (however briefly) foothold in a life torn between dreams and nightmares, and decides to take the road his father follows and Tyree reluctantly accepts his son's resolve to work with him. In a scene resembling Jesus's being tempted by Satan, Tyree takes Fish to the highest point

overlooking the town of Clintonville. Just like Satan offering Jesus dominion and authority over all humankind if he but worships him, Tyree points out the King's Street, dividing the black Clintonville from the white. He promises his son a kingdom of the Black Belt, if he plays the game right. And the rule of the game is simple enough.

> Fish, that's the *key*. How the white folks look at you's everything. Make 'em mad, and you licked 'fore you start. Make 'em feel safe, and the place is yours. Git what I mean, son?" Tyree's voice was sad but urgent. [emphasis in the original] (LD, 148).

Fishbelly realizes at that point that his father is already castrated, and the "self-abrogation of his manhood" shields Tyree away from the white men that would never threaten him with castration. It is interesting though that his father's warning boils down to sexual abstinence from white women as well, for Tyree claims to be no difference between bodies as white as snow and black as tar. Satan demands deference for what he can offer, and Tyree does the same with a nuance. The father demands his son to kneel not before him, but before the white god he pays his homages to. Fish steps into his father's shoes in the closing pages of the part titled *Daydreams and Nightmares….* and the part comes to an end by yet another dream, in which seemingly disparate elements of his past and future come into play.

> […] *he was shoveling coal into a roaring firebox and feeling the runaway locomotive rocking careening down steel rails and each time he scooped up a shovelful of coal he saw the countryside trees telephone poles houses lakes and then he glanced at the white engineer who was looking out of the window at the steel rails with his hand upon the throttle calling: "MORE COAL!" and he shoveled the shining lumps flinging them onto the glowing seething bed and the white engineer called again: "MORE COAL!" and when he scooped up coal the lumps rolled away and he saw the legs body face of a naked white woman smiling demurely at him and the engineer bellowed: "MORE COAL!" and he looked to see if the engineer saw the naked white woman then he was terrified as she seized hold of his shovel and smiled at him and the engineer bawled: "MORE COAL!" and he was standing between the two of them sweating fearing the woman would speak or the engineer would see the woman he had to do something either hit the woman or hit the engineer yes he could escape from both by leaping from the speeding locomotive the woman now pulled teasingly at his shovel and her lips opened to speak and he said: "Sh!" and the engineer yelled: "MORE COAL!" he dropped the shovel and leaped from the door of the cab into the whirling passing woods and he heard the white engineer and the naked white woman laughing as the train roared out of sight and he was tumbling over cinders*

> *finally hitting a wall and he was lying on his back looking up into the laughing face of Maud Williams who was saying: "Honey, you know better'n to try to hide a white woman in a coal pile like that! They was sure to find her…."* (*Ibid*., 159).

In *The Interpretation of Dreams* and *On Dreams*, Sigmund Freud identifies four activities, and they have been touched on before, as the driving forces behind the dream work. Condensation, displacement, pictorial arrangement and censorship have their unique roles in the formation of dreams and working in a fractious harmony, the elements transform the dream thoughts into the odd manifest contents in the dreams. The four elements, however, are not there to draw a line between reality and fantasy, but to provide an approximation, a simulation of reality in time and place. Yet the causal relation in dreams, between time and space, is confused and reversed, as the starting point can stand for the end or the end as the starting point. Following the confusion in cause and effect, Freud suggests a conjunction between the seemingly disparate scenes of a dream.

> In the first place, dreams take into account which undeniably exists between all the portions of the dream-thoughts by combining the whole material into a single situation. They reproduce logical connection by approximation in time and space. A causal relation between two thoughts is either left unrepresented or is replaced by a sequence of two pieces of dream of different lengths. Here the representation is often reversed, the beginning of the dream standing for the consequence and its conclusion for the premise. […] The alternative 'either-or' is never expressed in dreams, both of the alternatives being inserted in the text of the dream as though they were equally valid. I have already mentioned that an 'either-or' used in recording a dream is to be translated by 'and' (Freud, 1995: 157).

For Freud, the conjunction 'and' in dreams is crucial for the dream work, for it functions as an independent agent, instigating numerous other associations contrary to 'either-or', which would at best cause confusion over the origination of the dream thought. The grammatical structure of Fishbelly's dream, if one takes a closer look, is more or less connected with *ands* rather than punctuation marks or conjunctions like 'either-or' that would render a choice between two causalities inevitable. And if there is one phrase that traverses the dream from the beginning to the closure (needless to say that such phrases are also cutting through Fish's waking life) it is the repetitive command of "MORE

COAL!" The use of the capitalized command might point out to various reasons and associations like the father's clear-cut injunction "NEVER LOOK AT A WHITE WOMAN!" to Chris's death or to Fish's arrest. And feeding coal into the engine, the locomotive image he dreams of could fittingly stand in for the *genitalia* and for the act of *coitus*. The image is surely reminiscent of the humping and bumping sounds he catches his father make during the sexual intercourse in the office, and secondly, as indicated in the dream, the continuous command of the white engineer pushes him to the anxiety of hiding the naked body of the white woman, just like the newspaper clip he swallows in the face of castration threat. No matter how hard he stokes, and tries to hide the presence of the naked white woman, he is caught red-handed, and in the closing stages of the dream he realizes that the engineer and the naked woman are actually into a clandestine agreement to ridicule him. Maud Williams, *mama* of the brothels Tyree own, appears – somewhat mockingly- to warn Fishbelly: "Honey, you know better'n to try to hide a white woman in a coal pile like that! They was sure to find her…." (LD, 159).

After waking up, Fishbelly does not remember his dream, not a trace. And to complicate the matter even further, after Chris's murder and the mock castration he suffers under arrest, he is more determined to violate the taboo of miscegenation, and push its limits to the seams. Fishbelly's resolution can be observed to be fixed, approximately two pages before the dream scene, when he reconfirms his ambiguous take on whiteness.

> That white world, then, threatened as much as it beckoned. Though he did not know it, he was fatally in love with that white world, in a way that could never be cured (LD, 158).

A few pages back, Lacan's views on the relation between fantasy and dream are given, namely, it is mentioned that for Lacan fantasy does not consist of a scene to be looked at, one of active voyeurism, but rather of being a passive object in someone else's dream. The dreaming subject, as Lacan described it, is at best a captive butterfly, which

paints the self in accordance with the colors offered to its use by an outside gaze over which she/he cannot have a say. Likewise, Lacan holds the subject's passive position as in waking life to be also valid at the time of dreaming.

> In the field of the dream, on the other hand, what characterizes the images is that it shows…. So much is it to the fore, with the characteristics in which it is co-ordinated—namely, the absence of horizon, the enclosure, of that which is contemplated in the waking state, and, also, the character of emergence, of contrast, of stain, of its images, the intensification of their colours—that, in the final resort, our position in the dream is profoundly that of someone who does not see. The subject does not see where it is leading, he follows (Lacan, 1998: 74-75). [8]

Fishbelly's association with whiteness – if it is not a strained interpretation and already a tautologic one – is just like the Lacanian description of a subject's position in the dream and in the waking life. That is, whether dreaming or awake, he follows the images the white world piles on him -no matter how cruel and seductive they turn out to be- and ushers him to. And the phenomenon that attracts him in its dreamlike fascination and repels him (on pains of castration, mutilation and death) in its nightmarish reality is the miscegenation taboo. Carlyle Van Thompson, reading African American literature through "white-male police brutality" and "America's white supremacist culture" pairs off miscegenation with sexual consumption and violence (Thompson, 2006: xiii). In his introduction and first part to *Eating the Black Body: Miscegenation as Sexual Consumption in African American Literature and Culture***,** Thompson singles out miscegenation as the cauldron in which sexually driven acts of violence and sadistic desires of the whites for the black bodies bubble up. Thompson's claim falls on the downside of white shapes over miscegenation, yet, he does not provide sufficient evidence for the black perceptions on the sexual and racial transgression. Abiding by Wright's words on the "frog perspectives" and on the ambivalent structure of

[8] In a similar vein, Slavoj Zizek underlines the notion "we are objects in someone's dream" as the most elementary fantasmatic scene. Please see Slavoj Zizek's online article "Is There a Proper Way to Remake a Hitchcock Film?" on the subjects of gaze/eye, and dreams. The article can be read via the link http://www.lacan.com/hitch.html, accessed on November 3, 2014.

miscegenation split between “love” and “hate,” the issue of miscegenation (occupying a prominent place in the novel, and transfusing it from the opening to the closing pages) will be treated as a *taboo* rather than a *desire* in the coming section of this chapter. That is to say, contrary to the unilateral circuit of desire in the form of ‘consuming murder’ as Thompson holds, a bilateral analysis of taboo in the form of ‘cohabitation’ and ‘racial interbreeding’ will be under focus. In such endeavor, Rex Tucker’s – Fishbelly’s last dream will once again be the guide.

2.2 Miscegenation: A Dangerous Desire Born of Racial Transgressions

William Wells Brown, born into slavery in 1814 in Lexington, Kentucky, penned one of the most controversial literary works in the United States literary history. The novel *Clotel; or, The President's Daughter* (1858) alleged that one of the founding fathers, Thomas Jefferson, was in a long term relationship with the slave girl Sally Hemings and fathered six children. Brown was not the first and only person to make such claim, for as far back as 1802, Jefferson's one time ally, the political journalist James T. Callender wrote in a newspaper that Jefferson kept Hemings as his concubine for many years. The claim captivated the public imagination for decades and caused divisions among the historians over the authenticity of the relationship. The liaison even made it to popular film renditions such as *Jefferson in Paris* (1995) and television miniseries *Sally Hemings: An American Scandal* (2000). The adaptations – more or less, told the story of Jefferson's stay in Paris as the Federal official and his supposed sexual involvement with Hemings at the time. Promoted as "an impassioned story of forbidden love" and "the greatest love story never told" (qtd. in Raimon, 2004: 148), the screen adaptations of the love story added fuel to the already brewing discussion if it was appropriate for a founding father to be thus involved with an enslaved girl and what it would mean for the nation of the U.S. after two and a half century of signing the Declaration of Independence.[9] The love affair brought to surface other discussions on miscegenation and American citizenship. Indeed, the term miscegenation was not coined until 1864, not long after the Emancipation Proclamation, expressing "… the nation's most visceral fears, paradoxical or not, about emancipation" (Sundquist, 1983: 107). The anxieties on

[9] Before the Emancipation Proclamation was signed by Abraham Lincoln in 1863, Thomas Jefferson, along with the prominent founding fathers James Madison and George Washington, toyed with the idea of abolishment of slavery during the initial phases of the American Revolution, but subsequently fell into silence. Jefferson supported the equality and freedom of white and black races but believed that "nothing is more certainly written in the book of fate than that two races, equally free, cannot live in the same government" (qtd. in Nash, 2006: 76).

national, sexual, and racial purities were also taken up by Benedict Anderson, an authority on nationalism, who viewed nationalism deployed as "historical destinies" and racism as "eternal contaminations," "transmitted from the origins of time through an endless sequence of loathsome copulations: outside history. Niggers are – thanks to invisible tar-brush, forever niggers; Jews, the seed of Abraham, forever Jews…" (Anderson, 2006: 149). According to Debra Rosenthal, the state legislatures that were in effect back then equated incest and miscegenation, denouncing them both as sexual "deviations and hence subjected to the same restrictions" (Rosenthal, 2004: 9). Following sexual regulations and sanctions, the American nationhood and womanhood were somehow linked together and given as prerequisites for protection and preservation. The analogy between the sovereign territory and women's bodies constituted the basic end for anti-miscegenation laws and as Annette Kolodny put it, the U.S. psychic formation was "bound by the vocabulary of a feminine landscape and the psychological patterns of regression and violation that it implied" (qtd. in Rosenthal, 146).

In Richard Wright's works of fiction, a similar association of white women with the U.S. nationhood can be discerned and the issue of miscegenation also occupies a central place in his major novels, especially in *Native Son* (1940), *The Outsider* (1953), and *The Long Dream* (1958). *Native Son*'s Bigger Thomas is split between his forbidden passion and insurmountable hate while holding drunken Mary in his arms and Cross Damon of *The Outsider* falls in love with Eva, the white wife of a communist activist, his desire compelling him to commit four murders. Fishbelly's case is different though, as he does not resort to violence like Bigger and Cross to justify his existence and overcome the burden of the miscegenation taboo and yet he is constantly warned of the violence awaiting him if he dares to cross the line of miscegenation. For Wright, hybridity is not the only taboo an African American has to suffer in the United States, in *Black Boy* (1945) he enumerates twenty-one tabooed subjects that the Southern whites would not like to discuss with the "negroes" for the topics call for "manly self-assertion on the part of the Negro" (*Black Boy*, 1945: 253).

> American white women; the Ku Klux Klan; France, and how Negro soldiers fared while there; Frenchwomen; Jack Johnson; the entire northern part of the United States; the Civil War; Abraham Lincoln; U. S. Grant; General Sherman; Catholics; the Pope; Jews; the Republican party; slavery; social equality; Communism; Socialism; the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments to the Constitution (*Ibid*.).

Earle V. Bryant holds Fishbelly's sexual initiation and success in his relationship with the white women as "an absolute pre-requisite for his survival in the white world" (Bryant, 1993: 424). And Bryant further adds that for Fishbelly "white women are decidedly different from-indeed, even better than-black ones" (*Ibid*., 428). Bryant's thoughts could be said to be out of place with Fishbelly's reality in the novel, for there is no hint of his alluding to the preferable status of white women over the black ones. It is true that he is attracted to the lily white bodies even on brink of death, however, Fishbelly is attracted to white women as he believes them to embody the mysterious world of whiteness. Building his character on the negative image of his father and on the conceptions of a "surrealistic white world," Fishbelly decides to flee from the black section of the city which he calls the "purgatory" (LD, 164). Taking his first steps to that end by dropping out of school and collecting the rents of his father's illegal enterprises, he meets Gloria, Tyree's mulatto mistress. A few pages back and in the first part of the novel, Fishbelly's shock at catching his father in sexual intercourse with a black woman and his subsequent bewilderment was mentioned. His second confusion, concerning race and sexuality, occurs when he meets the "almost white" Gloria:

> Gloria confounded him not only because she had the air of a white woman, but because *acted* white. What, then, did acting *white* mean? She acted correctly. But what did acting *correctly* mean? [emphasis in the original] (*Ibid*., 166).

Following the model his father sets before him – no matter how negative it is – Fishbelly makes up his mind to lead a life like Tyree. At Grove dance club, the venue in which his father holds a share, he meets a mulatto girl called Gladys. Thinking that Gladys's white

skin would entitle her to the mysteries of the white world he wistfully chases after, and yet upon learning Gladys's indifference to the white world and her submissive view of her fate leaves Fishbelly dumbstruck.[10] Gladys's nonchalant attitude toward whiteness baffles Fishbelly, and pushes him to search his own soul for internalized traces of the white world. Despite having black skin, he thinks himself to be whiter at heart than Gladys, and still, it doesn't stop him from demeaning her by holding her imagination to be too naïve to comprehend the truth behind the race issue. He stumbles on his own version of the truth behind race while collecting the rent in the black neighborhood of Clintonville, or the purgatory as he calls it. At this juncture, Fishbelly's relation to his parochial, immediate racial landscape and to the overall racial reality of his nation becomes more confounding. Convinced that a parasitic, bloodsucking and reciprocal cycle to be operative in determining the black and white "organisms," Rex Tucker's view of the white world is extraneous and we learn that he experiences a spell of epiphany: "Yet he knew that both the "dependent niggers" and "independent niggers" were, in turn, dependent upon a white world for a definition of their lives" (*Ibid*., 200). In *White Man, Listen!*, a collection of four essays on white man's attitudes and relations with the colored peoples of Africa and Asia, Wright maintains a different view than what he puts in Fishbelly's mouth in the novel. For Wright, Africans and Asians, those who had been partially Westernized, still had "a quarrel with the West" and the West had no right of boasting about subordinating those people, let alone claiming to reduce the colored identities hanging on the threads of white subjectivity (Wright, 1978: 127).

If author-oriented interpretation is to be taken into consideration, contrary to the dismissal of such approach by New Criticism, some interesting points regarding Wright's character choices could be raised. Indeed, the events and episodes narrated in *The Long Dream*, as given in Wright's other works of fiction, are based on Wright's true to life experiences and historical processes. For example, the lynching of Chris Sims is

[10] Professor Jefferson at Rex Tucker's high school is one of the African-American males in the novel, who has sexual relations with Gladys. Fishbelly sees the attraction of the black males toward Gladys to be similar to his own, that is, she is thought to be the bridge, connecting them to the white world. The choice of Jefferson as the professor's name might also be interpreted as Wright's allusion –though imperceptibly- to the Thomas Jefferson – Sally Hemings affair.

gleaned from Wright's personal observation of such an event when Wright worked as a bellboy, also told in *Black Boy*. And the funeral sermon Pastor Ragland delivers during the sermon for the forty two victims of the Grove fire, can be tied to the nightclub fire in Natchez, Mississippi, killing 215 persons, many of them black teenagers. The name Gladys appears in *Black Boy* and *The Savage Holiday*. In *Black Boy,* it is given as Cross's (the main character's) African American, estranged and nagging wife whom Cross does not love and therefore seeks peace in Eva's arms and in *The Savage Holiday*, the white protagonist Erskine Fowler's childhood friend whose doll he fantasizes of destroying as he substitutes it for his mother. Tara T. Green sees Fishbelly's attraction and confusion over Gladys as representative of Wright's life, who married two white women**.** (Green, 2009). Michel Fabre taking the appeal of white women for Wright to somewhat extreme pole claims Wright's attraction to be also tinged with retribution.

> […] revenge for the years of sexual and emotional frustration during adolescence; he certainly felt additional pleasure in flaunting the taboos that for a black man in Mississippi, were the equivalent of a castration….To possess a white woman was a way of eradicating painful memories….[A] black man suffered many humiliations in public places (Fabre, 1993: 197).

Katherine Spandel also reads *The Long Dream* in relation to Wright's biography and Spandel's interpretation could be said to be speculative as Fabre's since she traces Fishbelly's journey to what transpired in Wright's emotional, therefore volatile life. Spandel, mincing her words, added that "As early as his childhood Wright could find little love in his own people, and he surely found little in whites. It is not surprising, then, although it is disappointing, that Wright leaves his last hero literally up in the air" (Spandel, 1971: 95).

And to go back to the *The Long Dream*, Fishbelly's fascination with Gladys is marked by a scorching question "Was it because she was a shadowy compromise that was white and not white?" (LD, 209). To add another layer to the rhetorical question, was Fish's attraction to Gladys on account of seeing his own sketch of racially marked life? His amorous escapade with Gladys, however, lives for a short time, after Gladys is burnt to death in Grove dance club, when the moss, not removed despite the warnings of

the fire department, blazes up and sets afire the whole venue. Unofficially declared, forty two patrons are found cooked to death. Trying to suppress his nausea on smelling the odour of burnt up bodies, Fishbelly overhears the firemen's conversation:

> "Jesus, I know that smell," a fireman said. "They ain't burning; they're *cooking!*" [emphasis in original]
> "...they say most of 'em were smothered..."
> "...how many were in there?..."
> "...somebody said about fifty...
> "All niggers?"
> "...all niggers, nothing but niggers...
> "...some Fourth of July..." (*Ibid*., 221-22). [11]

On seeing firemen drag asphyxiated and burnt corpses out of the Grove, and talking to the only witness of the fire, Fats, his father's employee at the Grove, and thus confirming Gladys's death, Fishbelly recalls "...that dim photo of that smiling white woman that he choked down his throat that day in the police car. Gladys had been a living white-and-black fantasy and she had gone up in smoke..." (*Ibid.,* 223). The fire at the Grove, though providing a fine prospect of profit for his father Tyree's undertaking business, also reveals the illicit agreements Tyree made with the police chief Cantley. Fearing that his ties with Tyree would indict him as well, Cantley pays a prompt visit to the office. Tyree, knowing all too well that things will go from bad to worse, tries to coax Cantley in helping him to stand a fair trial before a racially mixed jury. Cantley, somehow sympathetic to Tyree's request, informs him of the "Ku-Kluxer" judge who even hates the black cloak he has to wear. With tears in his eyes, and on his knees, begging Cantley for his support, Tyree shocks and shames Fishbelly beyond words.

[11] In 1852, Frederick Douglass, an African-American social reformer, orator, writer, statesman and ex-slave, delivered a speech against slavery before an anti-slavery audience in Rochester. Douglass, besides mentioning the terrible and dehumanizing effects of slavery also underlined an important truth on what it meant for an African American to be a citizen. "This fourth of July is yours not mine, you must rejoice, I must mourn." Douglass's words resounded for many centuries to come, and the Fourth of July, as the national day celebrated for freedom and independence, was referred as the day of catastrophe by African American writers. Richard Wright is one of those writers to raise critical question about the year, placing the Grove fire to happen on that particular date.

Witnessing his father cringe in humiliation before the police chief, he later learns, when the the chief leaves, that Tyree was actually acting to get Cantley believe that he had nothing stashed to be later used against him.

In "The Psychological Reactions of Oppressed People," the first chapter of the *White Man, Listen!,* Wright probes into "a whole variety of ironic attitudes" that he claims to be found in colonized people and he collects those attitudes under the heading of "acting." Furthermore, he adds that they stem from "an almost unconscious tendency [in the colonized] to hide their deepest reactions from those who they fear would penalize them" (Wright, 1978: 17)**.** Reflecting Wright's thoughts, Joseph Boskin writes that "the contact between whites and blacks during the long period of slavery almost always involved intricate forms of performing" (Boskin, 1986: 45). And such performing, as other scholars claimed, continued well into Jim Crow and even beyond. Wright defends being open in racial contacts, having it out in the open, instead of "acting" and "performing" for he believes that "a society is not very strong when it rests upon a large basis of secret, hidden things, like quicksand. In my opinion, things must be in the open" (Wright, 1978: 237). Aime Cesaire, in *Discourse on Colonialism,* somewhat echoes Wright's words and believes that any subaltern and postcolonial contact between the colonizer and the colonized should be free of "the obscurers, all the inventors of subterfuges, the charlatans and tricksters, the dealers in gobbledygook" (Cesaire,197: 34). Others, however, like James C. Scott, author of *Domination and the Arts of Resistance*, see some usefulness in employing offstage tactics as speeches, gestures, and practices to "confirm" and "contradict" at the same the script of domination. That way, for Scott, the dominated populations could open up holes in the wall of oppression and exploitation. (Scott, 1990: 4-10). Wright rejects such "weapons of the weak" and strictly holds on (though giving credit to subversive, behind-the-scenes maneuvers) to his condemnation of any demeaning act on the part of the African-Americans, and he goes on to state that while "acting," African American man opts for a high-pitched, plaintive voice in addressing and affirming his submissive position in the face of a white person.

It is what Tyree does in *The Long Dream*, that is to say, he lifts up his voice in his "acting," and he passes down the lesson to his son, Fishbelly, who, we learn later, imitates his father in supplication and hates himself for doing so. Tyree, while addressing a white man, puts on a "high-pitched, unnatural voice" (LD, 67), and he sticks to such tone while addressing Fishbelly as well.

> 'Ye see, Fish, these goddamned crazy white folks *respect* me,' Tyree cut him off again in a high-pitched voice, throwing an arm over his son's shoulder. 'I know how to handle these white folks.' Tyree's cracked tenor rose in feigned lyricism. 'Fish, I know these goddamn white folks better'n they know themselves' (*Ibid*., 128).

For Mikko Tuhkanen, Tyree's retaining of the "high-pitched" voice in addressing his son even when there is no white person around, is because "the game's taking control of the players, the dissemblance act's becoming indistinguishable from the "real" person behind the mask" (Tuhkanen, 2009: 94). In other words, Tuhkanen holds that Wright associates tricksterism and double-voice black vernacular with emasculation, and he lays it out in *The Long Dream* as he studies it in *White Man, Listen!* In the first section, it was mentioned that Fishbelly regarded his father as already castrated, somehow feminized in dealing with the white world. Tuhkanen, linking Wright's surmise with that of Jacques Lacan on subject's donning of "…the attributes of femininity and shadow, so propitious to the act of concealing" (Lacan, 1956: 44), believes it to be the attribute of the male characters Wright created. Tuhkanen offers to read the emasculation of Tyree as Wright characterizes him in *The Long Dream*, not by resorting to the Lacanian sexual difference and phallus but by making use of the *objet a*. According to Tuhkanen, the notions of double (high-pitch) voice, masked minstrelsy and the DuBoisian veil constitutes the "phobogenic" (something induced or caused by fear) object cause of desire. And in Tuhkanen's interpretation of Wright, "the mask-as-the-*objet-petit a"* is what "sticks in the throat," hampering "the smooth functioning of the (white) symbolic order" (Tuhkanen, op. cit., 100). For Wright, Tuhkanen believes, the answer is not to capitulate

and adjust to the language of the white symbolic order but to insist on protruding, rejecting such symbolic constellation in the first place.

In other words, contrary to Hegel's slave-master dialectic, the struggle of life and death between master and slave self-consciousness(es) over recognition, Tuhkanen introduces (if it is not a remotely connected comment) desire into the fray without mentioning Alexander Kojeve's reinterpretation of the Hegelian dialectic. In Kojeve's and Crossley's re-reading of the dialectic, there is always something elusive, awry and incompatible (whether in the position of the master or the bondsman) in affirming the other's humanity. (Crossley, 1996: 18). Recognition, if it is ever attained, hangs by a thread, and Kojeve's commentaries need to be quoted with some length.

> The relation between Master and Slave...*is not recognition properly so-called*...The Master is not the only one to consider himself Master. The Slave, also, considers him as such. Hence, he is recognized in his human reality and dignity. But this recognition is one-sided, for he does not recognize in turn the Slave's human reality and dignity. Hence, he is recognized by someone whom he does not recognize. And this is what is insufficient - what is tragic - in his situation...For he can be satisfied only by recognition from one whom he recognizes as worthy of recognizing him. [emphasis in the original] (Kojeve, 1969: 19).

Literary critics as Edward Margolies and Katherine Fishbum though think differently of Tyree Tucker than Tuhkanen does. For Margolies, Wright's skill, especially in the second chapter of the novel, consists of a true to life depiction not that of Fishbelly but that of Tyree:

> The most singular achievement of this section is not, however, Wright's facility in moving Fishbelly from a subjective world to an external world- but rather the very remarkable portrait of Tyree. Indeed, though it is obviously not Wright's intention, it is Tyree who runs away with the novel-and it is Tyree one remembers most vividly after one has finished the novel (Margolies, 1969: 158).

Katherine Fishbum, taking Margolies's praise further writes: "The most significant scenes in Part II are those where Tyree plays his role as 'nigger,' since the acting is witnessed by Fish who is amazed at Tyree's versatility in exploiting the white man's preconceived notions of blacks" (Fishbum, 1977: 36). Fishbelly witnesses his father to resort to acting once again when Tyree Tucker pleads his wish of a racially mixed jury before the Mayor of Clintonville. And when he receives the reply from the Mayor that he should be ready to sell all his property and to defend himself, Tyree fakes a fainting. After the Mayor leaves the house, Fishbelly observes, as Fishbum puts it, his father's versatility in facing off a white threat.

> "Fish," Tyree growled, his eyes blazing red, "I don't like what that goddamned white man said. I see it *all* now. *They jealous of me.* They done made up their minds to break me… These white folks think I won't fight 'em. But I will; I'll fight 'em and ride the black cat off the deep end to hell, so help me Gawd! When a man asks you how much money you got, he's planning to pick you clean, take every cent you got. And I ain't to let that happen. I'll *die* first!" [emphasis in the original] (LD, 258).

Unflinching in his resolve to use the cancelled checks in the court against Cantley the police chief, Tyree contacts lawyer McWilliams who plans on running for the next Mayor election of the town. And we learn that his encounter with McWilliams is the only time when Tyree assumes his real identity in the presence of a white person. At first, suspicious of McWilliams's intentions, and taking him for another white supremacist, but later convinced of his integrity, Tyree unleashes his true feelings on the white world. Rejecting McWillams's accusation of being corrupt, or rather refusing to shoulder the reproach by himself, he points to the white world and its laws as the very source of corruption.

> If I'm corrupt, who made me corrupt? Who took the bribes? The law, and the law's white. I live in what the white man calls Nigger Town….Mr. McWilliams, I didn't make Nigger Town. White men made it. Awright. I say, 'Okay'. But, goddammit, let

> me live in Nigger Town! And don't call me corrupt when I live the only way I can live (*Ibid*., 273).

While Tyree is determined to fight to the end, Fishbelly is somehow anxious and frightened lest something bad might happen to Tyree and he would find himself alone to face the cruelty of the white world that would surely come for him after his father is gone. His fears, unfortunately, are actualized as we continue reading into the novel, yet, before the catastrophes form a climax, Wright gives us Fishbelly's last dream. His feelings towards his father and the whites, as it is mentioned before, are once again equivocal in "his adoring hatred." Thinking it impossible to cringe and act before the whites just like his father does so as to get them feel sorry, sad, and amused, and equally impossible to be able to live and prosper in a town divided between white and black sections, he falls asleep to dream out his problems. In his dream, he finds himself seated at the desk in his father's office, going over the rent receipts when Gladys and Gloria enter. They procure bundles of green dollars out of their handbags and place them on the desk, telling Fishbelly to take them for they are all his. Declining to take the money, Fishbelly asks them where they got it. On learning that they stole it from the white men, he is seized with panic and fear first, but accepts to take the bundle and hide it due to the sweet talking of Gladys and Gloria. At this point, someone appears at the door of the office, and it turns out to be the police chief Cantley. Gladys and Gloria betray him immediately and inform on Fishbelly's taking the stolen money and stashing it away. In response, Fishbelly growls back with a curse "You bitches! You tricked me!" The mocking laughter of Gladys and Gloria, though, echoes in the halls of the parlor, and they have their own answer for Fishbelly's censure. "You're black and we're white and you'll believe anything we say!" Emma Tucker, the mother, appears in the nick of time to save his son, and advises him to hide in a coffin, it doesn't work out though, for Cantley, Gladys and Gloria find out Fishbelly's whereabouts and look down at him and Cantley steps up to deliver his sardonic parley: "All right, nigger. Either you're dead and we'll bury you, or you come out of there and go to jail!" (Ibid, 278).

This last dream of the novel shares some common characteristics with the Chris and locomotive dreams. First, the dream is traversed by the taboo of miscegenation as the two mulatto women Gladys and Gloria, who were once the bridge for Fish and his father to the white world, turn against him, and hand him over to the corrupt state official. Second, it is charged with sexual tension and expectancy ending in the imagery of death and/or incarceration. In Chris Sims dream, in which the monstrous fish attacks Rex Tucker, and it is appropriate to claim that the fish attacks his genitalia, and in the locomotive one Fishbelly hides the naked white girl, and in the last dream in which Gladys and Gloria trick him into accepting the money, one can track down a sexual anxiety in each of the dreams sometimes subtly and sometimes plainly given. The only difference between the last dream and the previous two is that the conjunctive structure of the dreams change, for the first and last time, from 'and' to 'either-or'. The last dream for the most part, just like the other two, is characterized by the 'and' conjunction, however, at the very end of the dream Fish and we readers are presented by a choice in the shape of "Either you're dead and we'll bury you, or you come out of there and go to jail." Wright's interference into the grammatical configuration of the dream, contrary to Freud's surmise that the alternative 'either-or' is never expressed in dreams, might point out to Wright's concern to show that his protagonist of *The Long Dream* has (always already) to face the inevitable choice of falling for his dreams or renouncing them completely. That is to say, the causal relation 'and' indicates in the form of synchronic multiplicity, is turned into a diachronic singularity by 'either-or', implying a closure as regards to Fishbelly's life. As the police chief presents a choice between death and imprisonment, Fishbelly devises his own choice by resuming his father's role or leaving it all behind, thus finally breaking free of the unrelenting and vicious circle of 'ands.'

In reality, however, Gloria, his father's mulatto mistress is the one who keeps the copies of the cancelled checks revealing the bribe traffic between Tyree and Cantley. For this reason, and for contacting McWilliams the lawyer, Cantley sets up a trap, along with the local police force, to kill Tyree in the brothel of Maud. To lure Tyree, Cantley makes Dr. Bruce, his partner in the business, call him, and Cantley shoots Tyree on the

spot soon as he arrives. Bereft of his father, whom he loved and hated at the same time, Fish wakes up to his nightmare, and finds his strength of survival standing on thin ice "Papa left me in the charge, and, goddammit, I'm going to take charge and all hell ain't going to stop me!" (*Ibid*., 304). With no one between him and the hostile world of the whites, and receiving the batch of checks from Gloria (which reveals the last five years of bribery between Cantley and his murdered father), Fishbelly undertakes the responsibility. In the flat, he rented for him and Gladys, he meets Cantley, and Cantley tells him that his father was shot by his enemies in the illicit business operations. Offering his condolences, Cantley also tries to persuade Fishbelly to take over his father's businesses and retain the ties he had had with Tyree. And next, the police chief brings up the hot button topic, the fate of the cancelled checks Tyree hid. Desperate to fend off the chief's inquisition, Fishbelly realizes that he is imitating his father's "acting."

> "There ain't no more checks, Chief!" His voice quivered. "I swear there ain't! I'm working for you. I don't want no trouble. I'll do what you tell me!" Shame made him bend forward and sob.
>
> "Awright" Cantley drawled. "That rain in your goddamn face ain't helping me any."
>
> The note of relaxation in the white man's voice eased his tension. Yes, in spite of himself, he was "acting" as Tyree had "acted," and he hated it, and he hated the man who was making him do it (*Ibid*., 339).

Finally, Cantley leaves Fish alone, not convinced of his pleas of innocence, and Fish knows only too well that the chief will return for more. At that point, in a similar vein to Benedict Anderson's insight that racism feeds on eternal and invisible contaminations, Fishbelly acknowledges and laments the racial heritage he inherits from his forefathers.

> He closed his eyes and whimpered: "Papa, there ain't nothing else for me to do! You left something that's *marked* me! It's like it's in my *blood!* I can't live with it here!" He opened his eyes, but he did not see the room; he shouted: "My papa, my papa's

> papa, and my papa's papa's papa, look what you done to me!" [emphasis in the original] (*Ibid*., 346).

For the last time in the novel, Fish falls asleep, this time without any haunting dreams. The following day he wakes up to his long cherished and equally fearful wish, that is, the figure of a young, blond, white girl looking at him through the half-open door of his apartment. First, he thinks that he is dreaming and staring at an image in a waking dream, that the white face with blond hair and blue eyes, eyeing him intently, could not be real but a delusion. However, when the young girl tells him that she is sent by Maud, and gives him a smile, Fish recoils in horror and flies down the staircase to find Cantley. Just then, a big, black car pulls to the curb and Cantley steps out. Out of breath, Fish stutters to tell what happened and at the very moment, the white girl appears in the doorway in tattered clothes. Alleging that Fish tried to rape him, and brutally mauled him, the girl begins to sob and that is enough for the chief to corner Fish. His fate is sealed right then for he would either hand in the batch of checks or face lynching just like Chris. Instead chief gives him a second chance to think it over and puts him behind bars for an undetermined period of time. If there is any moment in the novel for the main character to grow mature and gain full awareness of the whole racial reality of his surroundings, I think it comes to pass while he is in prison.

> As long as he could remember he had mulled over the balefully seductive mystery of white women, whose reality threatened his life, declared him less than a man. In the presence of a white woman there were impulses that he must not allow to come into action; he was supposed to be merely a face, a voice, a sexless animal. And the white man's sheer prohibitions served to anchor the sense of his women in the consciousness of black men in a bizarre and distorted manner that could rarely be eradicated- a manner that placed the white female beyond the pitch of reality (*Ibid*., 371-72).

One year and eleven months into his imprisonment, Fishbelly receives a letter from his childhood friend, stationed in France with the U.S. army. "France ain't no heaven," Zeke writes but he further adds that blond, French girls would "…go to bed with a guy who's black as the ace of spades and laugh and call it Black Market" (*Ibid*., 382). It can be

argued that expatriation includes a certain alienation both from the home country one leaves behind and from the host country one journeys to. Although, some examples of unproblematic adaptation could be counted, it can be claimed that the expatriate is nevertheless -culturally and socially- in a liminal state. And another argument, no mother how improbable it might sound, is that a subject flees from her/his native country on account of the disillusionment she/he goes through for being deprived of the citizenship rights the home nation promises. At least, that is the case with Richard Wright and his last literary hero Fishbelly. Yoshinobu Hakutani, regarding Wright's own life and the fictional character he created shortly before his death, also points out to such quest for constitutional rights of citizenship elsewhere: "Although expatriation implies the denunciation of one's country, Fishbelly's decision to go to France echoes the twin traits of the American national character: individual freedom and the pursuit of happiness, as guaranteed in the Constitution" (Hakutani, 1996: 277). In Britain, there is a jocular saying, which is also used by politicians and political scientists as constitutional principle to describe the individual citizen's relation to law, which goes like this "everything which is not specifically forbidden, is allowed" **(**Laws, 2000: 256). And there is another saying attributed to France "In France, everything is allowed, even if it is forbidden" [12] (Schütze, 2012: 415). The nuance between the British and French versions of the saying actually tells a lot. Even though the Americans fought a war of independence against the United Kingdom, they obviously borrowed a lot from the mother country's legislation and sociopolitical culture. Miscegenation, as it was mentioned before, was one of those prohibitions equated with incest, chastity of the white women and the sovereign territory, and therefore specifically forbidden by the Constitution. France, in the 18th century, during the time of Thomas Jefferson, also ruled out interracial marriages. Though it was held unlawful by the French Constitution at the time, its enforcement, especially through local practices and customs was not that strict. Furthermore, France's anti-miscegenation regulation was an administrative move rather

[12] And the joke is extended to other countries: "In Germany, everything is forbidden, unless something is specifically allowed." And "In Italy, everything is allowed, especially when it is forbidden." and so on.

than constitutional as the sanction covered only the colonized territories but not the mother country. And in Jefferson's case, Sally Hemings was an "almost white" woman who could easily pass for one. Perhaps, of course speculatively, that was the reason why Jefferson chose to live his unsanctioned love in France, when he was carrying out his duty as the Federal Official in Paris. Both the United States and France later amended their anti-miscegenation laws, and ruled them unconstitutional, France as early as 1806. Out of the twenty one taboo subjects, Richard Wright lists in *Black Boy* as the undesirable topics of discussion for white Southerners, France is one of them. France, once again hypothetically, is a heaven to fulfill one's suppressed desires, be it the president of the United States or an African American boy, fleeing for his life. And it is also pertinent to remember Zeke's – Fishbelly's childhood friend - postscript to his letter to show France's attitude towards prohibitions in general "[…] and laugh and call it Black Market" (LD, 382).

After Cantley plans to use Fish as his warrant and errant boy in the future and thus helps him get released from the two year imprisonment, Fish immediately decides to leave the country and look for his dreams elsewhere. Indeed, in the very last pages of the novel, we learn that the overarching dream, that is, the American Dream, based on the tenets of individual freedom and pursuit of happiness, has been Fish's worst nightmare all along the narrative.

> Would he ever find a place that he could call "My Wonderful Romance"? That man's father had come to America and had found a dream: he had been born in America and had found a nightmare (*Ibid*., ,380).

Still, it seems that he cannot completely shake off the remnants of the racial world of Clintonville, for he suddenly becomes aware of the white hand standing ten centimeters away from his left hand, and the white faces seated all around him. Unconsciously, and impulsively, he withdraws his left hand and covers his right with the left "trying vainly to blot out the shameful blackness on him" (*Ibid*., 380). Bringing desire into the discussion of the "mask," "veil" and "acting," and attempting to explain those notions through Lacan's object cause of desire, Tuhkanen touches upon some key issues of

racial visibility, violence and identity. Tuhkanen posits the double voiced and layered masks and performances as bones of contention in the throat of the white symbolic world. If a different and perhaps a complimentary reading of race and *objet petit a* is to be offered, it is feasible to mention Lacan's thoughts on the Symbolic (the big "O") with some space. For Lacan, the Symbolic, big Other, encompasses a variety of social and political (not racial) registers as laws, institutions, rules, norms, traditions, mores, rituals and on to the cultural practices. And the relation the subject holds with the Symbolic as regards structuring of desire is not unilateral but reciprocal and the desire born of the entrance into language necessitates an alterity, another subjective existence for the mapping of desire as Lacan makes it clear in the following excerpt that man's desire is the desire of the O(o)ther.

> […] man's desire is the Other's desire, in which the *de* /of/ provides what grammarians call a 'subjective determination' - namely, that it is qua /as/ Other that man desires. ... This is why the Other's question - that comes back to the subject from the place from which he expects an oracular reply - which takes some such form as '*Che vuoi?*', 'What do you want?' is the question that best leads the subject to the path of his own desire (Lacan, 2000: 300).

Zizek's reformulation of the question '*Che vuoi?*', 'What do you want?' however, is much more pertinent for Fishbelly. For Zizek, Lacan's *Che vuoi?* is not just a questioning of "What do you want?" but more of an inquiry into "What's bugging you? What is it in you that makes you so unbearable not only for us, but also for yourself, that you yourself obviously do not master?" (Zizek, 2006: 41-3). In other words, the subject's plea is not what I want from the Symbolic, but what do the others (the Symbolic) see in me, what is my position in the Symbolic constellation? Fishbelly's involuntary and yet learned resignment in the face of whiteness (on the plane, *en route* to France) could be tied to Zizek's surmise. Indeed, on behalf of Richard Wright, Fishbelly attests to such "inferior," "shameful" identity given to him by the white world he leaves behind and wonders if he can begin afresh in forming his new identity.

> Could he ever make the white faces around him understand how they had charged his world with images of beckoning desire and dread?...Above all, he was ashamed of his world, for the world about him had branded his world as bad, inferior. Moreover, he felt no moral strength or compulsion to defend his world. That in him which had always made him self-conscious was now the bud of a new possible life that was pressing ardently but timidly against the shell of the old to shatter it and be free (LD, 383).

The relationship between dreams and literary texts goes as far as back to ancient times, to the Babylonian epic, *Gilgamesh,* purported to be written circa 2150 – 1400 BC, and considered as the world's first truly great work of literature. Since earliest times, dream reports, literary texts and creative writing have been interfusing realms of human experience. The term *oneiremes* was first coined by anthropologist-poet Paul Friedrich to describe the dreaming elements in literature and the ways those elements contributed to the creation, or reformulation of literary contents and forms. In fact, all literary genres engaged with dream elements in one way or another. Dreams and dream reports became especially crucial for the authors of minority literature to convey the split psyches of their characters, caught between two incompatible cultures. Rudolfo Anaya, in his Chicano novel *Bless Me, Ultima*, used dreams to show a young boy's reattachment process to his Mexican heritage amidst the modern U.S. society. Many authors like Anaya resorted to dreams to tell the stories of marginalized and disenfranchised people and the ineffable experiences of apartheid, Holocaust, and immigration. Richard Wright, on the other hand, was widely criticized for his expatriate life and for cutting his emotional and racial ties with his native country. The critics saw Wright's literary choices and style in the last stage of his life as lenient in dealing with the highly volatile issue of race. *The Long Dream*, his last published novel before his death, also had its share from the criticism directed at his personal life. For the critics, the psychological portrayals of the black and white characters furthered the confusion and ambivalence of the novel, even caused distaste for the text's aesthetic direction (Ward, Butler: 2008). The dream metaphor, which stood out the novel as one of the main components, also added fuel to the discussion. Yet, if the novel is to be read in a reverse direction, that is, if *The Long Dream* is to be taken as Wright's own journey in his imagination back to his

home, though cut short by his untimely death at the age of 52, the novel, despite its shortcomings, would seem more significant. The dream theme, is obviously open to various analyses, as one of them would be the comparison with Rudolfo Anaya's character and his attempt at reattaching himself to his Mexican ancestry. If applied to Fishbelly, his dreams, or rather nightmares, work out differently, as they push him to leave his native soil and look for his home somewhere else. In the psychic register of the United States and in the country's collective unconscious, dreams and nightmares hold some recurrent patterns of cultural passions, violence and anxieties. Therefore, it is wrong to limit the reach of the dreams and nightmares to individuals, let alone reduce their extent to the African Americans. On the oscillation of dreams of carnal desires and nightmares of sexual transgressions bring about, and threads through which the vile sections of U.S. history and politics merge, Shannon Winnubst concludes it best as regards to the nation's dreams and nightmares and to the subsequent subject positions, whose words might also ring true for Rex Tucker's elongated dream journey:

> […] a fantasy that structures and ensures the hegemony of a phallicized whiteness and as a horrifying material reality that, despite its ontological status as a fantasy, traps and kills black and brown men in the contemporary United States. With no foothold in actual statistics on interracial violence or rape, it nonetheless functions as a myth that structures race, gender, sexuality, and class in the United States. Both real and unreal, it is a collective nightmare that structures power in U.S. culture. *But who is doing the dreaming?* [emphasis added] (Winnubst: 2003, 2).

CHAPTER THREE
Literature Beyond Race: Richard Wright's *Savage Holiday* and Toni Morrison's "Recitatif"

In 1993, journalist Bill Moyers accosted Toni Morrison with a question when she would begin writing about white people. Morrison responded with a pledge that she would "stay out here at the margin" (Morrison, 2008: 87), [1] letting the center come for the periphery she was located in. In fact, Morrison, by the time Moyers directed his question, had written considerably about whites both in fictional and nonfictional works such as "Recitatif" (1983) and *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination* (1990). Notably in *Playing in the Dark*, Morrison challenged the long ingrained and dogmatic beliefs in what it meant to be white and "uniquely American" and in a literary thrust to dethrone the essentialist, pseudoscientific, white supremacist hierarchies, she claimed race to be morphed from its biological form to a metaphoric one. The discussion whether race was not a biological matter and had no efficacy in shaping cultural and social life of the United States, or (though losing some of its potency) it was a substantial phenomenon infiltrating at times into the everyday American life engrossed a few scholars for a long time. The questions that kept the scholars busy can be particularized thus: should the term race be perceived as a noncommittal concept signifying a multiculturalism which is worth redeeming for its amendatory power of coexistence? Can race be thought in isolation from its history of racism and racist practices that were once indoctrinated into the fabric of U.S. policies of apartheid? How feasible would it be to resort to race in explicating the seemingly discrete events of violence and discrimination that happen to fall to the lot of a particular community?

[1] Toni Morrison's disappointment after Moyers's question did not stop at her final answer of addressing a central(ized), mainstream audience from the periphery. As we read into the conversation she held with Carolyn C. Denard, we learn that Morrison was irked more than intrigued by the question which also sounded to say " "What?", "Who are you?", What is behind the question is, there's the center, which is white, and then there are these regional blacks or Asians, or any sort of marginal people" (Morrison qtd. in Denard, 2008:87).

Two scholars should be given a special attention for such (still popular and current) debate over the "social construction" of race versus its "biological essence." Kwame Anthony Appiah, in *My Father's House: Africa in the Philosophy of Culture,* believes that the right way to deconstruct and undermine race is not to study it biologically.[2] For Appiah, propounding the truth that "there are no races" and "there is nothing in the world that can do all we ask race to do for us" (Appiah, 1992: 45), should be an adequate point to raise important issues concerning the phenomenon. If one makes a mistake of correlating the so called "gross differences of morphology" with "subtle differences of temperament, belief, and intention," one does so only at the expense of "biologizing what *is* culture, ideology" (*Ibid*.). David Theo Goldberg, on the other hand, in *Racist Culture: Philosophy and the Politics of Meaning,* does not completely dismiss the biological character, and efficiency of race in inter-subjective dimension of culture and regards race as a fluid and an "empty concept" which transubstantiates into different molds in accordance with the ever-changing, and the contingent paradigms of historical and material interests. For that matter, Goldberg assumes race to be a discourse of power, predicated around sets of inclusions and exclusions.[3]

> Classification, valuation, and ordering are processes central to racial creation and construction. The ordering at stake need not be hierarchical but must at least identify difference; and the valuation need not claim superiority, for all it must minimally sustain is a criterion of inclusion and exclusion (Goldberg, 1993: 87).

[2] Appiah writes that up until now, in the biological conception of the human organism, the alleles (any of several forms of a gene, usually arising through mutation, responsible for hereditary variation) were thought to be the determining factors for intellectual and moral capacities of a human being. Yet, as the recent studies showed, such correlation between the genes and intellectual capacities was not right and highly unlikely. Therefore, as Appiah states and believes race "is at best a poor indicator of capacity" (Appiah, 1992: 37).

[3] In a passage reminding Michele De Certeau's cultural sites of resistance, Goldberg's theory of the racial distinction – just like class antagonism – could be turned into one's favour. For such line of thinking one can easily come up with the emancipatory projects, manipulating the discourse of power here and there. "Such struggle would give race a legitimate space of discontent. Though race has tended historically to define the conditions of oppression, it could, under a culturalist interpretation… be the site of a counterassualt, a ground of field for launching liberatory projects or from which to expand freedom(s) and open up emancipatory spaces" (Goldberg, 1993: 210-11).

Acknowledging both the ideological utility and the biological potency race had "with inferences of inferiority and the ranking of differences" (Morrison, 1989: 3), Morrison also drew attention to such two racially divided camps within the U.S. society and academia.

> For three hundred years black Americans insisted that "race" was no usefully distinguishing factor in human relationships. During those same three centuries every academic discipline… insisted that "race" was the determining factor in human development (*Ibid*.).

Yet, as it was mentioned before, Morrison pointed out to a third position, that of the metaphoric formulation of race which was (perhaps still is) a far more threatening concept than social or biological race ever were. For Morrison, the threat that metaphorical race posed was due to the fact that it could conceal from sight class conflict, social indignation, economic inequality and thus uphold the national consolation of maintaining the dreams of democratic egalitarianism as the only way out. Yet, the disguise metaphorical race put on in regards to politico-economic and socio-cultural factors and in regards to its own existence was in fact embedded "in daily discourse" and was "more necessary and more on display than ever before" (Morrison, 1993: 63). The political ideals that constituted what Gunnar Myrdal called "the American Creed," promoting liberal, democratic, individualistic and egalitarian values also served as the background against which the tenets of individualism and freedom were measured along racial figurations (Myrdal, 1995). Following Myrdal's comments on the dilemma of the "Negro" problem and the problems of democracy, Morrison, in a similar vein, attested the function of an African American to be a "polar opposite" in which "individualism is foregrounded (and believed in) when its background is stereotypified, enforced dependency" (Morrison, 1993: 64). Or, freedom (the rights to mobility, to monetary welfare, to equal education opportunity, to be in league with a powerful center from which to narrate the world) is savored "more deeply in a cheek-by-jowl existence with the bound and unfree, the economically oppressed, the marginalized, the silenced" (*Ibid*.).

Despite all her efforts expressing race in the formula of metaphor, and turning the tables on whiteness via the black perceptions of the phenomenon, Toni Morrison's works on whiteness, as David R. Roediger put it, were dismissed by Bill Moyers and the like.

> That challenging book [Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination] was so little appreciated that Moyers could still ask when the writing on whites was to come. The fact that she had written the most important volume on whiteness published in this decade did not so much as establish Morrison's interest in the subject in the eyes of a relatively sophisticated observer of race in the United States like Moyers (Roediger, 1998: 4).

Such disbelief and/or disregard shown for Morrison and her work in understanding and narrating a history/story of whites by blacks was also what James Baldwin had to face with as Moyers's approach exemplified an overall pattern of discarding how much African – Americans knew about white populations. In fact, for Baldwin, the ultimate "dismissal by whites of African-American expertise regarding whiteness was one critical condition under which such knowledge could be obtained" (*Ibid*., 5). Discrediting and repressing the knowledge of whiteness accumulated by African Americans throughout the nation's history was not just an endproduct of white supremacy but an essential component of racial domination. Literacy, or having the leverage to contest one's right to recognition and freedom was one of the impelling causes of slave narratives for "a way of assuming and proving the 'humanity' that the constitution denied them" (Morrison, 2008: 68). What was at stake in slave narratives, as Morrison pointed out, was to demonstrate the 'humanity' of slaves as well as salvaging a reality that was dictated, overlooked and repressed by the slave owners.[4] A reality that was so overwhelmingly violent, scatological, and bloodstained that at times the events were impossible to narrate. After the abolishment of slavery in the United States in 1833, the

[4] Literacy was the crucial vehicle that enabled the slaves to administer a certain degree of control over their self-image and over the events that were otherwise set against their will. The empowerment literacy provided, gave the former slaves an authoritative position to re-write the history of slavery, the history which would be totally repressed by the slave owners or written in accordance with their interests. In this regard, Slave narratives, along with being the first examples of African American literature, should also be thought as personal accounts, and as politico-historical texts.

slave narratives gave their place to and were incorporated by a body of literature produced by the authors of African descent. African American literature, as it came to be known, was concerned, or rather thought to be concerned, with the plight of African Americans who had to deal with racism and social inequalities. Despite the efforts of the authors to draw attention to the predicaments black communities had to face, almost no interest was shown by the white public in the reality the literary works depicted. In other words, as James Baldwin put it, "white men" reserved for "black men a reality" which was far from being mutual (qtd. in Roediger, 1998, p. 5).

Being in possession of the status to say what counts as true, as 'the reality', amounts to exercising a certain power, both ideological and repressive. Michel Foucault mentions such correlation between making of truth/reality and wielding of power and argues that "truth isn't outside power, or deprived of power," on the contrary, truth "is produced by virtue of multiple constraints [a]nd it induces regulated effects of power" (Foucault, 1976: 12-14). To put it differently, Foucault claims that "each society has its regime of truth", and this regime functions via "the types of discourse [society] harbours and causes to function as true" and "the way in which each is sanctioned" (*Ibid*.).

Though the literary corpus African American authors produced was primarily concerned with the lingering effects of slavery on the black communities and the troubles the communities had to put up with in social life, the authors also took interest in writing about whites. Written mostly in prose form and structured around white protagonists, the literary works thus produced were stimulated by three causes: to quench a curiousity African Americans had about the ways of the "white folks," young Richard Wright was intrigued enough to direct a question to his mother, "Can I go and peep at the white folks?" (qtd. in Roediger, 1998, 6), to shatter the illusion the whites believed that African Americans could not see them, and to provide insights into the white behaviour, and consciousness, for African Americans according to Langston Hughes were "...the best thermometer" to know when "white folks feel good" and when they "feel bad...even before they do" (qtd. in Roediger, 1998, 27). While the literary works produced by African American authors that were primarily concerned with black

characters and raised issues about trials and tribulations of black populations were received with a certain interest and a certain distance by whites, the works that engaged white characters and white stories, however, were met by disavowal and denial. As David R. Roediger would have the readers believe, the dismissal of the works about whites penned by the black authors could not be attributed to the vanity of the white public alone, but to the anxiety of losing ground, using Foucault's words once again, in maintaing a white "regime of truth." Indeed, the repudiation on the part of the white society is easy to identify for no regime would tolerate a challenge to its "causes to function as true." The claim to lay hold of the reality African American authors persisted in representing in a contentious manner, however, also caused fissures within the African American literary circles as well. Featuring white characters, and texts that do not neccesarily employ race as the primary human marker led to a division in the distinction of "anomalous," and what Shelley F. Fishkin called "transgressive" African American literature. For Claudia Tate "anomalous" texts were "indusputably marginal in African – American literary history." And the reason they were labelled as anomalies, Tate argued, was primarily because "they resist, to varying degrees, the race and gender paradigms that we spontaneously impose on black textuality" (Tate, 1998: 7-8). Anomalous texts disrupted the traditional conception of African American literature by assigning African Americans to minor roles, while foregrounding white, racially neutral and ambigious protagonists. Transgressive texts, on the other hand, violated certain norms, the principles which insisted that "black fiction writers are expected to focus on African American life in the United States as seen through the eyes of black characters," and furthermore "black novelists are expected to focus on issues of race and racism and are considered suspect when they do not" (Fishkin, 2002: 125).

Despite the efforts of the white public at whitewashing and the indictments of some African American scholars for being deviant, the literature on whites, or racially neutralized characters produced by African American authors stretched accross the time span of one hundred and fifty years. Going as far back as the postbellum period of 1865 – 1900, and extending to the contemporary period after 1965, this kind of literature has

received considerable attention within African American literary tradition. Paralleling, though not surpassing, the seniority of the works concerned with African Americans, the "anomalous," or "transgressive" literature has also enjoyed a certain interest.

Frank Johnson Webb (1828 – 1894), an antebellum (Civil War of 1861) author recognized for his literary merits by a few influential figures at the time (William Lloyd Garrison, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, Harriet Beecher Stowe, and John Greenleaf Whittier to name a few) pioneered the first works of racial passing and "raceless" literature. His novel that earned him literary acclamation, *The Garies and Their Friends* (1857), offered a vivid and ghastly depiction of racism, violence, political corruption in the city of Philadelphia. A tale of two interrelated families, Garies, a wealthy white planter and slaveholder family in Georgia and Ellises, a working class African-American family living in Philadelphia, the narrative gives a contrasting account of these two families, their respective social statutes in the United States, and their shared, common fates regarding the interracial marriage between the two families. Envious of the wealth of Ellises and enraged that Garies transgress the taboo of racial mixture, a mob consisting of white Southerners, rallies for a riot and attacks Ellises' residence. In the antebellum period and even in 1987, Webb's novel came under attack for its "deficiencies" in portraying slavery's grim side and for focusing his attention on the matters of racial integration alone. The year the novel was published, a review came out in *Sunday Times* which reproached Webb for leaving the problem of emancipation "untouched" and how it "is to be effected, without as much injury to slave as to slaveowner" (qtd. in Sollors, 2006: 1). In 1987, Bernard Bell would also express his disapproval of the novel on the grounds that "we do not find a direct attack on slavery anywhere" and Bell found Webb's references to the issue of emancipation to be "timid and ambivalent" (qtd. in Sollors, 2006: 5). Claudia Tate, however, would come to the aid of Webb, and chiding the criticism directed against the novel and the belief which held a black author to tell stories about the oppression only would perpetuate "fantasies of white power and black victimization that take on lives independent of the material circumstances of real black and white experiences and further reifies a cultural code

where things 'white' signify entitlement, liberty, and power, things 'black' signify penalty, lack, and defect" (qtd. in Sollors, 2006: 29).

Webb's less known, though not less contentious work, the novella of *Two Wolves and a Lamb* (1870), set in France and among the expatriates living in Paris and featuring a Gothic tale of deception, however, has received almost no attention whatsoever. With its Euro-American cast of characters, and a literary style resembling that of Edgar Allan Poe, the novella can be considered to be a precursor of a long tradition of "raceless fiction" and "anomalous literature." The fact that the novella intrigued no one's interest can be traced back to the disbelief that an African – American is not capable of offering an expose of the social reality of the Euro-Americans, and again, she/he is supposed to write about the downtrodden populations, especially at a time when slavery was in full swing.

Frances Ellen Watkins Harper (1859 – 1930) is another postbellum period author, who literally succeeded Webb in the tradition of anomalous literature. Her best known work, *Sowing and Reaping: A Temperance Story*, was published as part of series in *The Christian Recorder* between 1876 and 1877. Lost until 1994 and found thanks to the efforts of Frances Smith Foster, the novel was deemed uninteresting for the reasons not difficult to fathom. What the text offered and signaled as was in the subtitle was indeed a story of "temperance." Launched as a social movement, the Temperance Movement in the United States sought to limit the excessive consumption of alcohol and called for total abstinence from the substance during the Reconstruction years following the Civil War of 1861. Regarded as a social and national ill, the excessive use of alcohol was thought to be (at least for the movement) a great danger facing the nation after the abolishment of slavery. Causing deformities within the social and familial fabrics of the nation, alcohol (the consumption of which was indeed on the rise in 1870s) was stigmatized as an evil to be fought against. For Harper's novel, the temperance movement occupied a significant position, for whatever the causes and consequences were "intemperance was a national problem that encouraged social disorder and undermined the strength of the country" (Peterson, 2006: 68). Structuring her novel

around such convictions about intemperance and temperance, Harper narrates three familial dramas. The first one, one about the saloon keeper John Anderson, whose obstinacy to relinquish the lucrative business of selling alcohol, results in the disintegration of his family. The following two stories of Mary – Joe Gough and Belle Gordon – Paul Clifford, on the other hand, embracing the call of temperance, result in marriage and "the establishment of a contended, self – regulating" (Ibid.) households. One bad example of keeping family intact versus two good ones at building it. The issue of temperance was indeed what marked Harper's novel as race free for the fact that, as Harper believed, the problems wrapped around the consumption of alcohol transcended racial categorizations, for intemperance was a form of violence both domestic and national and that was why the characters were neither white nor black, they were both/and, defying racial inscriptions.

Called the "Poet Laureate of the Negro Race," Paul Laurence Dunbar (1872 – 1906), whose heart was truly into the genre of poetry, decided to dismantle the cloak of poet and write a novel, not about African Americans *per se* but about his native state of Ohio. *The Uncalled*, Dunbar's first novel was published in 1898, and it became the first novel written by an African American to be nationally marketed and sold. The novel's national recognition depended great deal on William Dean Howells, who was a great literary figure in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century United States, nicknamed "The Dean of American Letters." In *Harper's Weekly,* June 27, 1896 issue, Howells commended Dunbar for being "the first man of his color to study his race objectively, analyze it to himself, and then to represent it in art as he felt it to be: to present it humorously, yet tenderly, and above all so faithfully that we know the portrait to be undeniably like" (qtd. in Jarrett, 2006: 99). However, Dunbar's first novel *The Uncalled*, as Kenny J. Williams claimed, deviated from Howells's praise, for Williams believed the novel to be "raceless" rather than being racially oriented.

> "The Uncalled is 'raceless' in the sense that Dunbar does not specify what race his characters are; neither does he by speech or other mannerisms identify them more

> than to make clear that they are all small-town Midwesterners with the speech patterns of that locale" (qtd. in Jarett, 2006: 100 - 101).

In late 1800s and early 1900s, local color writing/movement was celebrated as the democratically ideal literary convention in representing local dialects, habits, cultures and traditions at a time the country attempted to stitch together the sectionalist and sectarian disruptions following the tumultuous years of the Civil War. Dunbar, sidestepping the protocols of racial writing, contrary to what Howells said in praise of the novel, focused on the differences between and within the provinces, the differences between the social norms and moral values of the countryside and urban life. *The Uncalled*, placing such differences at its center, downplayed the significance of race in explaining the ever growing gap between small-towns and burgeoning industrial cities, and foregrounded the class as the ultimate factor in defining the social and communal attitudes. For Dunbar, class, not race or racism, was the driving force that prevented blacks and whites from attaining equal treatment in U.S. society, culture and politics.

If the Postbellum Period is to be called the period of crawling in the production of "anomalous" and/or raceless literature, the following period between the two World Wars, also spanning the decade of the famous Harlem Renaissance, can be called the toddling phase. Nella Larsen, Jean Toomer and Wallace Thurman, among the most important figures of the Renaissance, continued to contribute to the body of literature without racial markers, the foundation of which was laid by the preceding period.

The daughter of a Danish immigrant mother and a black father from the U.S. Virgin Islands, the life of Nella Larsen (1893 – 1964) was spent at the racial crossroads of being not completely white nor completely black. Situated at both poles of the racial spectrum in her personal life, Larsen's novels and stories also represented such liminal differences of culture, the interstices of gathering and, to borrow from Homi Bhabha, "a passage that crosses" within the singularities of race, gender, and class (Bhabha, 1994). Larsen's *The Wrong Man* and *Freedom* stories, both published in 1926, were thematized around the motifs of love triangles beset by class, bootlegging, and restrictions on

women's dress. The last motif was of special interest to Larsen, who had to face suspension from Fisk University (an esteemed "Negro" school for teacher training) for dressing up and violating the dress codes of the University for women students. Showing profound concern for women's so called dependence on gender and sexual roles, Larsen used lavish dressing as a transgressive – however transient it was – act of undermining a male dominated universe of sexual appeal. In this regard, her best known literary works, *The Wrong Man* and *Freedom* were considered to be the examples of raceless literature, for they mentioned the patriarchal – reminiscent of the strict rules of the Victorian era – restrictions on women's sexuality, constraints from which both the white and black women suffered.

Jean Toomer (1894 – 1967), distancing himself from a "Negro" identity, in a country which he thought to be "Negro" crazed, Toomer expressed his sense of self to be on a different plane than race or blackness. In a letter to Horace Liveright in 1923, Toomer stressed his position and freedom to be one of moving beyond strict categorizations: "My racial composition and my position in the world are realities which I alone may determine" (qtd. in Guterl, 2006, 143). *York Beach*, Toomer's best known and most contentious work, is indeed a testimony to his convictions on the necessity of extending across the almost mythical "Negro identity." *York Beach*'s protagonist Nathan Antrum, a self-entitled psychologist, as Matthew Guterl puts it, through whom Toomer somehow clumsily inserts himself into the text, and bathes himself in the glow of an irresistible attraction to the ladies, is the figure who transcends any racial profiling. In Antrum's desire to create a world for himself, "a world of sheer wish-force", an anachronistic truth might be heard ringing true for Toomer's wish for transforming the world and his physical being. Without any sustained discussion of race, Toomer's sense of self, once again referring to Guterl's words, is "discussed in the political debate at the end of the novel," a discussion based on national sense of belonging and "a curious leitmotif" of a study "between external color and 'internal' vibrations, or between word and meaning" (*Ibid*., 146).

The period between the two World Wars, also known as Harlem Renaissance, witnessed a considerable production of raceless literary works penned by African American authors. Yet, the most prolific period on the contentious literary corpus was between 1945 – 1960, a decade and a half following the second World War when the nation was on the brink of Civil Rights Movement. The prominent African American literary figures of the period, Frank Yerby, Ann Petry, Zora Neale Hurston, Chester B. Himes, Richard Wright, and James Baldwin touched upon the incongruity between the goals and claims of freedom the United States championed and allegedly carried to Europe during the war, and the practice of such liberal promises within the country. In that regard, the obstacles Americans faced regarding democratic equalities regardless of racial, gender and ethnic classifications were not just the issues to be reckoned with by African American populations alone, but by white individuals as well. For the sake of space and the direction of the argument though, some, not all African American authors of the period shall be given a place.

Zora Neale Hurston's (1891 – 1960) only work on white characters, or in her words "a true picture of the South" from the perspective of a white Southern family, took up different titles during its painful publication process. *Sang the Suwanee in the Spring, The Queen of the Golden Hand, Angel in the Bed, Lady Angel with Her Man, Seraph with a Man on Hand, So Said the Sea, Good Morning Sun* were the suggested titles before both the author and the publisher decided on *Seraph on the Suwanee* (1948) as the eventual title of the novel. Before Hurston's white novel came out, she was already an accomplished writer, praised for her knowledge and representation of black vernacular language and figures of speech. However, rejecting the theories that language she employed, especially in *Mules and Men*, was unique to the black culture and community in the South, Hurston ascribed the same linguistic characteristics to the whites in the region.

> I think that it should be pointed out that what is known as Negro dialect in the South is no such thing. Bear in mind that the South is the purest English section of the United States.... What is actually the truth is, that the South, up until the 1930's was a relic of England...and you find the retention of old English beliefs and customs, songs

> and ballads and Elizabethan figures of speech. They go for the simile and especially the metaphor.... This is common to white and black.... They did *not* get it from the Negroes. The Africans coming to America got it from them. If it were African, then why is it not in evidence among all Negroes in the western world? No, the agrarian system stabilized in the South by slavery slowed down change...and so the tendency to colorful language that characterized Shakespeare and his contemporaries... (Hurston to Mitchell, 1948).

As a matter of fact, in *Seraph and the Suwanee*, there are numerous phrases and sentences that evoke the rhythm and syntax of Hurston's black characters, and by doing so Hurston was seeking for a fusion between her black fictional figures in previous works and the members of the white Meserve family, the main characters of *Seraph and the Suwanee*, by means of Southern dialect. In one of the chapters of the book, which was later removed by the publisher, by making Kenny Meserve, the younger son of Jim and Arvay Meserve, meet a black musician in New York, Hurston mentioned the significance of a cultural exchange and the linguistic hybridity between the whites and blacks.

> There is no more Negro music in the U.S. It has ben fused and merged and become the national expression, and displaced the worship of European expression (Hurston to Mitchell, 1947).

Seraph and the Suwanee, on Hurston's part, was not just an attempt to put on display that a fusion between two races was also a national expression differing from that of Europe. The novel was her challenge as well to move beyond, and, in Hurston words, "hopes of breaking that old silly rule about Negroes not writing about white people." (Hurston to Vechten, 1942) A novel tracing the story of economically disadvantaged white Meserve family residing in Florida, and its gradual upward achievements for economic and class mobility, *Seraph on the Suwanee*'s ultimate focal point is on the convoluted questions of female sexuality and on sometimes violent, and incompatible encounters, arising from gender-oriented desires. Neither the novel nor its volatile plot, however, came to to fore during Hurston's time than the alleged crime of child abuse.

On September 13, 1948, barely a month before *Seraph* was published, Zora Neale Hurston was arrested for sexually abusing a child of ten years old. Hurston denied all charges, using her passport as evidence that she had been in Honduras when the alleged crime was thought to have happened. Eventually Hurston was acquitted, however, what was more interesting and discomforting than the child abuse slander was the attitude of the African – American press. On October 23, the national edition of the Baltimore based *Afro – American* journal published an inaccurate and false version of the story under the headline "Did She Want 'Knowing and Doing' Kind of Love?", using an excerpt from *Seraph*, and the paper continued the indictment by alluding to the novel.

> It [Afro – American] suggested that Seraph on the Suwanee advocated sexual aggressiveness in women and then used selected sentences from the novel as if they provided evidence of the author's immorality. Hurston's exploration of the sexual expectations and repressions of the novel's protagonists became, in the hands of the Baltimore *Afro – American*, the means for crucifying her (Carby, 2006: 262).

Richard Wright also came under attack by African American critics for writing a white novel (*Savage Holiday*) which was at best for Bernard Bell "a melodramatic Freudian tale of the repressed sexuality of [protagonist] Erskine Fowler" (Bell, 1987: 189). Needless to say, the attack was directed to his literary merits rather than to his dignity. Bell, however, by categorizing *Savage Holiday* as a Freudian tale, misses the significant point Richard Wright tried to make. The book was indeed another expression of Wright's lifelong interest in human soul and psychology, and his ardent curiousity in studying psychosocial and psychosexual patologies induced by the Western modernity.

> The protagonist is called Erskine Fowler. He is a rather wealthy New York insurance agent in his forties. He is white. But, as his name indicates, his problem is mostly moral, or it has been defined in terms of social morality. Fowler brings to one's mind the notion of being 'foul,' of defiling, of not behaving according to social rules (Wright, 1993: 167).

Savage Holiday, just like *The Long Dream*, was written during Wright's self – imposed exile in Europe, where he lived until his death in 1960. These two novels published when he was an expatriate in France were either dismissed or ignored by critics as being timid in handling volatile matters and being pompous.

The last African American author of the post World War II period of "anomalous" literature is James Baldwin. Baldwin's *Giovanni's Room* (1956), a novel combining "racial expatriation" with "geographical expatriation" was written during Baldwin's stay in Paris. Just like his precursor Richard Wright, change of location and the preference to live in Europe, gave Baldwin a space of freedom to write about different problems other than which was characteristically, and constrainingly so, referred to as "the Negro problem" (Berger, 1997: 281-94). Furthermore, the erasure of blackness enabled him to address more personal and complex issues of gender, sexuality, and subjectivity which would not be reduced to the singularity of "the Negro problem." In other words, and in a wider scope, the displacement of racial and national identities were crucial for Baldwin to reposition himself to question masculinity and nationalism of the Cold War era. *Giovanni's Room*, which was rejected by his publisher, appeared during the McCarthyism years of male chauvinism and fanatical patriotism. Stephen Whitfield, on the McCarthy era, describes the cultural milieu as a regime "which prescribed that men and women were housewives....and the overriding fear of [an] American parent was that a son should become a 'sissie'" (Whitfield, 1990: 43).

David's, a white American living in France, monologue opens up the narrative in a Lacanian moment of narcissistic self-contemplation. Standing before a mirror in his apartment, illuminated by the first rays of the morning sun, David muses over his tall figure.

> My reflection is tall, perhaps rather like an arrow, my blond hair gleams. My face is like a face you have seen many times. My ancestors conquered a continent, pushing across death-laden plains, until they came to an ocean which faced away from Europe into a darker past (Baldwin, 2013: 4).

The opening chapter and the very first sentences of the novel, David, in his dilemma fused with the dark history of his ancestors and with the dark consequences of his own deeds, comes to be deadlocked and resolved in the epiphanic moment before the mirror, not after his voyage to another continent but after his crossing of the Atlantic, the infamous passage of the slave trade. Like his ancestors, whose violent acts of conquering and pillage turned the continent of Americas into a bloodbath, David's violations of the moral norms also wreaks havoc and destruction on those closest to him. By evoking a white American's history in the above given manner, and by presenting his dilemmas alongside his ancestors, Wright in *Giovanni's Room* offers a critique of not only the United States, the country's bloody origins, but of masculinity crazed warmongers of the McCarthy era.

After the prolific years of the postwar in the production of "raceless" literature, the literary interest in white tales from black authors abated to a certain degree. Samuel R. Delany, Toni Morrison, and Octavia E. Butler are the authors of the contemporary period after 1965. Out of these three names, Toni Morrison and her short story "Recitatif" (1983), come to the fore. Morrison's first and last short story, "Recitatif," while stressing the significance of gender and sexuality in the formation of both black and white subjectivities, also accentuates the importance of defying "racial-realist ideologies central to the Black Aesthetic..." (Jarrett, 2006: 382). "Recitatif" keeps track of two main characters, Twyla and Roberta, for about three decades. Their story begins at an orphanage school (St. Bonaventure), and the two girls' (whose racial identities are hard to identify) friendship is analyzed as the bond which both strenghtens their respective cultural and racial differences and at times weakens them. The reason why identification of one race against the other is made difficult can be found in Morrison's intention to muddle the racial categorizations that would eventually see to the freedom of language from racial bonds. Morrison elaborates this idea in *Playing in the Dark*, and "Recitatif" is her attempt to "free up the language from its sometimes sinister, frequently lazy, almost always predictable employment of racially informed and determined

chains." In that regard, "Recitatif" is the story of "an experiment in the removal of all racial codes from a narrative about two characters of different races for whom racial identity is crucial" (Morrison, 1993: xi).

The "anomalous" works, or works egressing from the tradition and the expectation that African American intellectuals should be concerned with the problems of the black communities, are numerous and difficult to categorize and unite under a common theme. From racial passing, intemperance, and class to women's clothing, female sexuality, the morals of modernity, homosexuality and linguistics, African American authors addressed not a singular issue that was reducible to the essentialist racial viewpoint, but various and interconnected issues that would face the whole society regardless of racially assumed categories. James Baldwin in an essay titled "Here Be Dragons" (1985), underlined such dialectic and dialogic characteristic of identity formation in the United States.

> [E]ach of us, helplessly and forever, contains the other – male in female, female in male, white in black and black in white. We are part of each other (Baldwin, 1985: 690).

Though the African American authors, who shied away from being overwhelmed by the "Negro problem," set their minds to emphasize different issues in their works, an underlying theme that seems to traverse the literary works mentioned in the preceding pages could be also identified. At the heart of the complexities attributed to the so called natural relationships of gender, class, race, and sexuality can be found the family ideal promulgated by the state. Frank J. Webb's novel The *Garies and Their Friends*, a fairytale of race mixing, and cherished friendship between a white and a black family in Philadelphia is cut short by the extralegal hand of the state, that is by the mob acting as the *de facto* extension of an ideology determined to keep bloodlines pure. In fact, in the United States, as Brackette F. Williams claims, the flow of blood is somehow equated with the inheritance of rights, rights to land, property, and eventually to certain privileges. (Williams, 1995). Francis Ellen W. Harper's *Sowing and Reaping: A Temperance Story* is likewise concerned with the family paradigm, or rather keeping the

family ties intact in the face of excessive consumption of alcohol. For Paul Laurance Dunbar, Nella Larsen and Jean Toomer family theme was not the primary concern as they were interested in class, women's freedom movement against patriarchy, and political, national identities. If the notion that nationhood is ultimately family membership writ large is true, the authors' interests in issues other than family might also be seen as attempts at national integration or defiance of the patriarchal ideology which sees itself as the head of the great family called the United States. Zora Neale Hurston's *Seraph,* whose protagonist Arvay is consumed by her sexual desires and senses of guilt, is a direct take on the aporias of marriage and start of a family. Richard Wright's *Savage Holiday* likewise deals with the family paradigm for the protagonist Erskine Fowler's broken family history comes back to haunt him to commit a terrible murder. In *Giovanni's Room*, we come across the same face off with the family history, even dating back to the ancestors for a few centuries past. Twyla and Roberta of the "Recitatif" become friends through their mutual complaints of the lack of attention they receive from their mothers.

Thus compressed into a descriptive paragraph, the attempt to sketch an adequate account of the works written by African American authors on white subjects may, especially on the theme of family, come short in dealing with the complexities raised by the works cited in the previous pages. However, it is the contention and claim of this chapter that even if the African American authors were thought to be straying off the topic of "Negro problem," the evasion of the problem was indeed its genuine solution. If race, or racism is the complication incorporating political, national, social, and sexual issues, isolating the problem in the confines of a monolithic approach may not help towards its resolution but its further complexity. In the political terminology identifying the troubles of a so called minority group and grouping them under the descriptive title of a/the problem might prove to be a feasible first step for the solution within the limits of democracy, yet, such undertaking, no matter how well-intentioned it should be, tends to overlook the fact that for something to deserve the entitlement of a problem, not one but (at least) two adressees are needed. The "anomalous" or

"transgressive" works are actually doing that, that is, they are focused on the other end of the problem: white, Euro American society. In this regard, African American perceptions on the center of whiteness could be said to be antidotal, in the sense that – and in W.E.B. DuBois's words – Anglo Americans might realize that they are just human beings with deficient subjective formations just like the rest of the U.S. society.

> I see in and through them. I view them from unusual points of vantage. Not as a foreigner do I come, for I am native, not foreign, bone of their thought and flesh of their language….My word is to them mere bitterness and my soul, pessimism. And yet as they preach and strut and shout and threaten, crouching as they clutch at rags of facts and fancies to hide their nakedness, they go twisting, flying by my tired eyes and I see them ever stripped—ugly, human (W.E.B. DuBois, 1999: 17).

Supplementing DuBois's words that white Americans anxiously try to hide their split identities and ignore the fact that black Americans might know their souls even better than they do, Ralph Ellison adds that since the dawn of the nation, whites have suffered from "a deep inner uncertainty as to who they really are." And to overcome this uncertainty in their subjective formations, Ellison, contrary to DuBois's claim of ignorance, contends that whites have seized upon the presence of black Americans to "use them as a marker, a symbol of limits, a metaphor for the 'outsider'" (Ellison, 1970). Richard Wright also claims that "the Negro is America's metaphor" (Wright, 1978: 74), which, he thinks, accentuates the incongruous, insufficiently examined, racist dimension of American democracy. [5] Toni Morrison's evocation of metaphor as the recent tendency in race relations, and the Anglo American writers' deployment of blackness to explore the self-doubts of the white identity, is co-opted by African American writers to examine the internal and external boundaries of gender, sexuality and nationhood by repositioning and assuming a location of radical otherness. The literal meaning of the word metaphor in ancient Greek is 'carrying from one place to another,' and the rough

[5] The conflation of race (rather blackness) and metaphor continues to occupy a significant place in the national discourse of the country. After Obama's election the newspapers referred to his Christian and Islamic roots and flattered the president as the very embodiment of the "melting pot" metaphor, capable of bridging the sociocultural gaps at the national and international levels. For the related news and analysis, please see the link accessed on June 6, 2015: http://adanewmedia.org/2015/01/issue6-rambukkana/

definition of the word would be seeing something in terms of something else. As psychoanalysis is the assertive methodology of the present dissertation, it should prove useful to introduce a few words on metaphor from the psychoanalytic perception. Sigmund Freud is the first psychoanalyst to use, or rather inspired by it, the concept in his texts on dream symbolism in the form of condensation and displacement. Condensation and displacement are the Freudian dream processes bringing together disparate elements and emotions in the dream thoughts. In the most rudimentary interpretation of Freud's analyses of dreams, two opposite feelings such as apprehension and contentment could be found side by side in the same dream thought thanks to the substitutive characteristic of metaphor. For Jacques Lacan's algorithm of

meaning, metaphor occupies a substantial place as Lacan thinks that signification, the production of meaning, is made possible by metaphor. Metaphor in the algorithm enables the passage of the signifier into the signified thus making the creation of a new signified possible. It establishes a metaphorical connection, if you will, between the past and the present and suggests that metaphor generates reciprocal changes within the present and the past components. The use of psychoanalytic version of metaphor might especially prove useful in the analysis of the "anomalous" works as they deal not with the one-sided process of signification, fixed in the homogenous symbols of race, but with the bilateral process in which different, heterogeneous and reciprocal literary agents come into play.

Utilizing the metaphoric move (reversing the tendency of the Euro American authors to use the black characters as the screen), and the metaphoric approach to the so called "Negro problem," the present chapter focuses on two "anomalous" literary works by Richard Wright and Toni Morrison. Richard Wright's novel *Savage Holiday*, specifically, the protagonist Erskine Fowler's traumatic childhood, and its suppressed transference into his maturity manifested in the forms of infanticide and matricide will be the main topics to be discussed in the following pages. The short story "Recitatif" by Toni Morrison, and the narrative of the two friends, Twyla and Roberta (whose lives

coincide and differ on the issues of motherhood, race, and class) will be analyzed in light of the perceptions on the institution of family in the United States**.** In short, the present chapter attempts to comprehend the authors' claims of deconstructing the ideological, metaphorical fulcrum upon which white identities hinge and from which those identities speak and mandate the social reality of the country. Yet, in the process of identifying deconstructive elements in the texts, which would unhinge the central, white supremacist seat of power, the concerns, posited as the concerns of the authors, whether some new paradigms of race relations are emerging and reinforcing the seat of power not exclusively painted white will also be addressed. [6]

[6] After the September 11, 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center, a turning point in the nation's history, it is possible to see some shifts in the cognitive, racial mapping of United States. On the metaphoric dimension of the event, Marc Redfield's reading it as a "name-date," a symbol reducing the 'truths' of the event to a numerical idiom in the form of "9/11" can be given as a fine example of analysis. M. Redfield, "Virtual Trauma: The Idiom of 9/11" (2007). Following the attacks, the racial cartography of the country has not changed overnight for the racist slurs such as "sand nigger," and "camel driver" have long been in use in the nation's racial lexicon. After the event, however, the biological aspect of associating and condemning people with darker complexions as inferior has taken a different turn, and racism deployed along cultural and religious lines aimed to create the Muslim Other, introducing a third dimension into the long established black versus white dichotomy.

3.1 *Savage Holiday*: A Story of Infanticide and Matricide

…in the very nature of a holiday there is excess; the holiday mood is brought about by the release of what is forbidden.

-Freud's *Totem and Taboo*

There is nothing complicated about the plot of Richard Wright's novel *Savage Holiday*. The story revolves around 43-year-old Erskine Fowler, who is forced to retire from his job after working for Longevity Life Insurance Company for 30 years. Erskine, as we learn, is quite successful in the insurance agent job, in sniffing out the fishy testimonials of the insurance holders. Yet, his position, on which Erskine prides himself, is taken away after the manager decides to make room for his son, keen on taking over Erskine's job. Fowler, however, takes his forced retirement hard as the company means everything to him, standing in for his family, his friends, his past and future, basically for his reason to exist. After his discharge, Fowler finds himself in the abyss of freedom, not knowing what to do with himself and with the spare time on his hands. He is economically sound though as he receives a considerable amount of compensation after leaving the job. In one of those moments when he does not know what to do with himself, Erskine Fowler, torn between the simple yet impossible to make decisions of taking a shower, preparing a Sunday breakfast or picking up the Sunday paper left on his doorstep, makes a terrible mistake. In a scene freighted with naturalistic elements, elements that seal the fate of the character in a predetermined twist, Fowler tries to pick up the paper naked and the door snaps shut in his face. Naked, and anxious that a resident might see him in his shameful condition, Fowler makes a hasty decision. Instead of ringing the door of the porter for the extra keys, Fowler decides to enter his flat through the bathroom window, for which he has to climb through the balcony on which, as the story goes, his neighbor Mable's son Tony happens to be playing. Tony, a silent and a withdrawn kid, seeing Fowler's naked, hairy body panics and falls to his death from the balcony ten floors down. Before the sense of guilt sinks in and he is consumed by the pangs of remorse, Erskine thinks

out a solution to save his skin. First, he is resolved to make up a credible story that would clear the doubts of the residents and the police. After all, he is a respectable white man, a frequent observer of the Church service, and an esteemed member of the congregation. Second, he decides to court the company of Mabel Blake, suffering mother and a widow, not out of his pity, but out of his curiosity to find out whether she heard or saw him while he was climbing through the balcony. In fact, Tony's mother Mabel was asleep during the whole unintentional murder scene, probably blacked out from the late night heavy drinking and hustling. Erskine Fowler's plan works out for a while for no one doubts his testimony and Mabel seems to trust him. As the story unfolds, however, the turn of the events gets worse for Fowler. He receives mysterious phone calls, the person at the other end of the line telling him that he/she knew his big secret. And his relationship with Mabel gets more complicated for his initial feelings of spying on her give their place to an emotion of love mixed with a raging hate. It may not sound unlikely that Erskine falls in love Mabel in the process as he proposes to marry the woman. Yet, his love is somehow crooked and morbid as he accuses Mabel, not himself, for Tony's death and is infuriated that Mabel readily accepts the attention of other men. Mabel's lax attitude and "immoral" life eventually drives Erskine mad, what ultimately compels him to murder Mabel, however, comes when he learns that Mabel knew all along that it was he who was responsible for Tony's death. Up until this point in the story, nothing seems particularly interesting and profound, but as Erskine stabs Mabel several times in the kitchen and revels in the pool of blood, we learn that killing Mabel is also an act of killing his Mother, who just like Mabel, lived a promiscuous life and never returned his son's love. After the murder, Erskine turns himself in to the police and confesses the murder. However, despite the police officer's insistent question if there was anything else he wanted to confess, he dissembles the truth about Tony's death and thus the novel ends.

Savage Holiday, just like Richard Wright's latest novels published before his death, came under severe criticism on the grounds that the novel was feeble in handling the issues it claimed to portray. That is to say, Wright came short of treating the

dilemmas of the Western modernity in their complex, interwoven structures and offered instead a shallow tale of Freudian melodrama. The keynote address of the criticism, however, was on account of the presence of a white protagonist. Yoshinobu Hakutani believes that the reason why *Savage Holiday* has not been so popular among the literary critics is Wright's "exclusive treatment of white characters and his concern with nonracial matters" (Hakutani, 1982: 15). In an interview on *Savage Holiday*, Wright supported Hakutani's claims to the extent that it was indeed an "exclusive treatment" of whites in the United States, not exclusive enough though to provide a space of concern that would include the colored citizens as well:

> Having left America and having been living for some time in France, I have become concerned about the historical roots and the emotional problems of western whites which make them aggressive toward colored peoples.... I was looking for explanations of the psychological reactions of whites.... In this novel, I have attempted to deal with what I consider as the most important problem white people have to face: their moral dilemma (qtd. in Barthes, 1993: 167).

In another interview with Georges Charbonnier, Wright goes deeper into the analysis of the problem "I picked a white American businessman to attempt a demonstration about a universal problem...the problem of freedom" (qtd. in Charbonnier, 1993: 236). By positing the problem of freedom as universal and by associating such problem with a white American businessman, Wright makes his intentions clear in writing his only white novel. That is to say, as he later remarks, he is anxious to publicize *Savage Holiday* as white and at least make sure that "people will read this in a light of saying that this is Negro writing about whites" (qtd. in Fabre, *Unfinished*, 1993: 376). Wright's concern to create a race neutral text, and do away with racial complications regarding the "universal problem" of freedom, seem to hold sway during the early years of the novel, as initial criticism does not address any racial issue in the novel. The novel's insistent focus on whiteness and Erskine Fowler's perpetual anxiety of losing the privileges and protection afforded by his race, however, inform against the author's claim of crafting a "raceless" text. More recent critics point out to this aspect of the

novel, as Laura Dubek, for example, sees *Savage Holiday* to be a critique of "the glorification of white marriage and motherhood" in postwar America (Dubek, 2008: 595). Despite Wright's avowed intentions to write a "completely non-racial" novel dealing only with "the crime" (Fabre, *Unfinished*, 1993: 379), it might not sound erroneous to claim that he fails in his attempt and even further contend that (somehow speculatively) Wright equates race not with whiteness but with blackness. Thus, against the grain, and against the author's intentions, the present chapter intends to read *Savage Holiday* as a racial novel in an attempt to make explicit the things that the text does not say and author prefers to hide.

Erskine Fowler's problem of freedom, his moral predicament and the discrepancy between his belief in strict morality and his immoral acts, are generally read by the critics as the conflict and resolution of the Oedipus complex. J.F. Gounard and Beverley Roberts Gounard, besides stating the obvious fact about the novel that "*Savage Holiday* is Richard Wright's only nonracial novel" (J.F., R. Gounard, 1979: 344), they also analyze the novel from a Freudian perspective in the Oedipal conflict between Fowler and his mother. John Vassilowitch focuses on the "paradoxical connection between male sexual desire...and female degradation... [that] has its counterpart in Erskine's Oedipal fantasies about Mabel" (Vassilowitch , 1981:207). John M. Reilly reads the novel as an exciting story and claims that it "omits racial conflict because its narrative scope is...restricted to the singular pattern of one man's Oedipal complex" (Reilly, 1977:218). Michel Fabre's extensive analysis of the novel is somehow different from the other critics as Fabre portrays Fowler as "a psychopathic murderer" (Fabre, 1993:376). Whether it is a psychoanalytic exploration of Fowler's Oedipal predicament with his mother compelling him to murder Mabel, who he thinks is the replica of his deceased mother, or profiling Fowler as a mentally unbalanced character, the novel cannot help but invite a psychoanalytic reading. Before proceeding to the in-depth analysis of the novel from the psychoanalytical perspective, a true story of murder (the trajectory of which is somewhat reminiscent of Erskine's fictional one that kept the United States public quite busy in 1994 and for the next two decades) should also be

addressed as the case spiraled into a racial battleground in 1990s. Orenthal James Simpson, or O.J. Simpson as he was came to be known, was a famous NFL (National Football League) player from 1969 to 1985. Simpson was indeed a renowned athlete for his record breaking performances in the league and was eventually named as a Pro-Football Hall of Fame in 1985. Simpson led a luxurious life under the spotlights of the media, and his performances were widely broadcast in the country. In 1994, however, he was the subject of a different publicity as Simpson's ex-wife Nicole Brown Simpson and Ronald Goldman were stabbed to death whose bodies were found just outside the residence of Nicole Brown. Eventually, O.J. Simpson was identified as the sole suspect of the crimes and was arrested hours later. In a controversial criminal trial, also receiving international attention, O.J. Simpson was eventually acquitted of the crimes yet the controversy carried on for years to come. Currently, Simpson is in jail, serving out his 33 years imprisonment on charges of felony, armed robbery and kidnapping which he was alleged to have committed in 2008. The murders of Nicole Brown and Ronald Goldman, on first glance, can be seen like any other homicide cases, but inductee's being a famous athlete was one of the main causes for the wide publicity of the event at least not its primary motivation. O.J. Simpson is an African American, his ex-wife Nicole Brown and Ronald Goldman, on the other hand, were white. The homicide was thought to have been committed in a fit of jealousy and due to the infidelity of Nicole Brown. What lined African Americans against the white public regarding O.J. Simpson's case, however, was the media portrayal of the event for the gargantuan aspect of the whole case and its employed language depended on the stereotypical depiction of the African American 'criminal.' For Toni Morrison, what was disturbing about the whole case's publicization was the dichotomous nature of differentiating between "planned" versus "unplanned," "the subtle mind" against "mindlessness" motives of the crimes, the categorizations which pointed in the direction of racial configurations. Morrison wonders if it would different – interestingly so – if the culprit was identified as raceless: "…given the claims of race as a blinding force for the defendant and the jury, it would be interesting and possibly revealing to try to imagine

an un-raced figure executing the murders" (Morrison, 2010: 10). The official story surrounding the halo of O.J. Simpson's case has thrown the famous athlete into the pit of racial representations, his individual story of undergoing a murder trial and acquittal from the crime has been left in the dark. Indeed, once more citing Morrison's words regarding the race laden characteristic of the case, its larger than discretely individual structure, should also be addressed. For Morrison, almost overnight, O.J. Simpson became the representative of "the whole race needing correction, incarceration, censoring, silencing; the race that needs its civil rights disassembled; the race that is sign and symbol of domestic violence…" (*Ibid*., 27). In a manner to support and exemplify her claim in *Playing in the Dark* that race as metaphor has become a more dangerous point of reference than biological one, Morrison asserts that the attack, directed from the person of Simpson to all African Americans "is the consequence and function of official stories: to impose the will of a dominant culture. It is *Birth of a Nation* writ large—menacingly and pointedly for the 'hood" (*Ibid*.).

Justifying Morrison's assertion that the racial battleground has evolved into literary representations, American newspapers and television channels put on the airs of a literary authority comparing Simpson's case to Shakespeare's Othello and to Wright's Bigger Thomas character in *Native Son* (Reed, 2010). The unrelenting references to Nicole's murder and the comparisons made to Desdemona pointed in the direction of Othello Syndrome, a delusional jealousy that consequently gripped and consumed Simpson in its morbid grasp. However, the references were not only Shakespearean in nature, but that of a rich, slave owner:

> From news reports, the doctor, Dr. Poussaint, determined that Simpson "felt he owned Nicole like a piece of chattel" and, "in a bizarre twist," may have seen his white wife "as a rebellious slave who needed to be executed" (duCille, 2010: 344 - 45).

When Othello comparison did not suffice, the media turned to Bigger Thomas. On the surface, Simpson and Thomas have nothing in common. Bigger Thomas's poverty

stricken life, spent in the slums of Chicago is somehow similar to Simpson's humble beginning. Yet Simpson's college education and later rich life thanks to his bright career in football cannot be held similar to Thomas's destitute life. In the trial of Thomas as in the Simpson, media acted as the representative of the police and of the prosecution, agitating the public with sensational and gore filled stories unfavorable to the defendant. Like Bigger Thomas's, Simpson's case was also used, once again by the media, to serve as an excuse to terrorize and criminalize entire African American population. The questions of violence, class, race, capitalism, equality under the law, constitutional rights came into the fray during O.J. Simpson's trial. Yet it eventually boiled down to the question after all the smoke cleared off the case: Did he really do it? The answer did not carry any additional meaning to it, yet in time, as Morrison believed, it became a "ploy, disguised as a disinterested query that really asks, Are "they" guilty or innocent? "They" meaning we blacks, those blacks, we men, those men. Are "they" getting away with murder?" (Morrison, 2010: 23). O.J. Simpson's case was not treated as a discrete event, one that could befall on anyone, because he was a big football star, more than that as Morrison pointed out (as he was portrayed in the media) he was an African American capable of brutal and mindless deeds just like Bigger Thomas. Interestingly, before the murders, and during the years when the athlete was in his prime, he referred to himself in the third-person manner, and called himself a man, rather than an African American. He was glad to be regarded, he told reporters, to be reckoned as "colorless" by the American public, and gave the Hertz commercials as proofs of his transcending the color line. [7] After the murders though, he was deliberately 'darkened' by the U.S. media, as the cover of the *Time* magazine intentionally portrayed Simpson's face two shades darker than its original look.[8] In an attempt to understand the shifts in Simpson saga from racial crossover to overt racism, Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw identifies the reason

[7] The Hertz Corporation is an American car rental company with franchises in 145 countries around the world. In 1970s, the company generally hired black athletes in its advertisements, and O.J. Simpson became a household name through Hertz commercials.

[8] On the racialized side of the case, the *Time* magazine's arts curator Thelma Golden agreed that "if Nicole had been black, this case would have been on a cover of Jet magazine and not much more." (qtd. in Crenshaw, "Color Blind," 131). (*Jet* magazine was an American weekly marketed mainly for African American readers).

of the changes as follows: "In a society dominated by property, appetites, and family-in-jeopardy stories, race should disappear, but in a racialized society, concepts like property, appetites, and the family in jeopardy have racial implications" (Crenshaw, 2010: 128). Crenshaw's thoughts on why the public turned to racialize Simpson should also explain the reason why the media made references to black literary characters in explicating the case. Within this context, it is somehow understandable the choice of Bigger over Erskine, and in likening Simpson's case to its racial counterpart. Yet, the similarities as well as differences between the two racially different protagonists from the same author should be marked out.

Erskine Fowler may not fit in the murderer profile Wright sketched for Thomas. In fact, the differences between the two characters are quite obvious except one similarity: the hand of fate, or the factor of predestination causes quite radical changes in the lives of both characters. Erskine's getting caught naked in the hallway of his apartment, and ensuing events spiraling into the deaths of Tony and Mabel, Bigger's fear of getting caught with drunken Mary in his arms and his effort to keep her silent, and thus accidentally choking her to death, could be said to be two analogous fates decided by the forces beyond the characters' control. Even though the death of Mary is accidental, and beyond the grasp of Bigger's willpower, the murder gives Thomas a sense of purpose and an identity. Until the murder, we learn that Bigger's life and his choices are dictated by others, and the murder provides him with a chance to take his fate into his hands even though such sense of freedom lasts for a short time. Bigger's lawyer, Boris Max, in defense of his client, draws attention to the inner turmoil of the young African Americans caused by the powerlessness induced in them by the society. And the pent up tension of this turmoil, according to the lawyer, is often released in acts of crime for which the American society is to blame. On the other hand, Fowler's murders, (one accidental, the other intentional) are driven by the endless possibilities he faces in the abyss of his freedom. Like Bigger's, Erskine's life is subjected to dictation by others, his choices decided and handed to him by his superiors in the company**.** Yet, unlike the protagonist of the *Native Son*, Erskine does not wish to be rid of such system

of domination constricting his freedom, for he fears that freedom without the tight grasp of his company could bring about his demise, which, indeed comes to pass as we read into the story.[9] Erskine Fowler's self-destructive tendencies, his anguish of dragging the congealed *pastness* of his being to the twilight of his future, are characterized by the unresolved conflicts buried in his past, in his family history. In this regard, the conjecture Bigger's lawyer signals out and projects as the crime of the American society might hold true for Erskine Fowler as well. In other words, for the acts of homicide, not Fowler but the U.S. public should be held accountable. As we read into *Savage Holiday*, however, Erskine Fowler turns out to be sole instigator of the crimes, namely, he occupies the position of both the judge and the condemned, the prosecutor and the culprit. At this point there are two simple questions which need to be raised whose answers may not prove to be given easily: Could the U.S. society be held accountable for Erskine's crimes just as Bigger's? If the answer is affirmative, to what extent and in which circumstances Erskine's murders might be placed within the societal constellation of the white America?

[9] Freedom is posited as a problem, a deadlock, by numerous philosophers from Kierkegaard, Schelling, Heidegger, and Sartre. The philosophers generally distinguished between the fear of freedom and the anguish in the face of freedom. Fear is the fear in the presence of other beings in the world, envisaging a situation as acting on the subject externally whereas anguish is the anxiety before oneself, the subject acting (or, unable to act) on the situation internally. Freedom, whether in fear or in anguish, also implies destruction: "In freedom the human being is his own past (as also his own future) in the form of nihilation" (Sartre, 2003: 53). Such annihilative tendencies after being overwhelmed by one's freedom may suit the character of Erskine Fowler. However, it is also proper to mention the deterministic side to the discussion of freedom whether human beings are indeed free from the limits and forces imposed upon will and therefore are able to choose freely, or they are bound by conditions (physical features of having brown/blue eyes, white/black skins) that would shackle the free will and ultimately decide the outcome of the individual choices a person thinks she/he is making voluntarily. Just like the genetic composition of the individual over which she/he has no power, determinist approach also posits social conditions (family and culture) as deterministic which regulate the individual's mode of existence and give hue to his way of thinking and acting. Taking the naturalistic and deterministic elements of the novel *Savage Holiday* into account, Erskine Fowler's annihilative acts should be thought of in terms of such deterministic approach to freedom, which places the individual acts –whether good or bad, not on the side of the subject but on the side of the biological, social and cultural forces that would determine the causes and the effects of the personal choices.

In one of New York's most luxurious and largest hotels, the canopy decorated in gilded yellow, red, and black colors exhibits the eye-catching banner:

THE LONGEVITY LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY, INC.

GIRDS THE WORLD AND BRINGS

Security to You and Your Survivors

Tonight We Tender a Fond

HAIL AND FAREWELL

to

ERSKINE FOWLER

FOR THIRTY YEARS OF EXEMPLARY SERVICE AND DEVOTION

(*Savage Holiday*, 11).

One of the prominent members of the company is cheered on for a preliminary talk and he mentions the family-like structure of the company, and he commends Erskine for his ceaseless loyalty to the company. Then, he asks Erskine to replace him on the pulpit to address the colleagues. A six footer man with bushy hair and brown eyes raises awkwardly from his seat, touching, seeking the security of the four pencils in his coat's jacket. The voice on the pulpit keeps on his showers of praise and asks for a round of applause for the faithful servant of the trust. Amidst the cheers of the co-workers, and with moist eyes, Erskine eventually ascends the stairs for a farewell speech.

> As our great President [Abraham Lincoln] has so often pointed out, and I heartily agree with him, millions of people depend upon us for their welfare, come to us in their bereavement, and seek us out in their hope…That's not business; that's *faith!* (*Ibid*., 17).

For Erskine's honorary service, and somehow soulful address, the employees of the company begin to chant in unison the lyrics "For he's a jolly good fellow…," then Mr. Warren, the manager, takes the central stage and at Mr. Warren's signal all festive tables are hastily cleared and Fowler, swallowing his defeat, watches on the sidelines. At the age of 43, Erskine finds himself in the make-believe game of Warren who is keen on crushing Fowler in the machinery of falsehood, and once again Erskine touches the four pencils in his jacket pocket, to reassure him of the emotional stability of his being. Tightly grasping the square box in his palm, a memento of his successful deeds for the company, he knows, he cannot escape the burden of his past life, which he cannot know and master. To be tossed away from the Longevity life in such fashion touches Erskine Fowler deeply for his past, present and future are interwoven with the company. In fact not only the company but the job itself is what Erskine associates with his life.

> Insurance was life itself; insurance was human nature in the raw trying to hide itself; insurance was instinctively and intuitively knowing that man was essentially a venal, deluded, and greedy animal… (*Ibid*.,28).

Besides conferring on him the recognition of his fellow workers, and providing him with his livelihood, the work has one more crucial, or the most crucial, aspect for him. The work at Longevity life alienated Erskine from a part of himself he never wanted to know and acknowledge. He willingly locked himself up in the prison cage of labor, and Longevity Life ensured that his incarcerated dark part would not come free and drag Erskine to the court of his conscience. Now that he tasted freedom for the first time in his life, he had to become his own jailor, to erect walls and to shut the threatening feelings and desires in. On the first day of his new life, Erskine wakes up with the *bang bang* sounds coming from the other side of his bedroom wall. He mutters a sentence of annoyance and then his thoughts cluster on Tony, Mrs. Blake's son who pokes Erskine out of his sleep with the rumble he makes. Just like Tony, he reminisces, he was a lonely child without friends and would play by himself and there was no mother to look after him either. Erskine Fowler had no memory of his father who died when he was three years old, it was his mother he remembered, rather her laughter when she was

surrounded by the men who came and went. Then on one cold winter day, he was eight years old at the time, his mother was arrested and put behind bars for disorderly conduct and Aunt Tillie came down from New York to fetch him. He had a difficult childhood, scorn of other children, and Erskine laying on his bed at 7:30 in the morning, gulped down a dark impulse: whether those men ought to be killed or his mother? Staving off his dark thoughts, he gets up, determined to plan his first day of freedom efficiently. First he plans to prepare an opulent breakfast, then he changes his mind and decides to take a shower and gets undressed, just as he is about to step into the shower he hears the door bell and surmises that the Sunday paper is left on his doorstep. Finally deciding on picking up the paper, he walks up to the door naked and just then a breeze shuts the door in his face. With a bank account of forty thousand dollars in cash, investments worth more than one hundred thousand dollars in securities, a member of Rotary, a thirty-second degree Mason, yet Erskine Fowler stands shamefully naked in the hallway. In a state of frenzy and anxiety, he attempts to make a logical move, to go get the porter for the extra keys to his apartment, after all it would be better to explain his shameful condition to one person than all the residents of the apartment. As he steps in the elevator and descends towards the porter's flat, just then he hears the voices of two teenage girls, approaching to the elevator door. Another surge of anxiety floats over him and he stops the elevator just on time to ascend back to the eleventh floor. Brushing the rivulets of perspiration from his forehead, he takes a deep breath of brief relief. Surmising that there is no other option left but to climb through the balcony to his flat's bathroom window, he rushes to the balcony lit by the dazzling rays of the bright morning sun. At this juncture in the plot, Richard Wright distorts Erskine's human features and portrays him like a wild beast.

> …he went tumbling forward on his face, his long, hairy arms flaying the air rapaciously, like the paws of a huge beast clutching for something to devour, to rend to pieces…He steadied himself partially by clawing at the brick wall and then he saw, in one swift, sweeping glance, little Tony's tricycle over which he had tripped and fallen… (*Ibid*., 52).

Tony, seeing Erskine's nonhuman body, recoils with horror and starts to back up towards the rail. Erskine, fearing and sensing's Tony's imminent fall, reaches out his hand to save him yet the gesture only makes already frightened child more frantic and pushing his tiny body against the derailed rail, Tony falls to his death ten floors down. Erskine is first seized by pangs of guilt and then immediately his thoughts turn to his own survival. Surely, the police would investigate the case and he just could not tell them that he was trapped naked in the hallway, had to climb through the balcony, and poor Tony taking fright, accidentally fell off the rail. It was an objectively true story, but who would believe him? Besides, his story would appear next day in the *Daily News*, and the *Mirro*r as a story of perversion for the talk of the day was on "queers" and suppressed sexual desires.

> Yes; these days everybody was talking about "complexes" and the "unconscious"; and a man called Freud (which always reminded him of *fraud!*) was making people believe that the most fantastic things could happen to people's feelings. Why, they'd say that he'd gone *deliberately* on to that balcony like that, nude… (*Ibid*., 61).

Eventually, Erskine comes up with a story, the story of ignorance as to what had happened to the poor Tony. He would display feelings of sympathy and empathy for the police, the residents and the Mrs. Blake to see and believe in him. They all take his words to be true and find no ground to suspect him for he is a respectable, white, middle class citizen seemingly following the rules and norms set by the society and by the law. His job as insurance agent, in revealing the lies of the people, as people talked much more than they could handle, worked to his advantage for the first time. All he had to do was to keep quiet and join in the congregation of bereaving neighbors. Yet, Erskine knew too well that he had added a dark dimension to his already dark part of him he was struggling to lock in. Part two, titled "Ambush" opens with the scene, Erskine, alone, and brooding over the events of the previous day. He and Tony had a good relationship, the child admired him even, but why did he go into such panic? Erskine realized that a child's mind was an odd wonderland, exaggerating what could be taken as normal in adult life as full of monsters, and he was naked and perspiring, perhaps that was why

Tony was sent reeling. Never before in Erskine's life had he known the power of his emotions, indeed he lived in the illusion that he had no feelings.

> Now he felt ambushed, anchored in a sea of anxiety, because he was tremblingly conscious of all of his buried demons stirring and striving for the light of day (*Ibid*., 80).

To weigh down the burden on his soul, Erskine clutches at the Bible and concentrates on his Mount Ararat Sunday School lesson he is used to teach at his church. Soon as he finds himself in the company of the fellow church-goers, he declares he is contented to find himself at home, at "God's eternal family" (*Ibid*.,85). He quotes verses from the book of Matthew, 12: 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, and highlights the parts regarding the significance of building up and maintaining a family. Jesus stands on the top of a hill addressing his flock and behold, below him his mother and brethren stand, wishing to speak with him. A voice arises out of the flock and warns God's son that his family is eager to break words with him, and Joshua of Nazareth gives the famous answer: who is my mother and brethren? Mother, reach out your hand, this is your son, brother reach out your hand this is your mother. As Erskine continues to speak, his soul becomes inflamed and the more he preaches on, the more he believes in the strength of the words he utters. He imagines himself to be God's avenging whip, watching Justice sway her scales, and flogs that lost woman (Mabel Blake) to her senses. In other words, he points the way to truth, to "a sign that no man can possibly overlook! What is that sign? THE FAMILY!" (*Ibid*., 87). The issue of family occupies a significant part of *Savage Holiday* as the opening sequence of the novel offers a disguised oedipal drama just as the church sequence does. His banishment from the Longevity Life Insurance Company, to which Erskine has paid his tributes from the puberty onwards - is his first taste of being excluded from the family run by a patriarch. Indeed, the ceremony at the Longevity life in which Erskine is replaced by the manager's younger son is set as an erotic ritual, an old member of the family is expulsed, still wanted around the family though, for the up and coming new member so as to ensure the reproductive vitality of the company. Longevity Life is the ground of eros as it "insures" life and functions just as Freud

describes the working of Eros, "whose purpose is to combine single human individuals, and after that families, then races, peoples and nations, into one great unity, the unity of mankind" (Freud, 1995: 755). After his excommunication from the adoptive family of Longevity Life, Erskine finds an ersatz one in Mount Ararat Baptist Church. The difference between the two is that in the former circle he is in the role of an adopted son, for he devotes his life to the company from his puberty years until the age of 43, and in the latter he is the self-proclaimed patriarch of the aging middle class congregation. Despite his inspiring sermon on the importance of family bonds, his thoughts cannot help but seduced by the persistent image of Mrs. Mabel Blake's voluptuous body. His sexual craving for Mabel was something new and recent, his scorn of her immoral ways of living though, accepting various men into her bedroom and engaging in sexual affairs, went back to the previous year. On some mornings around five o'clock, he would hear some vague and rhythmic noises of carnal activity and on such mornings he would wonder how she could do that to her little child. A week later after his disturbed morning sleeps, he saw Tony on the sidewalk playing by himself. Upon seeing Erskine Tony smiled and ran up to him grabbing his hand. He and Tony had a mutual understanding and a sort of friendship. During their short walk to the drug store, Tony complained about the indifference of his mother towards him and about the men in Mabel's bed.

> "Do you sleep with your mother often?" he'd found himself asking Tony.
>
> "I used to. But there are so many men coming to see her at night now…I go to sleep in her bed when she's away at work at night, but then I wake up in the morning, I find that she's taken me out of her bed and put me in my bed, and there's a man in the bed with her," Tony had said, staring off into space (SH, 95).

Tony's game he played with his favorite toys baffled Erskine for the kid associated fighting with "making babies," probably with the strange sounds coming from his mother's bedroom. Tony's words made Erskine remember a painful memory as he also recalled watching men stamp in and out of the house in his childhood and an old, frightful chill went through his spine. Fowler is consciously aware that Tony's childhood is the mirror reflection of his own past and identical in the sense that they both share a

fear of strange men getting involved in sexual intercourse with their mothers. In a term called "the sadistic concept of coitus," which is also posited as the primal scene, Freud claims that if a child at an early age witnesses a sexual intercourse between adults/parents, she/he becomes prone to "regard the sexual act as a sort of ill-treatment or act of subjugation: they view it, that is, in a sadistic sense" (Freud, 1995: 271). In other words, this first sighting of sexual activity by the child is not understood and remains enigmatic for a long time, and the child's imagination (if Freud's analysis is to be believed) associates the act not with benevolent scene of love but with the traumatic act of violent domination. Tony's witnessing his mother in coitus with men might explain the reason why he playfully holds procreation with fighting, as a matter of fact, as Erskine later realizes, Tony's seeing him "naked, frantic, wild-eyed….about to fight him…made him lose his balance and topple" (SH, 104). Erskine's seeing his mother engaged in sexual intercourse with other men, on the other hand, lead to an abstinence (a vow of celibacy even) from sexual life in general and from women in particular. To return to Freud's analysis, the traumatic encounter with the primal scene in childhood might return as a predisposition to sadistic displacements in adult life (Freud, 1995). Erskine's murder of Mabel can be attributed to such object displacement from mother on to Mabel, who, as Erskine believes, substitutes his mother in all respects and by killing her, he kills his mother's memory whom he simultaneously and awkwardly loves and hates. To introduce complexity into Freud's analysis of the primal scene, Melanie Klein's views on witnessing the coitus between parents, should also be dealt with some space. Klein takes Freud's thoughts on sadistic view of the intercourse to a further dimension in that she does not only see an aggressive attitude on the side of the child but also envy upon seeing the mother/father couple locked in the mutual scene of love making. The "combined-parent figure" Klein claims, presupposes an exclusion for the child, excluded from the seemingly perfect relationship of carnal and mental gratification (qtd. in Segal, 2008: 108). Thus the aggression the child faces and later introjects into its being does not depend on its inability of making sense of the sexual intercourse, on the contrary, the child understands and takes the intercourse as a sign of

omission from the ground of love and affection. In support of Klein's views, Abdul R. JanMohamed reads *Savage Holiday*, and Erskine Fowler's accidental trapping in the hallway naked as the anxiety of banishment and exclusion from the homely space of his flat and from the sanctuary of familial bonds offered by the Longevity. On the manifest register, the accidental shutting of the door, constant ascend and descend of the elevator, the Sunday paper's replacement of Adam's fig leaves to cover Erskine's private parts, the tricycle over which Erskine trips are read as the "cold, mechanical, inorganic elements – doors, elevators, stairs, tricycles, etc." to be functioning as causes without secondary invocations (JanMohamed, 2005: 220). On the latent register however, the mechanical elements turn out to be sexually charged objects, cathected in Fowler's memories.

> Fowler's increasingly urgent attempts to regain the safety of his home via the main door prove totally futile, which is to say that he has been totally barred from legitimate reentry into the zone of repression, to the zone of moribund sexuality (*Ibid*., 218).

If read in this way, the panic in the hallway and the rise and fall of the elevator could be taken to be the signs of tumescence. Namely, objects and locations could represent the psychological states Erskine finds himself in. In this regard, nakedness in the hallway can be read as Erskine's laying bare of his unconscious desires and anxieties, the constant rise and fall of the elevator as tension filled sexual intercourse and Erskine's final rush to the balcony as the climax of that intercourse. On his way back to the sanctuary of his home, however, he happens to meet Tony and incidentally kills him. Abdul JanMohamed offers a different reading to Tony's death and claims that even though the incident is accidental and contingent, it is also a necessity for Erskine thus, seen from this perspective, Tony's death is intentional and desirable. JanMohamed further explains the facets of this necessity of infanticide in two parts. The first necessity arises due to the subject's desire for freedom from her/his stagnant, historically determined formation as subject. In this regard, the second necessity of infanticide becomes obvious and inevitable: "the subject can never succeed in fundamentally

overcoming his formation unless he can kill the child who houses the deepest and most basic effective bonds of the now adult subject" (*Ibid*., 221). Serge Leclaire even prioritizes infanticide over the related acts of patricide and matricide for the formation of 'I', for Leclaire, the assumption of one's subjectivity begins at the moment of killing "His Majesty the Baby" (Leclaire, 1998). Leclaire's words on killing the 'baby within' both contradict and uphold Lacan's views on the first steps of walking into the Symbolic. In the theories of Lacan, it is posited that the nature in human beings is overwritten by language, and this causes a split in the subject (in fact the split/gap is the ultimate condition of being a subject in the Symbolic) which she/he will vainly try to overcome for "the subject can never be anything other than divided, split, alienated from himself" (Evans, 2006: 195). The gap/split is first introduced by the Oedipal structure of castration, and in this sense, what is symbolically killed is not the infant *per se*, but the Mother, and according to Luce Irigaray the Western culture depends on matricide, which is more primordial than the patricide of *Totem and Taboo*, yet while patricide is glorified and universalized, matricide is simply forgotten and even repressed (Irigaray, 1993). Viewed from this angle, it is possible to say that Leclaire bypasses the 'essential' deaths of father and mother for the attainment of the subjective position of 'I', yet by abstracting, distancing the baby from the mother, he similarly overlooks the agency of mother in the formation of subjectivity. Infanticide has been an important theme in African American literature in particular and an important subject of discussion in the history of slavery in general. The records of slave mothers killing their babies so as to save them from the abuse of their masters and from the tyranny of the institution of slavery abound in the history of the United States. [10] In the literary representations of infanticide, the same impulse of protection is also highlighted, especially in Morrison's *Beloved* infanticide occupies the central stage of the novel, yet the literal act of killing the baby is not just carried out in the name of mercy killing alone, but entails a symbolic murder as well "…murdering an infant mentally or psychologically by curbing the

[10] On the historical accounts of slave mothers killing their babies, please see Deborah Gray White's book *Ar'n't I a Woman? Female Slaves in the Plantation South* (New York: Norton, 1985).

desires and rights" (Gupta, 2009). Leclaire's definition of infanticide is not tied to any historical references such as slavery, yet when he mentions it, he seems to be following a similar trajectory of curbing, taming one's infant desires *en route* to becoming an adult.

In *Savage Holiday*, Wright too seems to be aware of this imperative as Tony falls off the balcony and Fowler waits for that awful sound Tony's body would make when it hits the black pavement.

> …it seemed that he had been standing here naked on this balcony in the hot morning's sun waiting for an eternity to hear that awful sound, a sound that would reverberate down all the long corridors of his years in this world, a sound that would follow him, like a taunting echo, even unto his grave… (SH, 5).

Tony's fall retrojects to Fowler's past and at the same is carried into his future, and by this necessary death, Fowler is reborn and replaces Tony. At this point, it should be appropriate to question whether the death of Tony, accidentally committed by Fowler, can be associated with the act of mercy killing, so as to protect him from being exposed to the primal scenes of sexual intercourse. Or, more speculatively, could it be said that Fowler desires (though unconsciously) to prevent Tony from becoming a man as he is for the two characters' childhood stories are so much alike in relation to their mothers. JanMohamed's explanation, on the contrary, points in the direction of a wish of willful replacement than that of wistful protection:

> Oedipal sexual desire has to migrate, necessarily but without apparent conscious intention or plan, from its Heimlich sequestering, from its proper repression, to the possibility of unheimlich manifestation, to a properly displaced return of the repressed…in the completion of this circuit, the accidentally necessary killing of "His Majesty the Baby" turns the circle into a spiral: Fowler's repressed sexual desires for Tony's mother will now slowly be reborn, fueled this time by the alibis of remorse, guilt, and obligation. Tony's death is thus necessary for the displaced rebirth of Fowler's oedipal desires (JanMohamed, 2005: 223).

Via his identification with Tony, or rather by assuming the position of the dead child, Fowler becomes the son and thus is reunited with his deceased mother in the person of Mabel Blake. Fowler also occupies the position of the husband after his marriage

proposal and thanks to the proposal he wants to occupy the position of the father who will not kill his son by subjecting him to the primal scene. Before taking a huge leap and go to the marriage proposal and murder scenes in the novel, Fowler's relationship with Mabel should also be mentioned in detail. After Tony's death, Fowler's initial motive for approaching Mabel is to learn whether she saw him climbing through the balcony. For that purpose, he consults Mrs. Westerman the neighbor, who obviously hates that "immoral" woman and provides Fowler with the information he seeks. The first mention of race is made in the dialogue with the neighbor. Mrs. Westerman questions Mabel first and she tells her that she saw dangling feet in the air. Westerman wonders what color those feet were, and Mabel assures her that they were not the feet of a colored person. Upon learning this irksome detail, Fowler decides to take the matter into his own hands. His first impulse is to safeguard himself against any possible revelation of his crime, yet as he gets to know Mabel, and as his sexual craving for her rises, he eventually makes a proposal. Via the proposal he thinks he could save this lost woman and bring her back to the path of righteousness and a moral life. In fact, marriage would benefit him more than it would benefit her, as he thinks that this gesture, this leap of faith would make him forget his terrible memories, fill in the void Longevity Life left in his soul, and enable him to answer God's call and do His will. More crucially, Fowler would find someone to rule over and completely dominate. At first glance, it might seem unrelated to Fowler's relationship with Mabel. Yet the second mention of race, that is, Fowler's thoughts on his black maid Minnie, can be related to Fowler's prevailing view of women. In fact the first notification of race, the dangling feet of a supposed black male, probably given as the usual suspect figure in the novel tells as much about Erskine's feelings towards women as the second. In the first instance, the allusion to the colored feet, aside from the racist association of holding the color black with malefaction, points out to another type of 'lawlessness', to miscegenation taboo. Given Mabel's 'promiscuous life', it would not be hard to imagine on Erskine's part to surmise that Mabel would have black lovers as well thus violating the taboo. Minnie, on the other hand, is not quite human, for Erskine believes that all servants serve just one purpose: showing simple and submissive

reactions to their masters' wishes. Without any obvious and viscous references made to race or class in the novel, it is still possible to see the construction of an/the Other figure(s) against and on which the protagonist deploys his ontological cause. It should not be far-fetched to contend that women are the marginalized figures to whom Erskine Fowler responds from the central position of the sexist, mighty patriarch supported by the belief in white supremacy. Taking the advantage for granted that his money and social status would eventually give him the mastery over Mabel, he feels free to criminalize Mabel and dehumanize Minnie. No matter how irrelevant might it sound, the name choices for the two women characters, both beginning with the letter M, thus reminiscent of the Mother, could be said to represent the two poles of motherhood. The name Mabel, derived from the Latin *amabilis*, meaning "lovable, dear," could easily be attributed to the character herself, for she is quite loveable as a lover in Erskine's eyes but eludes his hold of love every time he makes an attempt. And as a mother, she is loved, dearly so, only to find out that her love is not reserved for the son but for the other males seeking her sexual favors. The choice of surname for Mabel is also interesting for phonetically and etymologically the word Blake evokes the word black, someone with dark skin. The name Minnie, on the other hand, phonetically evokes the word nanny, child minder, care provider, a position that was given to elderly African American women in taking care of the children of the slave owners. Compared to Mabel, Minnie is more of a mother figure, yet Fowler's position as the son of Mabel is foregrounded in the novel than his mother-son like relation with the maid Minnie.

To that end, there are some clear cut observations made in the novel, Erskine's resemblance to Tony is one of them, even Mabel confirms the analogy: "When you were angry with me… You reminded me so much of Tony… *You and Tony*…. You need a mother" (SH, 183). And the other observation is concerned with Fowler's insatiable desire for Mabel, perhaps due to his impulse of finding a stand in mother, and his likewise rapacious wish to dictate and prohibit everything in her so called *amorous escapades*. To go back to the issue of race, and its sparse portrayal in the novel, Slavoj Zizek's words might make sense in explicating Wright's use of the issue. Offering three

different manifestations of evil in the world, Zizek highlights Id-Evil as the cause for racist prejudices and practices. The domain of Id, if Freud is to believed, could also be taken as the playground of a child, for a child, unbridled by any authority promising reward and punishment, finds itself amidst the atavistic "psychopathologies", incest being one of them. In Zizek's reading, however, the Id, however childish it might sound, is the very ground from which racism as we know it today emanates.

> The Id-Evil thus stages the most elementary 'short circuit' in the subject's relationship to the primordially missing object-cause of his desire: what 'bothers' us in the 'other' is that he appears to entertain a privileged relationship to the object….That is to say, racism is always grounded in a particular fantasy (of *cosa nostra*, of our ethnic Thing menaced by 'them', of 'them' who, by means of their excessive enjoyment, pose a threat to our 'way of life')… (Zizek, 2005: 71).

Replacing Tony, and occupying Tony's position of childhood, Erskine Fowler seeks the missing object of desire, that is, his mother, and by killing Tony he figuratively gains access to the body of the deceased parent. Still, he cannot totally overcome his id-driven self and takes Mabel's exorbitant sex life threatening to his existence. Minnie is socially dead for Fowler, thus he projects his "racist" beliefs – following Zizek's argument - on Mabel. Here, racism should not solely be thought in terms of ethnic discrimination as Fowler's 'positional superiority' serves as the pretext to justify his desire to control and define the Other. Sander L. Gilman also draws attention to different manifestations of racism in the United States, sexual exploitation as one of the foremost tools of patriarchal, and white supremacist domination.

> The 'white man's burden' thus becomes his sexuality and control, and it is this which is transferred into the need to control the sexuality of the Other, the Other as sexualized female" (Gilman, 1986: 256).

Failing to control the sexuality of Mabel, Fowler eventually regards her as a threat against which he feels his manhood should assert itself. The elimination of the threat, however, turns out to be a morbid one as he understands that despite all his efforts, he

would not be able to dominate her entirely and she would continue to be the *femme fatale* figure, existing in her mysterious, impenetrable, and unconquerable entity.[11] The desire to eliminate or to dominate the 'vamp woman' Mabel Blake should not be merely ascribed to the psychical disturbances of Fowler, as this desire may also harbor a veiled reference to race. The studies exploring the affinities between white women and black men have traced the roots of these affinities to the oppression of both groups at the hands of the white male power. In the worldview of the white men, black male and white female have been put in the same category of 'effeminate characters', that is, they both have been branded as lacking in reason and guided by their 'childish' emotions. According to Lewis Gordon, white women are also "white blackness", in the sense that only she –as regards the racial convictions of the United States- is capable of bearing black babies. Gordon argues that she is posited as a "hole" in a nation in which white, heterosexual patriarchy attempts to "close all…holes" (Gordon, 1995: 124-29). If she resists closure, and rejects the power of the white manliness, then she becomes the person who can be killed with impunity. Identifying the reason why Fowler kills Mabel as racial -as Gordon argues- may have no bearing on the true motive of the crime, yet it could shed light on one of the dark spots of Fowler's yearning in becoming the patriarch. While stabbing Mabel many times and in machinelike motions, Fowler shows unexpected signs of composure and tranquility. After making sure that she is dead, he steps away from the table, tosses the butcher knife carelessly on the hacked torso of his victim and stands before the mirror to observe his face. Right then a childhood memory

[11] To press home the point, or to complicate it even further, Lacan's claim that "Woman is one of the Names-of-the-Father" and Zizek's subsequent interpretation should be mentioned. According to Zizek, following Lacan's thesis, femininity should be read as a "masquerade", and when one tears down the mask, it is likely that one will encounter the obscene pre-Oedipal Father enjoyment: "Is not an indirect proof of this provided by the unique figure of the Lady in courtly love, this capricious implacable dominatrix? Does not this Lady, like the 'primordial Father', stand for Enjoyment unbridled by any Law? The phantasmic figure of Woman is thus a kind of 'return of the repressed', of the Father-Enjoyment removed by means of the primordial crime of parricide – that is to say, what returns in her seductive voice is the roar of the dying father…" (Zizek, 2007: 155). In *Savage Holiday*, however, one does not encounter any references made to parricide, to the murders of both the father and the mother. The issues of matricide along with infanticide are clearly given in the narration, yet no allusion to patricide can be found and thus one is tempted to think if it is Fowler who assumes the role of the obscene, "dying Father-Enjoyment" figure and ultimately binds himself to the Law/Symbolic by turning himself in.

gets ahold of him. After killing Gladys's, the girl next door, doll with a dirty brick bat, and telling Gladys that it was his mother whom he was killing, his mother told him to go and look in the mirror to see how bad he was. His reflection in the glass however, had nothing bad about it he thinks, so his mother lied to him after all. Leaving the bathroom, he lingers a while in the door, staring on the bloody murder scene with petulant, impassive pride. With a determination he has never felt in his life before, he takes the elevator, walks to the police station and confesses his crime. In response to the question put to him by one of the officers if it was a game he was playing, he finds himself caught in the hazy and another dusty memory of his childhood. He never battered that doll, he was drawing an image of a dead doll with his colored pencils and was daydreaming about the death of his mother. To the officer's domineering order to say it all, he finds himself in the conundrum of telling the truth.

> How could he ever explain that a daydream buried under the rigorous fiats of duty had been called forth from its thirty-six-year-old grave by a woman called Mabel Blake, and that that taunting dream had so overwhelmed him with a sense of guilt compounded of a reality which was strange and alien and which he loathed, but which, at the same time, was astonishingly familiar to him: a guilty dream which he had wanted to disown and forget, but which he had had to reenact in order to make its memory and reality clear to him! He closed his eyes in despair…still touching the four colored pencils! (SH, 220).

In murdering Mabel whether he loses his white supremacist position of power in a show of his powerlessness (Gaskill, 1973: 47), or redeems it in the murderous manifestation of its power is open to criticism. Throughout the narration one central issue comes to the fore with a certainty. In designating the title of the novel, Wright does not think that it is holiday as such that is violent, rather the freedom utilized savagely is the essence of the brutality depicted in the novel. Such freedom, following Orlando Patterson's distinction between personal freedom and sovereign freedom, should be categorized under the latter description and Fowler's sense of being free could be said to depend on such sovereignty of absolutist freedom of power in doing what he/it pleases regardless of the wishes and protests of the others (Patterson, 1991). As 'racelessness' of the novel is seen

as the shortcoming of the novel in failing to address anything of significance socio-politically, its significance should be sought in such deliberate omission and silence. Erskine Fowler comes to represent the colonial reality of the United States, that is to say, he embodies three interconnected positions of oppression and exploitation: missionary, businessman, and patriarch. As the self –proclaimed missionary of the Mount Ararat Baptist Church, and believing in his God given propensities, Erskine sets out on a spiritual journey to bring the 'fallen' back to God's grace, especially that woman Mabel Blake, who is in dire need of his counseling and guidance for the formation of godly family. On that note, it would not be erroneous to liken Fowler to first Puritan (pilgrim) Fathers of the North America in the sense that he too believes in the sanctity of family and pure, strict moral codes and his "overt goal," following the footsteps of the forefathers, is to "civilize the savage," those who have gone astray [12] (JanMohamed, 1986: 81). The second role of the businessman is easier to identify, for, as a businessman he can be associated with the myth of American success, with the image of self-made man, celebrated and supported by the illusion of American Dream. And the last figure of the patriarch is the father figure who incorporates in himself the previous two positions and a few others. The ultimate patriarch, as Erskine Fowler points out in his farewell speech to Longevity, is the president of the United States, in this case Abraham Lincoln.

Erskine's invocation of the 16th president of the United States, serving throughout the Civil War years until his assassination in 1865, could be taken as another (not openly given) indicator of racial concerns of the novel. Abraham Lincoln is remembered for his leadership in helping the nation to get rid of one of the great infirmities of humanity. Due to his strong resistance against slavery, and even risking a war for the elimination of such inhumane practice in the land of freedom, and democracy, he is the celebrated and cherished political figure in the country. Yet, the often ignored part about Lincoln's policies is that, just like the founding fathers of

[12] British colonizers in Americas did not follow their Spanish and Portuguese counterparts in using religion to their advantage in conquering native populations. Although the Puritans of the Massachusetts Bay Colony had different usages of religion in the 'taming of the savage', the method they followed resembled to that of Columbus, Cortes and Pizarro. That is to say, they imposed their worldviews on the neighboring natives through murder, violence and pillage.

George Washington and Thomas Jefferson, he too devised a plan of forming African American Freedmen colonies in British Honduras, in Île à Vache off the coast of Haiti, believing that no racial harmony would be possible between whites and freed blacks of the country. (Magness and Page 2011) *Savage Holiday*, despite the non-complex treatment of its subject matter, could be read as the inventory of white male power and the presence of blackness, though not tangibly felt in the novel, as placed in opposition to such white seats of power. In fact, the novel, without mincing its words, confronts the ages old adage that represented the ontological basis of the Western mind: "To be is to be white" (Johnson, 1988: 14). The phrase presupposes an impeccable sense of self, a perfect entity of power unblemished by any impurity or weakened by a sign of frailty. By engaging the question of freedom, and analyzing the positions freedom brings with it, built on identifications between the acts committed in the name of civilization and oppression, Richard Wright posits the ultimate dilemma of the Western modernity as the phenomenon of freedom. In this sense, Wright demands a shift of focus from the radical Other, from the periphery (African American) to the so called Self and the central figure (Euro American male), so as to show us the mindset behind the white lenses. By creating a deliberate confusion between the realms of civilization and savagery, between independence and slavery, he points out to the fact that a 'civilized' man such as Erskine Fowler could inhabit both realms without trouble, and thus Wright, in a move of shuffling the odds, offers a relocation of the Other/Self binary, asking the reader of the novel one final and troubling question: where do you stand, or where does your racial footing begin and end?

3.2 "Recitatif": A Story of Defiance of Postmodern Racial-Realist Ideologies

Toni Morrison's only short story to date "Recitatif" tracks the relationship between the main characters, Twyla and Roberta, for about a span of thirty years. The story opens up in 1950s, at the state funded orphanage and shelter St. Bonaventure, located in the upstate New York. The two eight-year-old girls at the time, Twyla and Roberta spend four months at the all-female facility, sharing a room. While the majority of the girls staying at St. Bonaventure are orphans, Twyla and Roberta are "dumped" there because Twyla's mother "danced all night" and Roberta's was sick all the time ("Recitatif," 2006: 386). Consisting of black, white, Asian, Latina, and Native American familyless inhabitants, Twyla and Roberta are snubbed by the other girls because they are not regarded as "real orphans" (*Ibid*., 387). At first, Twyla and Roberta too ignore each other's presence, for being placed in the same room with a girl from the other race plays into their racial prejudices they learned from their mothers. Called "salt and pepper" by the other girls at the shelter, Twyla and Roberta represent the two ends of the racial spectrum, one white, the other black. (Ibid.) In fact the racial compositions of the two girls are deliberately confounded so as to disrupt and upset the conventional markers of race. Morrison herself, in an attempt to aver such willful disorientation, explains the reason why she penned the short story as follows: "Recitatif is an experiment in the removal of all racial codes from a narrative about two characters of different races for which racial identity is crucial" (Morrison, 1993: xi). In the analyses of the short story, however, the general tendency of the critics is to read "Recitatif" as a racially mixed narrative, for the racial categorization is rendered impossible and undesirable by the flow of the plot. Yet, the critics are also inclined to overlook the fact that the main characters are entangled in the racially defined identities, and racial identification remains decisive throughout the narration. There are some instances in the plot in which both Twyla and Roberta embrace and estrange their respective racial positions. The first

point of mutual identification cuts through their relationships with their mothers as they are the neglected daughters of careless mothers. The second point clusters on the being of Mrs. Itkin, the director of the facility nicknamed "the Big Bozo," whom Twyla and Roberta associate with the dumb and yet powerful authoritative position. And the third point of reciprocal, racial recognition comes at the expense of humiliating the bow legged, "sandy colored" Maggie the cook. Twyla's and Roberta's stay at St. Bonaventure is brief though, for after four months, the girls are retrieved by their mothers and after their leaving the institution they lose contact. As fate would have it, they happen to meet four subsequent times throughout the narration, each time marked by the surfacing of the racial codes accumulated in years. The first meeting, coincidental as it is, comes to pass in a bar called Howard Johnson's where Twyla works as a waitress. Hanging out with the popular guys at the time, that is to say with the rock and roll teenagers of the 60s, Roberta shows reluctance to recognize her roommate. She even shows disdain for Twyla's lack of knowledge on rock music and gives out a laugh "that included the guys but only the guys" at Twyla's provincial ignorance ("Recitatif," 392). The second encounter, drawing the racial line once again, occurs a few years later in a check-out line at a grocery store. By that time, the two girls gone women are married happily, Twyla with a firefighter in the downtown area of Newburgh, and Roberta with a successful IBM executive, living in the wealthy suburban neighborhood of Annandale. After exchanging a few words of friendship for the old times' sake, the women part once again only to meet at another event. The event though, turns out to be a strike against racist practices of school busing, and gentrification and Twyla spots Roberta picketing with a sign read "Mothers have rights too!" Against Roberta's sign, Twyla decides to wave her banner of opposition: "How would you know?" (*Ibid*.,400). The final instance of meeting transpires on the New Year's Eve, in which Twyla and Roberta slimily embrace their past at St. Bonaventure's and Roberta directs the eventual question of the story: "Oh shit, Twyla. Shit, shit, shit. What the hell happened to Maggie?" (*Ibid*.,403).

"Recitatif" first appeared in *Confirmation: An Anthology of African American Women* (1983), co-edited by Amiri Baraka and his wife Amina Baraka. The anthology,

putting the short story under the titles of 'pan-Africanist,' 'anticolonialist' and 'racial-political activism,' canalized Morrison's work to the race-gender dichotomy (Amiri, Amina Baraka, 1983). Stating the constructed nature of race in the story, and pointing out in the direction of disoriented racial codes, the critiques generally focus on these two tenets and on the readers' potential desire to ascribe racial identities to the two protagonists of the story. In *Black Writing, White Reading: Race and the Politics of Feminist Interpretation*, Elizabeth Abel comes to the decision that it is almost impossible to determine the racial identity of one character over the other, and this indetermination paves the way for the author's ultimate goal of writing the story, that is, for exposing the manufactured and translucent taxonomy of racial identifications (Abel, 1993: 470-498). Comparing "Recitatif" with James Baldwin's short story "Sonny's Blues," Trudier Harris also draws attention to the ambiguous racial categories of the story and argues that "characters in each text join readers in being placed in positions that border upon voyeurism. We watch characters being shut out of one another's lives even as we are titillated by the events of those lives" (Harris, 2006: 104). Like Abel, Harris contends that the desire to search for the eventual racial categories in a narrative of dubious subject positions would reflect at best the reader's own preoccupations with structural inclination in assigning racial roles. However, not all critics read "Recitatif" as racially unidentifiable short story. Ann Rayson, for example, believes that "Morrison makes Roberta wealthy and black to overturn our class assumptions" (Rayson, 1996: 41), and gives a circumstantial evidence (the scene at Howard Johnson's where Roberta looks down on Twyla for not knowing who Jimi Hendrix is) as proof of her blackness. Even so, admiration for an African American 'demi god' may not always give away one's ethnic identity. According to Orlando Patterson, white Americans are more likely to be the admirers of African American popular culture icons than black Americans. Patterson extends his argument to the point of likening African Americans in the world of entertainment (sports, music, and movies) to Dionysus, "the crosser of boundaries and the dissolver of these very boundaries" (Patterson, 1998: 250). The United States, with its background of Puritanism in the North, the asceticism and pietism of the Quakers in

the Mid-Atlantic, and the patriarchal authoritarianism and militarism in the South, has no shortage of draconian discipline in its history. Patterson, viewing such strict social codes as constitutive of the Apollonian character of the nation, believes that Euro Americans are in need of the Dionysian ghetto culture of African Americans to release the pressure and anxieties brought about by the vortex of post-industrial social life (*Ibid*., 274). Despite their diverging thoughts, Abel, Harris and Rayson use race as the primal critical lens in analyzing "Recitatif," and it can be said that they all tend to identify Apollonian and Dionysian characteristics in Twyla and Roberta. By focusing on race alone, which is somehow understandable given Toni Morrison's intention of disrupting racial identifications in the story, these scholars sidestep a crucial point of the story, a point which Morrison tried to make in almost all her literary works. The story probes the strong relationship between Twyla and Roberta which recalls Morrison's long lasting effort to underline the bonds between women in the face of patriarchal, masculinist and heteronormative conditions. In Morrison's first novel, *The Bluest Eye*, it is possible to discern such solidarity as Claudia and Frieda MacTeer accept into their home and protect the marginalized, oppressed and sexually abused Pecola Breedlove. In her second novel, *Sula*, a similar bond of mutual affection occurs between Nel Wright (coming from a middle-class family) and Sula who lives with her mother in the neglected and poverty stricken section of Ohio. The apparent omission of race, or rather its push out of focus, in "Recitatif" accentuates the gender and class based codes that underscore the subject positions of the main characters. The figure of the "sandy colored," racially ambiguous Maggie, for example, embodies the blurred racial figurations, yet in her person, Twyla and Roberta come to realize the significance of gender and motherhood. It is also necessary to add though that Twyla and Roberta's feelings towards Maggie are not molded by empathy and reverence at first, as they recall (somewhat amnesiacally) that they have taken part in the insults other girls at the St. Bonaventure piled on Maggie. At this juncture, physically disabled Maggie stands for a scapegoat figure in and through whom the complexities of race, gender, and class are manifested and somehow resolved. The memory of Mrs. Itkin the administrator, on the

other hand, alias known as 'the Big Bozo,' looms large in the imagination of Twyla and Roberta as the figure of authority, who smiles rarely and runs the facility in her tight grasp. Thus the women, the female characters of the story, cannot be said to be forming a united front against masculine power and oppression as such, for all-female characters of the story the front is set against centers of hegemonic, hierarchical structures of domination that are not clearly identified as masculine. Although the critiques on "Recitatif" are sparse, and the story is understudied, the general tendency of criticism could be divided in two camps: one focuses on race alone at the expense of overlooking other factors in the story such as gender and class and the other foregrounds gender by avoiding the racial dimension of the narrative. [13] Without underestimating the significance of any factors – be it race, gender and class, it is the contention of the present study to analyze "Recitatif" from various, and interlocking angles. To do so, Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza's neologism "kyriarchy," the interrelated power structures of "cultural-religious-ideological systems and intersecting discourses of race, gender, heterosexuality, class, and ethnicity" (Fiorenza, 2001: 211), and the Deleuzian concept of rhizome, ceaselessly establishing "connections between semiotic chains" and "organizations of power" (Deleuze, Guattari, 2003: 7) will be used as models of analysis. [14]

The short story takes its title from the French form of the word recitative, a musical style wavering between songs and ordinary speech, usually used as dialogic and narrative breaks in operas. Just like in the musical pieces, the interludes in the narration point out to the episodic nature of the story, and the vignettes register and bring together

[13] On total rejection of the other critiques, David S. Goldstein could be given as the example for he wholeheartedly rejects a reading of the story based on gender roles: "in no way does gender figure into "Recitatif"" with the corollary insistence that "concentrating only on women sidesteps the social problem of sex-based 'othering' which elsewhere figures prominently in Morrison's writing and thus forces readers exclusively on the racial issue raised in and by the story." (Goldstein, 1997: 85)

[14] "Rhizome" could be roughly described as not narrativization of history and culture, but rather as a map of attractions and influences without a specific origin or genesis for a "rhizome has no beginning or end; it is always in the middle, between things, interbeing, *intermezzo*" (Deleuze & Guattari, 2003: 25). In claiming to posit Maggie as the rhizomic character of the story; the interstitial, "intermezzo" figure occupying both the beginning and ending, she is intended to be analyzed as the conjunctive agent connecting disparate elements, flows in the lives of Twyla and Roberta.

five coinciding sections in the lives of Twyla and Roberta. The first section in which Twyla's and Roberta's lives intersect is at St. Bonaventure, alias, St. Bonny's shelter. Twyla the narrator's first reaction upon learning that she is to be placed in a room with a girl from another race is annoyance first, as her knowledge of the other race depends on her mother, Mary's, occasional inculcations.

> Every now and then she would stop dancing long enough to tell me something important and one of the things she said was that they never washed their hair and they smelled funny. Roberta sure did. Smell funny, I mean ("Recitatif," 386).

Yet, when Roberta comes up to her and asks if her mother is sick too, they break the ice between them, for they are both abandoned by their mothers and dumped at the shelter. The first seeds of friendship, however, blossom when the girls are ignored by their peers, and in the words of Twyla, even by the "New York City Puerto Ricans and the upstate Indians" (*Ibid*., 387). Even then, it is not feasible to regard Twyla's and Roberta's relationship as intimate, for what makes two girls familiar with each other is both their mutually shared fates regarding the mothers and the sense of rejection (because they are not regarded as real 'orphans') by other residents of St Bonny's. In this sense, the companionship between the two does arise due to a necessity of sharing similar fates rather than a sense of empathy established between the two. The girls at the shelter, girls at the age of fifteen and sixteen named as the "gar girls" in the story, and the ones under twelve, as we are told, have their distinct ways of surviving and living in the institution, yet the only time their interests and behaviors meet up is when the bandy legged Maggie is in sight. This "sandy colored," kitchen woman with "legs like parentheses," would dress like a kid and never return the insults thrown at her (*Ibid*.). Maggie's silence is taken to be a sign of dullness, and Twyla and Roberta, sharing this conviction of the other girls call her names referring to her condition. On the day Maggie falls down, Twyla and Roberta are visited by their mothers. The scene depicting the fall in the

orchard of St. Bonny's, however, causes a friction in the memories of the two girls: while Twyla remembers that Maggie fell down and the gar girls laughed at her, Roberta has a more violent memory of the event, and remembers that the gar girls pushed Maggie and when she was on the ground they tore her clothes. These contradictory memories regarding Maggie would last till the very closing page of the story as Maggie's spectral presence resurfaces throughout the story and symbolizes the two girls' views of oppression, family and motherhood. According to Sandra Kumamoto Stanley, with her physical disability, Maggie is the figure who is entrapped within what Lennard J. Davis calls "hegemony of normalcy" (Davis, 2006: 12). Stanley claims to establish a connection between women, people of color and disabled individuals on the grounds that these three groups struggle "against a dominant culture that places them in subordinate positions, defined by being outside of white, masculinist norms" (Stanley, 2011: 73). However, she contends that despite having similar conditions in being pushed to the periphery of the society and in undergoing the processes of othering, the disabled persons are more likely to face the double bind of marginalization. That is to say, disabled figures are not only subjected to discrimination by the central power elites, but by the subaltern groups as well such as women, and people of color. In this wise, Maggie of "Recitatif," replacing the "serviceability of the Africanist presence," is "provocatively transposed to the serviceability of the disabled presence in the figure of Maggie, who is read by the characters and critics alike as a signifier for the bound, fixed, unfree, and serviceable" (*Ibid*., 74). If read within the *kyriocentric* and *rhizomic* modes of power, and if it is feasible to claim so, the Maggie's oppression is sustained not by those modes of hegemony, but by the characters (in this case by Twyla, Roberta, and the gar girls at St. Bonny's) who, in their turn, are chastised by the figures of authority. [15]

[15] The term 'hegemony' is used in its well-known definition given by Antonio Gramsci, that is to say, as 'cultural hegemony,' describing the domination of a society by a ruling elite, the class which does not only oppress other classes in economic and political domains but in cultural configurations as well. According to Gramsci, the latter aspect of hegemony, the socio-cultural domination (super/supra structure if you will) is as crucial as the politico-economic (infrastructure) one. And in this model of oppression, it is crucial to add that the 'oppressed' classes are very likely to be aware of the processes of domination, and they would still negotiate their boundaries of agency as well as marking the limits of a dominant ideology. If put this way, hegemony cannot and should not be taken as unilateral domination of one class, race, ethnicity over

After four months at the shelter, Twyla and Roberta are separated for a long time and Twyla gets into a waitress work at the bar called Howard Johnson's. A few months into her job, she comes across Roberta sitting in a booth with two guys. Contrary to her expectation of a warm welcome, Roberta gives her a cold shoulder and scolds Twyla for not knowing who Jimi Hendrix is. As mentioned before, this particular scene is given as the proof for identifying Roberta's race as black. Thus denied by Roberta, Twyla feels offended and yet quickly recovers from the shock and proceeds to give a brief account of her husband's family and of Newburgh, the town she lives in. If another evidence is to be sought so as to inscribe the ethnicity of the main characters, the information on the history of the town could prove to be useful, only to contradict the presumption that Roberta is African American due to her admiration for Hendrix. Half the population of Newburgh, as we are told, lives on welfare compared to the other half living in luxury. The poor residents of the town live in the dilapidated downtown area whereas the rich, employees of the IBM (International Business Machines) Corporation, live in the suburbs. On that note, it is proper to add that the racial composition of the city centers in the United States is predominantly black while that of the suburbs is white. Labeled as "white flight" and dating back to the 1950s, the migration of the white populations to the suburbs of the city went hand in hand with the move of the industries from the town centers to the outskirts of the cities. Following the trail of their jobs, white Americans built gated and luxuries communities. The populations made of African Americans, Mexicans, and Puerto Ricans, on the other hand filled in the abandoned city centers. The relationship between the income level and racial cartography of the cities is crucial as wealthier individuals live in the suburbs while jobless, poor ones are stuck in the ruinous centers. Some scholars claim that today the whites are returning to the centers due to the decline of racism and racial profiling and due to the changes in the definition of employment as industrialism gave its place post-industrial service jobs. Surely, the age of industrialism, factories and what not is not over but the giant

---

the other(s), but as mutually consented, constructed multiplicities or agreements of domination made between the concerned classes of hegemony.

companies have relocated their plants to Mexico, Vietnam, and China on account of low-cost labor and lower taxes. While the claim that whites are returning to downtowns is true to some extent, the division is still tangibly felt in the country: "In Birmingham, Alabama, a public bus takes about a dozen housekeepers from their low-income, mostly black neighborhood to a wealthy white suburb." [16] In this regard, Twyla not Roberta should be named African American for Roberta is married to an IBM executive and living in the rich section of Newburgh. The third encounter with Roberta occurs at a grocery store and the girls learn each other's marital lives and names. This time Mrs. Twyla Benson and Mrs. Roberta Norton become intimate and seem to forget about the stiffness at Howard Johnson's. As Roberta orders the driver to carry the bags to the car, Twyla cannot conceal her surprise and asks her old friend if she is married to a "Chinaman." The 'Chinaman' is a contentious English language term which is thought to be offensive in modern usage. *The Cambridge Guide to English Usage* defines the term as having "derogatory overtones" (Peters, 2004), *The New Fowler's Modern English Usage* regards 'Chinaman' to have a "derogatory edge" (Fowler, 1996), and Philip Herbst, in his reference work *The Color of Words* considers that the term might be taken as a token of a demeaning attitude (Herbst, 1997). The usage of the term is condemned and ruled out by Asian American associations yet it is used by the English speaking Americans of Chinese descent without any consideration for the derogatory connotations of the word. The case could be compared with that of the use of 'Nigger' word, as, similarly, its pronunciation is censured, still, the term enjoys a renown among African Americans. Regardless of their ethnicities, Twyla and Roberta could be said to share a secret amusement over this reference to the "Chinaman," and as they sit down for a cup of coffee the chit-chat comes back to the scene at Johnson's, to race and eventually to Maggie. Twyla demands an explanation for Roberta's indifference back then, and Roberta explains away that twenty years ago it was the necessity of the time:

[16] Please see the following links for today's racist, segregationist practices of busing. The issue may be over for school children, yet, for some adults the problem still stands.
http://projects.aljazeera.com/2015/05/birmingham-bus/ &
http://www.npr.org/2014/03/09/287877060/city-versus-suburb-a-longstanding-divide-in-detroit Accessed on July, 11, 2015.

"Oh, Twyla, you know how it was in those days: black – white. You know how everything was" ("Recitatif," 396). However, Twyla thinks that the situation was just the opposite:

> Busloads of blacks and whites came into Howard Johnson's together. They roamed together then: students, musicians, lovers, protesters. You got to see everything at Howard Johnson's and blacks were very friendly with whites in those days (*Ibid*.,397).

Once again, but not for the last time, Maggie's memory (whether the fall was her fault or gar girls' making) continues to loom large in the imagination of the girls, distorting their senses of reality. After this reunion scene, the fourth encounter does not pass in such a friendly atmosphere. The same year in fall, racial unrest hits the country as newspapers are full of stories of protests and upheavals over school busing, segregation in housing and workplaces. There are no specific dates provided in the story except for some hints such as social conflict which might place the scene in late 1960s, the peak decade of the Civil Rights Movement. Twyla, unable to absorb the on-going events, thinks that the strife is not something new, and even dates back to the pre-historic, pre-human times of the dinosaurs.

> Racial strife. The word made me think of a bird – a big shrieking bird out of 1,000,000,000 B.C. Flapping its wings and cawing. Its eye with no lid always bearing down on you. All day it screeched and at night it slept on the rooftops. It woke you in the morning and from the *Today* show to the eleven o'clock news it kept you an awful company (*Ibid*.).

One day, Twyla sees a line of women marching and she spots Roberta among the group carrying a sign that read "Mothers have rights too!" (*Ibid*., 398). Trying to find out what is going on, she walks up to her friend and learns that it is a protest march against school busing. One of the hot button topics of the day, school busing was a practice of

transporting students to racially/ethnically segregated schools. Regardless of the residential address, if there was no school in the neighborhood corresponding to student's racial/ethnic identity, she/he was supposed to be bussed to the closest white or black school depending on the race of the student. So, Roberta is against such discriminative practice while Twyla is angry that protestors see themselves as big Bozos and decide for her where her child goes to school. Against the protestors, she sides with the busing supporters and carries her own line of counter-argument: "So do children!" (*Ibid*., 399). The confrontation between the two over a socio-political subject, leads to a tense situation and once again Maggie dominates the dialogue. This time however, Roberta accuses Twyla of kicking the poor lady while on the ground and for the first time the reference to Maggie's blackness is made.

> "Maybe I am different now, Twyla. But you're not. You're the same little state kid who kicked a poor old black lady when she was down on the ground. You kicked a black lady and you have the nerve to call me a bigot" (*Ibid*.).

Sandra Kumamoto Stanley reads this particular scene as an attempt, on Twyla's part, not to appear as a socially aware mother but rather to restore a past in which she and her friend could come together in the neutral, and strife free zone of friendship. To that end, Twyla extends her hand out to Roberta, to separate her from the protestors and make her believe that the protestors serve a dominant ideology like Mrs. Itkin, Bozo, of St. Bonny's. The talk of dominant ideology is somehow blurred at this point as the friends view the other's group in serving a hegemonic structure. After the suspension of classes, the children spend their spare times watching the television shows *The Price Is Right* and *The Brady Bunch,* that bolster market-oriented U.S. society and offer a commodified, idealized white family, excluding both Twyla and Roberta and their mothers out of the picture. Stanley claims that the whole scene with its pros and cons points out to an assertion Morrison tries to make throughout the story: "In any case, Morrison suggests that the past is already a culturally and psychologically mediated construct, revealing not a transcendent historical truth but a series of representations of

that history" (Stanley, 2001: 81). The fifth and last encounter between the two is once again one of reunion and of course the talk is about Maggie.

> "Listen to me. I really did think she was black. I didn't make that up. I really thought so. But now I can't be sure. I just remember her as old, so old. And because she couldn't talk – well, you know, I thought she was crazy. She'd been brought up in an institution like my mother was and like I thought I would be too. And you were right. We didn't kick her. It was the gar girls. Only them. But, well, I wanted to. I really wanted them to hurt her. I said we did it, too. You and me, but that's not true. And I don't want you to carry that around. It was just that I wanted to do it so bad that day – *wanting to is doing it*." [emphasis added] ("Recitatif," 402).

Recalling a memory from one's childhood, or from the recent past calls for a restructuring process of collaging different and seemingly unrelated images. In Freud's and in the psychoanalysts' views following his lead, memory is the site of distorted images, sounds and smells and a memory is impossible to reconstruct in perfect symmetry to what is truly had transpired for Freud believes that such distortion in the course of actual events occurs especially in childhood memories and he makes the following observations:

> It may indeed be questioned whether we have any memories at all *from* our childhood: memories *relating to* our childhood may be all that we possess. Our childhood memories show us our earliest years not as they were but as they appeared at the later periods when the memories were aroused. In these periods of arousal, the childhood memories did not, as people are accustomed to say, *emerge*; they were *formed* at that time. And a number of motives, with no concern for historical accuracy, had a part in forming them, as well as in the selection of the memories themselves. [emphasis in the original] (Freud, 1995: 126).

To illustrate his point on the recollections from childhood and on "screen memories," Freud narrates an anecdote. At the age of three, with his boy cousin, he remembers

collecting yellow alpine flowers and seeing the beauty of the bunch a neighbor's daughter has, he snatches the flowers and runs away. A peasant woman, trying to console the crying girl, gives her a big chunk of bread and Freud runs up to the woman for some as well. Out of this particular memory, however, the yellow flowers and the exquisite smell of the bread are especially highlighted. Freud identifies the reason why these two images come to the fore than the others as related to other memories he has, one at the age of sixteen, and the other when he was pursuing his undergraduate degree. In his teenage years, he falls in love with a girl, who looks dazzling in her yellow dress. Before he can confess his love though, the girl moves to another town and leaves Freud broken-hearted. The second memory from his university years which he associates with the bread of his childhood is recalling the secret plot his father and uncle make to discourage him from pursuing a career in science and instead take a more practical, "bread and butter," and easy to earn money job. The color yellow is especially stressed on account of the fact that his first love appears in a dress with the same color. Flowers, Freud tells, can be tied to his desire to "deflower" his beloved. And the bread is underlined because of his father's and uncle's plans for his future. Freud uses the term "screen memory" to designate a memory functioning to conceal or reveal another, usually unconscious content. In other words, he believes that each memory is accompanied by a phantasy (generally hidden) which distorts and at the same time brings out some images as more significant than others. In the case of yellow flowers and bread, he surmises that by superimposing two phantasies (from within and without) on one another, the individual re-creates her/his childhood memory. Perhaps that's why he claims in the above given passage that there may actually be no 'real' childhood memories to relate as the images are constructed in retrospect, and thus the childhood memory gets to be perpetually created in accordance with the phantasies and memories of adulthood.

As "Recitatif" revolves around memories that are not remembered but experienced, notwithstanding the temporal, and spatial zones they are mentioned in- it might be appropriate to attempt an analysis using Freud's theory of "screen memories."

The final part of the story might be taken as the ultimate resolution of the question of what had happened to that poor woman, yet the very last sentence tells us otherwise: “What the hell happened to Maggie?” (“Recitatif,” 403). The question, if slightly adjusted, is not to find out what really befell on her but to perceive Maggie’s position within the symbolic world of the two girls. Maggie’s presence surfaces when the topics are delicate ones such as motherhood, race (racial strife) and class. Whenever Twyla and Roberta find themselves in the predicaments of these subjects, they refer, somehow unconsciously, to Maggie and thus are able to sustain their identities. Referring to Maggie’s legs shaped like parentheses, David Shirley Goldstein states “Parentheses indicate something of secondary importance, which, added to Maggie's muteness, connote a passive, marginalized victim, a cipher; the bow legs conjure the image of zero itself. Reduced to nothing, Maggie is robbed of agency, which leaves for her only the role of pawn in the battle of memories waged by Twyla and Roberta over three decades” (Goldstein - Shirley, 1997: 77-86). In these three decades, Maggie becomes the inventory in which Twyla and Roberta deposit their apprehensions about their mothers and subject positions. Sarah Madsen Hardy contends that Maggie “helps Roberta and Twyla access their unresolved feelings toward their mothers and that the two women will never know what happened to Maggie, nor will they ever be as whole as if they had not abandoned Maggie, and eventually, each other” (Hardy, 1988). As the analyses indicate, the first reference to the memory of Maggie is made when two girls’ mothers appear in the story, the characters obviously love them, yet a certain anger can be felt as they are abandoned by the mothers to live in a shelter. The second one is made when the racial strife breaks out, and Roberta accuses Twyla of being a racist for kicking the poor, black Maggie and tearing her clothes. And the final reference comes with a confession, as Roberta openly admits that Maggie was not black and she wanted to kick and tear her clothes for the fear of being raised, just like her mother, in an institution like St. Bonny’s. In line with Freud’s claim that certain images of a childhood memory are highlighted and thus restructured by the experiences, memories in adulthood, it is appropriate to make the same claim for Maggie and the memory the two girls have of

her. What is particularly remembered about her is the fall in the orchard, her race however, though also highlighted, remains ambiguous until the very end of the story. Once again, Freud's assessment that "screen memories" are primarily constructed to conceal the true motives behind phantasies and memories of adult life could be also fitted in the story, as Maggie memory is mentioned in the story whenever Twyla and Roberta try to hide their feelings on the matters of motherhood, race, and class. In fact, Roberta's confession towards the end that she wanted to kick Maggie in the orchard tells much about obstructing another, more painful memory.

In *Playing in the Dark*, Morrison makes a strong observation that we need "to analyze the [artist/dreamer's] manipulation" of those who are "bound and/ or rejected" (Morrison, 1993: 53), in doing so, she claims, we should be able to deconstruct narrations that represent and administer such psychosocial projections as anguish, dismay, and remorse as well as racialized, class-driven ideologies. In this regard, Stanley's claim that Morrison views past as a constructed, and culturally, psychologically mediated structure put together by a history which comprises socio-political representations, could be defended. That is to say, the past(ness) of the story actualized in the identity of Maggie, is not one of a grand/master narrative of oppression and defiance but of threads/representations connecting the past, present and the future histories of the main characters. In Elisabeth Fiorenza's and Gilles Deleuze's words, Maggie is the ultimate *kyriocentric* and *rhizomic* character in establishing connections between discourses of race, gender, class and ethnicity and in upholding (not by her but by the characters who take part in her persecution) the governing dynamics of power. In this wise, and thanks to the character of Maggie, "Recitatif" could be read as the story defying postmodern identity politics, unsettling the idea that race could be fixed in the protocols of race, gender or class. In fact, as Shari Stone – Mediatore claims, the story implies that an acceptance of racial, ethnic, and gender roles/identities that have been defined by oppression may "repeat the exclusionary and divisive practices of the dominant culture" (Mediatore, 2002: 125). In this regard, neither the identification of the racial identities of Twyla and Roberta, nor the solidarity between the two characters

based on gender roles should come to the fore as the most significant elements of the story. On the contrary, the attempts to do so should be refuted on the grounds that embracing these roles would only uphold the center of power and create another peripheral cycle of oppression. Roberta's anguished cry "What the hell happened to Maggie?" may suggest that it behooves the readers and writers to recover diverse forms of otherness from the alcoves of cultural memory and to reveal how literary representations may interfere with and shape our politics of reading a text.

CONCLUSION

The dissertation is comprised of three chapters, each dealing with the crises of race, gender, sexuality, and class culminating in the family paradigm. In the first chapter, Cholly of *The Bluest Eye*, the villain character, if you will, who rapes his own daughter, is given as the rape victim whose masculine position (and imminent roles of husband and father) are taken away by the two white men. Cholly, whose story ends up in the dissolution of his family, is also reminiscent of the slave figure who is raped, emasculated and infantilized by the paternal slave owner. Furthermore, another characteristic of the idea of family in the United States (perhaps its main driving force) in the form of private property and ownership eludes Cholly's and Pauline's grasp as the couple cannot come into the possession of material goods and utensils that would not only entitle them to the so called normative filial space but to the ownership of their offspring as well. Pecola's persistent wish for the bluest eye is analyzed in the context of family trope, for her yearning cannot be placed on the individual plane alone but on the affiliative structures of language, public education and sociocultural enjoyment. In other words, she seeks (for herself and her parents) to become a member of the great family called the United States and believes that the only way of achieving it passes through the obtainment of the bluest eye in the world.

Richard Wright's *The Long Dream*, depicting a different type of African American family in terms of class and social standing, is also laden with the familial complexes. Rex Tucker's childhood, spent in the comforts of his middle class family, turns into a nightmare as he discovers that his father Tyree Tucker is symbolically castrated, impotent man who cowers and bends knee to the white men he associates with. Tyree's case is also related to the slavery period when the slaves would supplicate before their masters so as to escape punishment, receive a reward, or simply to manipulate the master into granting their wishes. When he becomes of age, Rex also suffers the castration complex at the hands of the white men and finds himself in the hateful position of his father, tearfully begging the police chief for his innocence. At the

very end of the novel he realizes the futility of his attempts in integrating into the white community, in living out "The American Dream" and hence leaves his native country for France.

Chapter three offers a different angle to the analysis of family, race and nationalism. Featuring a white character, Richard Wright's *Savage Holiday* deals with the ultimate dilemma the Western modernity faces: the phenomenon of freedom. In this novel, freedom, besides lavishing a sense of sovereignty on the concerned person (if that person is white of course) also brings with it a traumatic past. Erskine Fowler, the white protagonist of the novel, finds himself in the impasse of occupying a patriarchal position of a white male and suppressing his murderous and incestuous memories about his mother. Thus split in his subjective formation he accidentally causes the death of a child and murders Mabel Blake, his would be wife. By creating a deliberate confusion between the realms of civilization and savagery, between independence and slavery, Wright claims to point out to the fact that a 'civilized' man such as Erskine Fowler could inhabit both realms without trouble, and thus Wright, in a move of shuffling the odds, offers a relocation of the Other/Self binary. Toni Morrison's only short story to date, "Recitatif" also opts for an omission of race, or rather for its push out of focus, so as to muddle the racially constructed categories and subject positions of the main characters. Twyla and Roberta become friends thanks to their shared fate of indifferent mothers and their friendship goes back and forth between racial segregation and integration and thanks to the creation of a third figure of racial other, outside the white/black binary, the characters seem to embrace their respective positions within the U.S. nation.

Indeed, the starting point of the present dissertation was to bring into focus the symbiotic relationship between U.S. nationalism and the idea of family constructed and tempered within the ideological constructions of white, masculinist supremacism. The fact that sixty percent of African American children are brought up without the emotional support of a father may at first glance seem to be the idiosyncratic problem of private households, not to be held accountable to the dominant ideology. Yet, two and a half century of slavery, followed by the neo-slavery of Jim Crow, wrought an

irreversible havoc on the conjugal, consanguineous, and co-residential ties of African American families. This does not mean, of course, that there is/was no hierarchical structures within African American families nor that women are/were not subordinated to men and oppressed by the male heads of the family unit. Yet, regardless of gender in the dyadic relationships of husband/wife, mother/child, father/child, and brother/sister, all members of the domestic space suffered from the broken bloodlines stretching as far back as the Middle Passage of the Atlantic slave trade. Illustration of the ongoing effects of slavery on African American families has been the second intention of the thesis, especially in the first and second chapters, in the person of the characters of Cholly Breedlove, Tyree, and Rex Tucker. Furthermore, it has been interesting to identify and observe the recurrent patterns of sexual degradation, emasculation, infantilization, powerlessness, childhood neglect, and legal nonexistence to be traversing the lives of the main characters in the four works that are studied. Seeing such repetition of the patterns peculiar to the period of slavery, especially in the last chapter and in the two supposedly "race neutral" works has particularly proved intriguing as "white" characters should be expected to be immune from such ill effects of slavery.

The idiom of family provides an indispensable metaphor, especially in the context of the United States, to foster the orders of the social hierarchy, industrial bureaucracy, and imperial capitalism. Therefore the significance of the family trope can be divided into its two ideologically useful categories. First, family metaphor is appropriated as the harbinger of material, and historical progress, no matter how violent and bloody the progress may be, as the colonial fathers rule over the immature children of the colonized in a 'benevolent' fashion. Fanon aptly describes such familial progress during the French intervention in Algeria, turned into the rescue drama of a family: "Around the family life of the Algerian, the occupier piled up a whole mass of judgements," as an attempt at the "total domestication of Algerian society" (Fanon, 1965: 38). Second, it is utilized and deployed as the mold in which social differences and hierarchies are naturalized vis-à-vis the subordination of women to men, children to adults, mothers to fathers, in the domestic space. Thus, the social hierarchy in the public

space is postulated as natural and familial/familiar through the processes of subordination in the private.

In this regard, chapter three can be said to be the conclusive part of the study, in the sense that Erskine Fowler of *Savage Holiday* comes to represent the progressive end of the family metaphor. In his violent ravings to be the ultimate patriarch and in a rescue drama of a family, he overlooks the very contours of his patriarchal yearning, that is, he is blinded by the illusion of progress promulgated by the dominant ideology of parental culture. Morrison's "Recitatif" mounts a criticism not only against the white central(ized) seat of power but against the oppressed, "colored" periphery as well. In the acceptance of the naturalized, hierarchical structures of domestic space, Morrison draws attention to the danger of creating scapegoats on the public domain, unconsciously reinforcing the dichotomies of white/black, center/periphery, and oppressor/oppressed.

As indicated in the "Introduction", the present study is insufficient in addressing and comprehending the complexities of race, gender, sexuality and class compacted into the paradigms of family and nationalism. It would be interesting to analyze white novelists' approaches to these issues alongside Morrison's and Wright's, and to observe whether their opinions would converge with or diverge from the insights African American authors make on the precarious existence of racialized families. William Faulkner's novels *The Sound and Fury* and *Absalom, Absalom!* should prove to be the excellent starting point to delve further into the intra-racial configurations of race and filial associations between the black characters (Dilsey and Charles Bon) and the broken white family histories (Compsons and Sutpens). A study of such scope, I believe, would not only encompass the intricacies the phenomenon of whiteness harbors, and display what transpires on the other side of the racial coin, but would address the issue of racism at its very core. In the final analysis, it should be an interesting further study to undertake, and a complementary one, which is wished and set as a personal reminder to be pursued in the near future.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Abel, Elizabeth: "Black Writing, White Reading: Race and the Politics of Feminist Interpretation," **Critical Inquiry**, 19.3, (1993), pp. 470-98.

Alexander, A. : "The Fourth Face: The Image of God in Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*," **African American Review,** 32.2, (1998), pp. 293-303.

Anderson, Benedict: **Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism**, Verso Books, 2006.

Appiah, Anthony: **In My Father's House: Africa in the Philosophy of Culture**, New York, Oxford University Press, 1992.

Baldwin, James: "On Being "White"…and Other Lies" (1984), **Black Writers on What it Means to be White,** Ed. by., David R. Roediger, New York, Schocken Books, 1998.

Baldwin, James: "If Black English Isn't a Language, Then Tell Me, What Is?," *The New York Times*, July 29, 1979.

Baldwin, James: **Giovanni's Room**, New York, Vintage, 2013.

Baldwin, James: "Here Be Dragons," **The Price of the Ticket**, New York, St. Martin's, 1985.

Baraka, Amiri: **Home: social essays**, New York, Morrow, 1966.

Baraka, Amiri: **Confirmation, An Anthology of African American Women,** New York, William Marrow and Company, 1983.

Barthes, Raymond: "Interview," **Conversations with Richard Wright.** Ed. by., Keneth Kinnamon w. Fabre, Jackson, University of Mississippi Press, 1993.

Balibar, Etienne: **Race, Nation, Class: Ambiguous Identities**, London, Verso, 1991.

Berger, Roger: " 'The Black Dick': Race, Sexuality, and Discourse in the L.A. Novels of Walter Mosely," **African American Review** 31.2, (1997), pp. 281 – 94.

Bhabha, K. Homi: **The Location of Culture**, New York, Routledge, 1994.

Boskin, Joseph: **Sambo: The Rise and Demise of an American Jester**, New York, Oxford University Press, 1986.

Bové, Paul: **Edward Said and the Work of the Critic: Speaking Truth to Power**, Durham and London, Duke University Press, 2000.

Boyarin, Daniel: " 'An Imaginary and Desirable Converse': *Moses and Monotheism* as Family Romance," **Reading Bibles, Reading Bodies: Identity and The Book**, Ed. by., Timothy K. Beal w. Gunn. London, Routledge, 1997, pp. 184‑204.

Bryant, Earle V. : "Sexual Initiation and Survival in *The Long Dream*," **Richard Wright: Critical Perspectives Past and Present,** Ed.by., Henry Louis Gates, Jr., w. Appiah**,** New York, Amistad, 1993.

Carter, B. Julian**: The Heart of Whiteness: Normal Sexuality and Race in America, 1880 – 1940,** Durham and London, 2007.

Cesaire, Aime: **Discourse on Colonialism (1955)**, Trans. by., Joan Pinkham, New York, Monthly Review Press, 1972.

Charbonnier, Georges: "A Negro Novel About White People," **Conversations with Richard Wright,** Ed. by., Keneth Kinnamon w. Fabre, Jackson, University of Mississippi Press, 1993.

Chow, Rey: **Ethics after Idealism: Theory, Culture, Ethnicity, Reading**, Indianapolis, Indiana University Press, 1998.

Cleaver, Eldridge: **Soul on Ice,** 1968, rpt., New York, Dell, 1970.

Collins, H., Patricia: "It's All in the Family: Intersections of Gender, Race, and Nation," **Hypatia**, 13:3, (Summer, 1998), pp. 62 – 82.

Cooper, Antony: **Destructiveness, Intersubjectivity and Trauma,** London, Karnac Books, 2010.

Crenshaw, Kimberle: "Color-blind Dreams and Racial Nightmares: Reconfiguring Racism in the Post – Civil Rights Era," **Birth of a Nation'hood: Gaze, Script and Spectacle in the O. J. Simpson Case**, Ed. by., Toni Morrison, Claudia B. Lacour, New York, Pantheon Books, 2010.

Crooks, S. K. : **Desiring Whiteness: A Lacanian Analysis of Race,** New York & London, Routledge, 2000.

Crossley, Nick**: Intersubjectivity: The Fabric of Social Becoming**, London, Sage, 1996.

Davis, A. Cynthia: "Self, Society, and Myth in Toni Morrison's Fiction," **Contemporary Literature,** 23, (1982), pp. 324 – 346.

Davis, J. Lennard: “Constructing Normalcy: The Bell Curve, the Novel, and the Invention of the Disabled Body in the Nineteenth Century,” **The Disability Studies Reader**, Ed. by., Lennard J. Davis, Psychology Press 1, 2006.

Deleuze, Gilles, Guattari Felix: **A thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia**, London & New York, Continuum, 2003.

Derrida, Jacques: **Specters of Marx**, New York, Routledge, 2006.

Dubek, Laura: “ ‘Til Death Do Us Part: White Male Rage in Richard Wright’s Savage Holiday,” **Mississippi Quarterly**, 61.4, (2008), pp. 593 – 613.

DuBois, W.E.B. : **Black Reconstruction in America 1860-1880,** Reprint Services Corporation, 1935.

DuBois, W.E.B. : (1896) **Darkwater**, Mineola, NY, Dover Publications, 1999.

DuBois, W.E.B. : **The Negro American Family**, Atlanta, The Atlanta University Pres, 1908.

DuCille, Ann: “The Unbearable Darkness of Being: “Fresh” Thoughts on Race, Sex, and the Simpsons,” **Birth of a Nation’hood: Gaze, Script and Spectacle in the O. J. Simpson Case**, Ed. by., Toni Morrison, Claudia B. Lacour, New York, Pantheon Books, 2010.

Eckard, G. Paula: **Maternal Body and Voice in Toni Morrison, Bobbie Ann Mason, and Lee Smith,** University of Missouri Press, 2002.

Ellison, Ralph: **Shadow and Act (1972),** New York, Vintage, 1995.

Ellison, Ralph: “What America Would Be Like Without Blacks.” **Time**, April 6, 1970.

Engen, Trygg: **Odor Sensation and Memory**, New York, Praeger, 1991.

Evans, Dylan: **An Introductory Dictionary of Lacanian Psychoanalysis**, London, Routledge, 2006.

Fabre, Michel: **The Unfinished Quest of Richard Wright**, Urbana, University of Illinois Press, 1993.

Fanon, Franz: **Black Skin, White Masks,** Pluto Press, 1967.

Fanon, Franz: **A Dying Colonialism**, New York, Monthly Review Press, 1965.

Fick, H. Thomas: “Toni Morrison’s “Allegory of the Cave,” **Bloom’s Modern Critical Interpretations, Toni Morrison’s The Bluest Eye,** Ed. by., H. Bloom, New York, Infobase, 2007.

Fiorenza, S. Elisabeth: **Wisdom Ways: Introducing Feminist Biblical Interpretation**, Maryknoll, NY, Orbis Books, 2001.

Fishbum, Katherine: **Richard Wright's Hero: The Faces of a Rebel-Victim,** Metuchen, Scarecrow, 1977.

Fishkin, F. Shelley: "Desegregating American Literary Studies," **Aesthetics in a Multicultural Age**, Ed. by., Emory Elliott et al., New York and Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2002.

Foner, S. Philip: **Blacks in the American Revolution,** Greenwood Press, 1976.

Foucault, Michel: **Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison**, New York, Vintage Books, 1995.

Foucault, Michel: "The Political Function of the Intellectual," **Radical Philosophy**, Vol. 17, (1976), pp. 12 – 14.

Fowler, Henry: "Chinaman," **The New Fowler's Modern English Usage**, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1996.

Frankenburg, Ruth: **White Women, Race Matters: The Social Construction of Whiteness,** University of Minnesota Press, 1993.

Fredrickson, George: **Racism: A Short History**, University of Princeton Press, 2002.

Freud, Sigmund: "On Dreams," **The Freud Reader**, Ed. by., P. Gay, London, 1995.

Freud, Sigmund: *Totem and Taboo,* **The Freud Reader**, Ed. by., P. Gay. London, 1995.

Freud, Sigmund: "The Ego and the Id," **The Freud Reader**, Ed. by., P. Gay, London, 1995.

Freud, Sigmund: *Three Contributions to the Theory of Sex,* **The Freud Reader**, Ed. by., P. Gay, London, 1995.

Freud, Sigmund: "Civilization and its Discontents," **The Freud Reader**, Ed. by., P. Gay, London, 1995.

Freud, Sigmund: "Screen Memories," **The Freud Reader**, Ed. by., P. Gay, London, 1995.

Gaskill, Gayle: "The Effect of Black/White Imagery in Richard Wright's *Black Boy*," **Negro American Literature Forum,** 7, (1973), pp. 46-48.

Gellner, Ernest: **Thought and Change**, London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1964.

Geiger, Jeffrey: "Unmaking the Male Body: The Politics of Masculinity in *The Long Dream*,"**African American Review***,* 33, (1999), pp. 197-207

Geismar, Maxwell: "Growing Up in Fears Grip" (1958), **Richard Wright: The Critical Reception,** Ed. by., John M. Reilly, New York, Burt Franklin, 1978.

Genovese, D. Eugene: **The World The Slaveholders Made: Two Essays in Interpretation,** Pantheon Books, 1969.

Gibson, B. Donald: "Text and Countertext in Toni Morrison's The Bluest Eye," **Bloom's Modern Critical Interpretations, Toni Morrison's The Bluest Eye,** Ed. by., H. Bloom. New York, Infobase, 2007.

Gilman, L. Sander: "Black Bodies, White Bodies: Toward an Iconography of Female Sexuality in Late Nineteenth-Century Art, Medicine, and Literature," **Race, Writing, and Difference,** Ed. by., Henry Louis Gates, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1986.

Gilman, L. Sander: **Freud, Race, and Gender**, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1993.

Gilroy, Paul: **The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness***,* Harvard University Press, 1993.

Goffman, Erving: **Relations in Public: Microstudies of the Public Order**, New York, Harper Collins, 1972.

Goldberg, David: **Racist Culture: Philosophy and the Politics of Meaning,** Cambridge, Blackwell, 1993.

Goldstein - Shirley David: "Race and Response: Toni Morrison's 'Recitatif,'" **Short Story** 5, (1997), pp. 77 – 86.

Gordon, R. Lewis: **Bad Faith and Antiblack Racism**, New York, Humanity Books, 1995.

Gounard, J.F., Gounard, B. Roberts: "Richard Wright's *Savage Holiday*: Use or Abuse of Psychoanalysis?," **CLA Journal**, 22, (1979), pp. 344-49.

Green, T. Tara: "The Virgin Mary, Eve, and Mary Magdelene in Richard Wright's Novels," **Bloom's Modern Critical Interpretations, Toni Morrison's The Bluest Eye,** Ed. by., H. Bloom, New York, Infobase, 2007.

Gupta, Monika: "Infanticide and Mother- Daughter Relationship in Toni Morison's *Beloved*", (Online Source) http://www.inter-disciplinary.net/wp-content/uploads/2009/04/ewf1gupta.pdf, July 8, 2015.

Guterl, Matthew: “Jean Toomer,” **African American Literature Beyond Race**, Ed. by., Gene Andrew Jarrett, New York and London, New York University Press, 2006.

Hakutani, Yoshinobu: “Richard Wright's The Long Dream as Racial and Sexual Discourse,” **African American Review**, Vol. 30, No. 2 (Summer, 1996), pp. 267-280.

Hakutani, Yoshinobu: **Critical Essays on Richard Wright**, Ed. by., Y. Hakutani, Boston, G.K. Hall, 1982.

Hall, Stuart: “Cultural Identity and Diaspora,” **Identity, Community, Culture, Difference,** Ed. by., Jonathan Rutherford, London, Lawrance & Wishart, 1990, pp. 222-237.

Hardy, S. Madsen: “‘Recitatif’: Maggie as Metaphor,” **Short Stories for Students**, Vol. 5, 1988.

Harris, Truddier: **Fiction and Folklore: The Novels of Toni Morrison,** Knoxville, University of Tennessee Press, 1991.

Harris, Truddier: “Watchers Watching Watchers: Positioning Characters and Readers in Baldwin’s ‘Sonny’s Blues’ and Morrison’s ‘Recitatif,’” **James Baldwin and Toni Morrison: Comparative Critical and Theoretical Essays**, Ed. by., Lovalerie King, Lynn Orilla Scott, New York, Palgrave/Macmillan, 2006.

Harris, Cheryl: “Whiteness as Property” (1993), **Black Writers on What it Means to be White,** Ed. by., Roediger R. David, New York, Schocken Books, 1998.

Herbst, Philip: “Chinaman,” **The Color of Words: An Encyclopaedic Dictionary of Ethnic Bias in the United States,** Yarmouth, Intercultural Press, 1997.

Herman, Judith: **Trauma and Recovery: The Aftermath of Violence- from Domestic Abuse to Political Terror,** Basic Books, 1997.

Hernton, Calvin C. : **Sex and Racism in America***,* New York, Grove, 1966.

Hooks, Bell: **Black Looks: Race and Representation,** New York, Routledge, 1992.

Hurston, N. Zora: **Hurston to Burroughs Mitchell**, September 3, 1947, Charles Scribner’s Sons Archives, Author’s File 3, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University.

Irigaray, Luce: **An Ethics of Sexual Difference**, Trans. by., Carolyn Burke, Gillian C. Gill, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1993.

James, C.L.R. : **Modern Politics**, Detroit, MI, Bewick, 1973.

JanMohamed, R. Abdul: **The Death-Bound-Subject: Richard Wright's Archaeology of Death,** Duke University Press, 2005.

JanMohamed, R. Abdul: "The Economy of Manichean Allegory: The Function of Racial Difference in Colonialist Literature," **Race, Writing, and Difference,** Ed. by., Henry Louis Gates, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1986.

Jarett, A. Gene: "Introduction," **African American Literature Beyond Race**, Ed. by., Gene Andrew Jarrett et. al., New York and London, New York University Press, 2006.

Joanne S. Frye**: Living Stories, Telling Lives,** Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, 1986.

Johnson, Charles: **Being and Race: Black Writing Since 1970**, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1988.

Khanna, Ranjana: **Dark Continents: Psychoanalysis and Colonialism**, Durham, Duke University Press, 2003.

Kiniery, Paul: "Of The Long Dream" (1958), **Richard Wright: The Critical Reception,** Ed. by., John Reilly, New York, Burt Franklin, 1978.

Kinnamon, Kenneth, Fabre Michel (1960): "Richard Wright Explains His Work and *The Long Dream*," **Conversations with Richard Wright,** Ed. by., Kinnamon w. Fabre, University Press of Mississippi, 1993.

Kismaric, Carole, Heiferman, Marvin: **Growing Up with Dick and Jane: Learning and Living the American Dream**, Harper Collins, 1996.

Klotman, R. Phyllis: "Dick-and-Jane and the Shirley Temple Sensibility in *The Bluest Eye,*" **Black American Literature Forum**, Vol. 13, No. 4 (Winter, 1979), pp. 123-125.

Kojeve, Alexander: **Introduction to the Reading of Hegel**, Trans. by., James H. Nichols, New York, Basic Books, 1969.

Kolchin, Peter: "Whiteness Studies: The New History of Race in America," **The Journal of American History***,* Vol. 89, No.1, (Jun., 2002), pp. 154 – 173.

Kovel, Joel: **White Racism: A Psychohistory**, New York, Pantheon Books, 1970.

Lacan, Jacques: **The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis**, New York & London, Norton,1998.

Lacan, Jacques: **"Seminar on 'The Purloined Letter'" (1956)**, Trans. by., Jeffrey Mehlman, Muller and Richardson, 28‑54.

Lacan, Jacques: **Écrits: The First Complete Edition in English,** Trans. by., Bruce Fink, Norton, 2000.

Lacan, Jacques: **Écrits: A Selection**, Trans. by., Alan Sheridan, London, Tavistock Publications, 1977.

Lacan, Jacques: **On Feminine Sexuality, The Limits of Love and Knowledge,** New York & London, Norton, 1999.

Lacan, Jacques: "Ego-ideal and ideal ego" (1953-4), **The Seminar of Jacques Lacan: Book I, Freud's Papers on Technique,** Ed. by., J. Alain Miller.,University of Cambridge Press, 1988.

Laplanche, Jean and Pontalis, Jean-Bertrand: **The Language of Psycho-Analysis,** Trans. **by.,** Donald Nicholson-Smith, London, Hogarth Press, 1973.

Laws, John: "The Rule of Reason- An International Heritage," **Judicial Review in International Perspective,** Vol. 2, (2000), pp. 247 – 259.

Leclaire, Serge: **A Child is Being Killed: On Primary Narcissism and the Death Drive,** Trans. by., Marie-Claude Hays, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1998.

Leonardo, Zeus: **Race, Whiteness and Education,** Routledge, 2009.

Magness, Phillip and Page, Sebastian: **Colonization After Emancipation: Lincoln and the Movement for Black Resettlement**, University of Missouri Press, 2011.

Margolies, Edward: **The Art of Richard Wright,** Carbondale, Southern Illinois UP, 1969.

Marriott, David: **On Black Men,** Edinburgh University Press, 2000.

Marx, Karl and Engels, Friedrich: **Ireland and the Irish Question**, New York, International Publishers, 1972.

Mediatore, S. Shari: "Postmodernism, Realism, and The Problem of Identity," **Reclaiming Identity: Realist Theory and the Predicament of Post-modernism**, Ed. by., Paula Moya, Michael Hames – Garcia. Berkeley, University of California Press, 2000.

Meigs, A. and Barlow, K. : "Beyond the Taboo: Imaging Incest," **American Anthropologist, New Series,** Vol. 104, No. 1 (Mar., 2002), pp. 38-49.

Miner, Madonne M. : "Lady No Longer Sings the Blues: Rape, Madness, and Silence in *The Bluest Eye,*" **Conjuring: Black Women, Fiction, and Literary Tradition,** Ed. by., Marjorie Pryse, Hortense J. Spillers, Bloomington, Indiana UP, 1985. 176-91.

Morrison, Toni: **Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination,** Picador, 1993.

Morrison, Toni: **The Bluest Eye,** Vintage, 1994.

Morrison, Toni: "Recitatif" (1983), **African American Literature Beyond Race**, Ed. by., Gene Andrew Jarrett, New York and London, New York University Press, 2006.

Morrison, Toni: **What Moves at the Margin**, Ed. by., Carolyn C. Denard, U. Press of Mississippi, 2008.

Morrison, Toni: "Introduction," **Birth of a Nation'hood: Gaze, Script and Spectacle in the O. J. Simpson Case**, Ed. by., Toni Morrison, Claudia B. Lacour, New York, Pantheon Books, 2010.

Mosse, George L. : **Toward the Final Solution: A History of European Racism**, New York, Howard Fertig, 1978.

Moynihan, Daniel: "The Negro Family: The Case For National Action," United States Department of Labor, (Online Source) http://www.dol.gov/dol/aboutdol/history/webid-meynihan.htm, May 2014.

Mulvey, Laura: "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," **Film Theory and Criticism: Introductory Readings,** Ed. by., G. Mast, M. Cohen, Oxford University Press, 2004.

Myrdal, Gunnar: **An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy,** New York, Harpers, 1995.

Nash, B. Gary: **The Forgotten Fifth: African Americans in the Age of Revolution,** Harvard University Press, 2006.

Nast, J. Heidi: "Mapping the "Unconscious": Racism and the Oedipal Family," **Annals of the Association of American Geographers,** Vol. 90, No. 2 (Jun., 2000), pp. 215-255.

Ottley, Roi: "Wright's New Novel Isn't for Squeamish" (1958), **Richard Wright: The Critical Reception,** Ed. by., John M. Reilly, New York, Burt Franklin, 1978.

Patterson, Orlando: **Rituals of Blood: Consequences of Slavery in Two American Centuries**, Basic Civitas, 1998.

Patterson, Orlando: **Freedom in the Making of Western Culture**. Vol. 1. London, Basic, 1991.

Patterson, Orlando: **Slavery and Social Death: A Comparative Study**, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1982

Peters, Pam: "Chinaman or Chinese," **The Cambridge Guide to English Usage,** Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2004.

Peterson, L. Carla: "Frances Ellen Watkins Harper," **African American Literature Beyond Race**, Ed. by., Gene Andrew Jarrett, New York and London, New York University Press, 2006.

Raimon, A. Eve: **The "Tragic Mulatta" Revisited: Race and Nationalism in Nineteenth Century Antislavery Fiction,** Rutgers University Press, 2004.

Rayson, Ann: "Decoding for Race: Toni Morrison's 'Recitatif' and Being White, Teaching Black," **Changing Representations of Minorities East and West**, Ed. by., Larry E. Smith, John Rieder, Honolulu, University of Hawai'i Press, 1996.

Redding, Saunders: "The Way It Was" (1958), **Richard Wright: The Critical Reception,** Ed. by., John M. Reilly, New York, Burt Franklin, 1978.

Reed, Ishmael: "Bigger and O.J.," **Birth of a Nation'hood: Gaze, Script and Spectacle in the O. J. Simpson Case**, Ed. by., Toni Morrison, Claudia B. Lacour, New York, Pantheon Books, 2010.

Reilly, M. John: "Richard Wright's Curious Thriller, *Savage Holiday*," **CLA Journal**, 21, (1977), pp. 218-23.

Roediger R. David: "Introduction," **Black Writers on What it Means to be White,** Ed. by., Roediger, New York, Schocken Books, 1998.

Rosenthal J. Debra: **Race Mixture in Nineteenth Century U.S. and Spanish American Fictions: Gender, Culture, and Nation Building**, Chapel Hill, The University of North Carolina Press, 2004.

Rothenberg, A. Molly and Foster, Dennis: **Perversion and the Social Relation,** Duke University Press, 2003.

Sartre, J. P. : **"What is Literature?" and Other Essays**, Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard University Press, 1988.

Sartre, J. P. **: Being and Nothingness,** Trans. by., Hazel E. Barnes, New York and London, Routledge, 2003.

Schreiber, J. Evelyn: **Race, Trauma, and Home in the Novels of Toni Morrison,** Baton Rouge, Louisiana State University Press, 2010.

Schütze, Robert: **European Constitutional Law**, Cambridge University Press, 2012.

Scott, O. Lynn: **James Baldwin and Toni Morrison: Comparative Critical and Theoretical Essays,** Ed. by., Lovalerie King, Lynn Orilla Scott, Macmillan, 2006.

Scott, C. James: **Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts**, Yale University Press, 1990.

Segal, Hanna: **Introduction to the Work of Melanie Klein,** London, Karnac Books, 2008.

Shapiro, Harry L. : "A Portrait of the American People," **Natural History,** (June 1945), pp. 248-55.

Sollors, Werner: **Fiction, Poetry, and Essays**, New Milford, Conn., Toby Press, 2004.

Sözalan, Özden, H. : "The Representation of the Female Subject in Contemporary Women's Dramatic Writing," Ph.D. Dissertation, 2000.

Spandel, Katherine: "The Long Dream," **New Letters,** 38, (1971), pp. 88-96.

Standley L. Fred and Pratt H. Louis: "Introduction," **Conversations with James Baldwin,** Ed. by., Fred L. Standley, Louis H. Pratt, University Press of Mississippi, 1989.

Stanley, K. Sandra: "Maggie in Toni Morrison's "Recitatif": The Africanist Presence and Disability Studies," **MELUS**, Vol. 36, No. 2, **Toni Morrison: New Directions**, (2011), pp. 71-88.

Sugrue, J. Thomas: **The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit,** Princeton University Press, 2005.

Sundquist, Eric: **Faulkner: The House Divided**, Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1983.

Tate, Claudia: **Psychoanalysis and Black Novels: Desire and the Protocols of Race,** New York, Oxford University Press, 1998.

Taylor – Guthrie, Danille**: Conversations with Toni Morrison***,* Ed. by., Danille Taylor-Guthrie, University Press of Mississippi, 1994.

Thompson, Van Carlyle: **Eating the Black Body: Miscegenation as Sexual Consumption in African American Literature and Culture,** New York, Peter Lang Pub., 2006.

Tuhkanen, Mikko: **The American Optic: Psychoanalysis, Critical Race Theory, and Richard Wright,** State University of New York Press, 2009.

Vassilowitch, John: "'Erskine Fowler': A Key Freudian Pun in *Savage Holiday*," **English Language Notes**, 18, (1981), pp. 206-08.

Vickroy, Laura: "The Politics of Abuse: The traumatized Child in Toni Morrison and Marguerite Duras," **Mosaic** 29.2 (1996), pp. 91-100.

Wallace, Michelle: **Black Macho and the Myth of the Superwoman**, New York, Dial, 1979.

Ward, W. Jerry, Butler, J. Robert: **The Richard Wright Encyclopedia**, Ed. by., Jerry Ward, Robert Butler, Greenwood Publishing Group, 2008.

Whitfield, Stephen: **The Culture of the Cold War**, Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990.

Wiegman, Robyn: **American Anatomies: Theorizing Race and Gender**, Durham, Duke
University Press, 1995.

Wilson, Elizabeth: "Not in this house: Incest, Denial and Doubt in the White middle Class Family," **The Yale Journal of Criticism**, 8, (1995), pp. 35-58.

Williams, Brackett: "It's All in the Family: Intersections of Gender, Race and Nation," **Hypatia**, 13: 3, (1998), pp. 62 - 82,

Williams, Eric: **Capitalism and Slavery**, Chapel Hill, The University of North Carolina Press, 1944.

Winnubst, Shannon: "Vampires, Anxieties, and Dreams: Race and Sex in the Contemporary United States," **Hypatia**, 18: 3, (2003), pp. 1-20.

Wong, Shelly: "Transgression as Poesis in *The Bluest Eye,*" **Bloom's Modern Critical Interpretations, Toni Morrison's The Bluest Eye,** Ed. by. H. Bloom, New York, Infobase, 2007.

Wood, S. Gordon: **The Radicalism of the American Revolution,** Vintage Books, 1993.

Wright, Richard: **The Long Dream,** Boston, Northeastern University Press, 2000.

Wright, Richard (1957): ***White Man, Listen!*** Greenwood Press, 1978.

Wright, Richard (1946): "Psychiatry Comes to Harlem," **Free World Periodical**, 12, pp. 49-51.

Wright, Richard: **Black Boy: A Record of Childhood and Youth (1945),** HarperCollins, 2006.

Wright, Richard: **Native Son,** New York, Harper & Row, 1940.

Wright, Richard: **Savage Holiday**, Banner Books, University Press of Mississippi, 1954.

Young, Richard: **Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race,** New York, Routledge, 1995.

Zizek, Slavoj: **How to Read Lacan**, New York, Vintage, 2011.

Zizek, Slavoj: **The Universal Exception**, London, Continuum, 2006.

Zizek, Slavoj: **The Metastases of Enjoyment: Six Essays on Women and Causality**, London and New York, Verso, 2005.

Zizek, Slavoj: **The Indivisible Remainder: On Schelling and Related Matters**, London and New York, Verso, 2007.

Zizek, Slavoj: **Jacques Lacan: Society, Politics, Ideology**, New York, Routledge, 2003.

ÖZGEÇMİŞ

Aşkın Çelikkol 1983 yılında Adana'da doğdu. Danışment Gazi Anadolu Lisesi'nden 2001 yılında mezun oldu ve 2001-2005 yılları arasında İstanbul Üniversitesi, Edebiyat Fakültesi Batı Dilleri ve Edebiyatları Bölümü, Amerikan Kültürü ve Edebiyatı Anabilim Dalı'nda lisans öğrenimi gördü. 2005 – 2008 yıllarında, Fulbright bursu ile, Amerika Birleşik Devletleri, Michigan State University [Michigan Eyalet Üniversitesi], American Studies [Amerikan Çalışmaları] bölümünde yüksek lisansını tamamladı. 2008 – 2009 yıllarında İstanbul Üniversitesi, Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Amerikan Kültürü ve Edebiyatı Anabilim Dalı'nda doktora çalışmalarına başladı. 2010 yılından itibaren İstanbul Üniversitesi, Edebiyat Fakültesi Batı Dilleri ve Edebiyatları Bölümü, Amerikan Kültürü ve Edebiyatı Anabilim Dalı'nda Araştırma Görevlisi olarak çalışmaktadır.