



Research Paper

Lack of self-esteem in *The Bluest eye* and *Native son* novels

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ABSTRACT

The current paper investigation of the major reasons behind the decreasing of self-esteem in the main characters of the eminent American novels *Native Son* and *The Bluest Eye*. Richard Wright and Toni Morrison novelists are an effort to bring out the central theme of the Black American experience in an unjust society like America. In the two novels explores a lot of themes, among these themes is the lack of self-esteem that are widespread in African American communities. African American faced multiple challenges to their self-esteem, including racism fear, criminal, and sexism. The Compare and contrast of the ways that these two American writers have conceived the relationship between racial oppression (black) and the institution of the family (society) in their respective selected works. The problems of freedom and equality which are denied to black people in the United States. The researcher showed how the two African Americans characters rages against White oppression. *Native Son* is a novel that revolves around critical themes of race, identity, and family. Richard Wright showed Americans how a Black youth long suppressed shows the gumption to raise his voice against white oppression. *The Bluest Eye* invariably dramatize of the fundamental social and existential problems such as rootlessness, displacement and lack of self-esteem among other nagging issues in the black community.

KEY WORDS: Lack of self-esteem, racial oppression, discrimination, depravation

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I. INTRODUCTION

Since the beginning of their plight and forced departure from Africa through death boats and transcontinental merchant ships to the jungles of America, chained and disdained, black Americans have been fighting against injustice, inferiority, inequality, and institutional stereotyping, denouncing oppression and slavery, and searching for freedom and social justice - despite the narrow opportunities and the impossibility of demands - in ways. Multiple such as rebellion and revolutions, and art and literature that embodied memories of wounds and pain, so their demands, despite their simplicity, were elusive because of the racists who saw that black people were half human and half animal, and did not possess the tools of thinking and capabilities that qualify them to full humanity.

Under slavery, blacks were suffering from hard work, the pain of the whip, and humiliation, and they could not claim their rights and express their tragedy through art and music after banning drums and art tools from African farms and gatherings, or to write their history and heritage, because writing in the eyes of whites is the highest degree of human maturity and sophistication. The slaves did not realize this sublime stage yet .

In order to counter this heresy, the black cultural movements began to initiate their intellectual views and outlook on life, freedom and the self, and produced stories, theaters, novels and songs, and with the improvement of the situation and the rise of voices calling for the abolition of slavery, the blacks gradually became involved in the American cultural mold, and they fought through their writings, narratives, and musical art ideas. Racism, and the banner of this decisive period in the history of Negroes in America carried skilled writers, writers and musicians who devoted their efforts to turning the page of slavery and opening the era of citizenship and equality.

The shipping ports of Africa are still evidence of the effects of this human tragedy of the nineteenth century. Blacks were continuing their timid attempts, which were mostly individualistic and far from influencing, in order to restore respect and break through the barrier of cultural isolation and emancipation from the negative effects of years from slavery and introversion to freedom, and the influence of the American street

and its colonial culture and transforming it into a common culture characterized by inclusiveness, justice and patriotism. Thus the struggle and the fight against racism and discrimination continued until the Harlem Renaissance and the wide-ranging and deep-rooted cultural and intellectual movements that came with it.

James Weldon, Alan Locke and their colleagues were among the authors interested in ideas, debates, and the wild imagination towards negation of inferiority as well as self-affirmation and respect for cultural identity, The Jubilee singers, Scott Joplin, and others who founded an African American school of singing and melodies that had their pioneers, features and lyrical language continued their search for the self.

After World War II, the Afro-American community found platforms through which it could express its culture, feelings, problems, pasts of slavery, psychological and physical oppression, and aspirations for freedom and the future. They created musical groups and cultural clubs, and excelled in novels and literary writing, and in this period were formed the landmarks of independent American black art, which bears deep African imprints, whether it is jazz, hip-hop, folklore and cinema.

Self-esteem is one of the most widely studied topics in psychology; there are publications deal with how individuals feel about themselves. But the low of self-esteem if define the people who lacks confidence and who they are and what they can do. They often feel incompetent, unloved, or inadequate. People who struggle with low self-esteem are consistently afraid about making mistakes or letting other people down. Having self-esteem issues can be detrimental to your health and negatively affect your personal and professional relationships. There are many reasons why you may have low self-esteem — your genes, how and where you grew up, and other life circumstances all play a role. A major factor of low self-esteem, however, comes from your own mental state. Your inner voice, or the thoughts in your head, can be constantly telling you that you are not good enough or worth anything, even if there is evidence to the contrary. Negative thinking in general is linked to low self-worth and low self-esteem.

This paper examines the determinants of personal self-esteem, racial self-esteem, and personal efficacy in a sample of black Americans. The researcher wanted to shed light on the lack of self-esteem and its negative effects in a society that is based on racial inequality represented by white Americans.

Discussion :- The present paper analysis the select works of eminent a African American authors Richard Wright and Toni Morrison. Their novels embody the countless struggles of the Afro-American community and the problems lack of self-esteem, displacement and devastation they faced due to racial prejudice and discrimination. A large part of their live got consumed by the ugly specter of slavery. Often trampling their very existence under overpowering onslaught of racial discrimination and violence. In the two novels are views the issue of racial isolation as lying at the base of criminalization of a whole race on the premise of face esteem.

Native Son 1940

Richard Wright was one of the prominent African-American novelists and his novel *Native Son* is spoken to for both Black and White groups of onlookers. In fact, the issue of Blacks in *Native Son* is at first the contention between various skins. His own particular experience in the society included violence, clashes, racist oppressions and escape from the South toward the North. The greater part of the characters enlivened from his life to express that experience. Hence, he utilized Bigger Thomas in *Native Son*. The vast majority of his works were taken from Black life and he likewise gladly connected Black existence with his own particular biography. Richard Wright's novel *Native Son* will be talked about as it recounts the tale of a black man's life and the difficulty of neediness and hardship which puts the fundamental character, Bigger Thomas, in a circumstance outside his ability to understand.

The importance of *Native Son* with respect to the introduction of racial discrimination and Identity has fittingly been summed up by the acclaimed social historian specialist Irving Howe (1963) in the accompanying words:

The day *Native Son* appeared, American culture was changed forever. It made impossible a repetition of the old lies [and] brought out into the open, as no one ever had before, the hatred, fear and violence that have crippled and may yet destroy our culture (Howe, *Dissent*, pp.353-368).

In *Native Son* views the issue of racial isolation as lying at the base of criminalization of a whole race on the premise of face esteem. In *Native Son*, being born a black is getting consequently marked as a potential criminal – a heartbroken truth which Wright appears through the difficulty of his hero, Bigger Thomas. This disturbing novel projects beyond doubt how the ghettoization of the blacks in unhygienic and inhuman conditions remains one of the most powerful factors behind their indulgence in criminal activities. Without even the base of sustenance, the blacks are either pushed into humble occupations or into insignificant violations like robbing and taking. Even with such social truth, the little demonstrations of philanthropy and social change lose their self-esteem.

Wright depicts Bigger Thomas as a Black man isolated from the two his companions and his family. *Native Son*, Wright's best work, deals with the story of the Black man's struggle to characterize himself and free himself from the shackles of White society. His protagonists, and especially Bigger Thomas among them all, want to be completely human all alone terms and to substantiate themselves deserving of esteem. Richard Wright deals with racial violence which is fearful and terrifying and has depressing effects on the Black race. In this novel, Bigger nearly covers Mary

Dalton, a White woman, by squeezing a pad on her mouth and nose. Actually, he would not like to slaughter her, yet she passes on and afterward he consumes her body.

Bigger is a representative of Black people group who fights and dissents against violence, racial abuse, slavery, and racism. In fact, violence is the primary experience of the African-Americans. Richard Wright made Bigger in *Native Son* to demonstrate Black hopelessness and loss of the self-esteem in the American society. As Wright in—*How Bigger Was Born* stated, there are numerous Biggers in America:

As I contemplated Bigger and what he meant, I said to myself, I must write this novel, not only for others to read, but to free myself of this sense of shame and fear. In fact, the novel, as time passed, grew upon me to the extent that it became a necessity to write it; the writing of it turned into a way of living for me (*Native Son*, p.17).

Richard Wright tries to include us inwardly all through Bigger's criminal vocation, without section divisions and with breaks just when important to stamp a difference in scene against the society where he lives. "He realized that the minute he permitted what his life intended to enter completely into his awareness, he would either kill himself or another person. So he denied himself and acted tough" (*Native Son*, p.14). Here is the way to the greater part of Bigger's conduct and to all his brutality. To legitimize Bigger's oppression and to demonstrate how society impacts a person's conduct, his mom's voice drifted to him in song, a song that angered him:

Life is like a mountain railroad with an engineer that's brave we must make the run successful from cradle to the grave (*Native Son*, p.40). Yes, "life is like a mountain railroad" where to go ahead means to carry all our dreams, all our frustrations, everything have lived before; and Bigger had been, in fact, all his life so conditioned by fear and violence, that being found alone in a White girl's room, when blind Mrs. Dalton appears, forces him into a state of hysterical terror, and he murders the poor girl. It is an accident and not an accident; he killed. Because of fear, accidentally, but he did kill to be someone in the society, where he never had been himself.

We live here and they live there. We black and they White.

They got things and we ain't. They do things and we can't.

It's just like living in jail. (*Native Son*, p.50).

Bigger is always tormented by the glitter of the leading civilization. It is a serious crisis to him to feel confident of his own identity in a society where he feels continually in conflict. Hence comes his prevailing fear:

I don't know. I just feel that way. Every time I get to thinking about me being black and they being White, me being here and they being there, I feel Like something awful's going to happen to me... Why they make us live in one corner of the city? Why don't they let us fly planes and run ships . . . (*Native Son*, p.50).

Bigger feels more joyful and more liberated after he kills Mary. His violence against a White lady gives him a feeling of energy. Toward the finish of *Native Son*, he even suggests that his killings communicated his most profound self. You could contend that through his fierce resistance, Bigger has risen above or transcended the resignation of the other black characters. Starting here of view, Bigger's violence is an assertion of his freedom and a rebellion against society's constraints.

The struggles to make black identity in a society where blacks are considered as 'White property, heart and soul, body and blood' are the points of interest in *Native Son*. The considerations and activities of Bigger Thomas show us that, because of this objectification, the "rhythms of . . . [black] life" are "indifference and violence" (*Native Son*, p.58). At the end of the novel, Bigger perceives that violence has turned out to be so indispensable to his identity as a person that he "didn't know I was really alive in this world until I felt things hard enough to kill for 'em'" (*Native Son*, p.453). In the novel, Black violence based on these lines, with its refining black identity and excelling empathy turns into a positive power. Because of this distinguished future from the average White impression of violence, Black people are compelled to consider violence from a different perspective. Through the injustice of black objectification, Bigger ends up indifferent to the suffering of other human beings. Psychologists Brock Bastian and Nick Haslam depict the advancement of "cognitive responses to interpersonal maltreatment, affirming that people go into 'psychological deconstructive' states when rejected. These include enthusiastic desensitizing, diminished compassion, subjective firmness, and an absence of meaningful thought" (Bastian, Brock, 2011: p.295). As Bigger adapts to abuse by Whites, he experiences the indications of psychological deconstruction; this is show in even his most close connections: "I was just scared. I wasn't in love with Bessie . . . I don't reckon I was ever in love with nobody . . . You had to have a girl, so I had Bessie" (*Native Son*, pp.381-82). Bigger can neither genuinely despise nor adore; his abuse by Whites has guaranteed lack of concern. As the novel finds some conclusion, Bigger can discover peace through investigating his newly discovered human identity. It is apparent, nonetheless, that Bigger will never experience the full advantages of being human; humanization is insufficient to spare him from his approaching death sentence. As Max plans to leave Bigger for the last time, Max eyes are:

brimming with dread, yet Bigger feels all right. . . realizing that what I killed for, I am . . . What I killed for must've been good? When a man kills, it's for something . . . I didn't know I was really alive in this world until I felt things hard enough to kill for em . . . it's the truth, Mr. Max. I can say it now, cause I'm going to die (*Native Son*, p.453).

Ralph Ellison, a notable African-American writer and one of Richard Wright's companions who wrote a remarkably acclaimed book entitled *Invisible Man*, uncovers that:

Native Son and *Uncle Tom's Children* express an artistic sensibility overcoming the social and cultural isolation of Negro life and moving into a world of unlimited intellectual and imaginative possibilities. The technical, artistic, and intellectual qualities of these works are a reflection and a result of this process. To understand this is to grasp many of the problems of Negro life and fiction (Ralph Ellison, p.12).

A condemnation of racism Richard Wright

Native Son novel is an explicit accusation of American racism that denies the main reason behind these criminals is the environment in which the Negro lives. Critics consider *Native son* novel the summit of American black tragedy. It revolves around the problem of social incompatibility in America, the impact of the social environment on the individual behavior, problems of crime and the punishment in a society based on racism against blacks. The black society is the victim of indifference, and the injustice that befalls on the black man has deep racial roots in America. The sense of injustice drove him to become preoccupied with the concerns of black men everywhere. The white man represented in his view a set of dilemmas that were looking for a solution, and the search led him to embrace existentialism after it became clear to him the falsity of communism, but he did not find in all these doctrines a solution by which he could overcome the differences between human beings. This prompted him to pay attention to the problem of the struggle against colonialism, so he traveled to Ghana, which is known in the fifties and before its independence as the Gold Coast and witnessed the misery of the situation there and recorded his impressions in a book entitled (*Black Power*), and the title became after that a slogan for the Negro liberation movements and a symbol of the cohesion of Negroes in America and pride in themselves and their heritage The ancient African . , As that title - or that phrase - a reason for his subjection to CIA surveillance and that Western colonialism feared that Wright would become a leader of the black movements and the Alliance of Black Peoples in the world.

***The Bluest Eye* 1970**

The purpose of this paper work is to demonstrate the low of self-esteem in *The Bluest Eye* novel (1970). With a specific end goal to discover how far Toni Morrison processes her own particular experience's in her first bit of work, it is essential to have a closer understanding into her history. It is important to think about the underlying reasons why Toni Morrison began writing *The Bluest Eye*, as her inspiration uncovers the enthusiastic connection she has to her work. Hence, in this work represents a meaning of self-esteem and social identity situation, the idea of magnificence assumes a noteworthy part. This study outline the troublesome situation of Black people in an overwhelming White culture and how some Black characters in *The Bluest Eye* are produced subsequently. From that point onward, the researcher introduce a sociological perspective of this issue and portray how Morrison's characters suffering from low of self-esteem and how they try to build up their personalities by characterizing them into categories.

In *The Bluest Eye*, Toni Morrison statement a timeless problem of White racial control in the United States and points to the influence it has on the life of black females growing up in the 1930s. Morrison in this novel uncovers that Blackness is not the main issue for the Black girls and ladies, yet there are additionally similarly squeezing issues like Black destitution, frailty and loss of dignity which is another huge trouble for the Black people group and all the more so for the Black female.

As Toni Morrison has turned out to be one of America's most commended contemporary authors, her first novel *The Bluest Eye*, published in 1970, has increased expanding consideration from scholarly critics. A large portion of the novel is described by a youthful Black young lady, Claudia MacTeer, who is a piece of a poor yet adoring Black family in Lorain, Ohio, in the 1940s. The essential concentrate of the novel is on Pecola Breedlove, another youthful Black young lady who lives in altogether different conditions from Claudia and her sister Frieda. Pecola's mom, Pauline, is brutal to her family since they are a consistent update that her life can never measure up to the perfect world of the White family for which she fills in as a house keeper. Is her mom removed and unapproachable, as well as temperamental for any solace or support? Cholly Breedlove drinks unnecessarily and later assaults Pecola. She bears his youngster, who kicks the bucket soon after birth. Morrison shows that a Black woman looking for her true identity is frustrated by her Blackness and yearns to be White because of the constant fear of her rejection in her surroundings. Toni Morrison surveys how Black sex is treated as an animal throughout that period in her novels. According to Fanon states these inhuman behaviors in his book, *Black Skin and White Mask*:

The negro is animal, the Negro is bad, the Negro is mean, the negro is Ugly,' look, a nigger, it's cold, he nigger is shivering, the nigger is shivering because he is cold, the little boy is trembling because he is afraid of nigger, . . . he thinks that nigger is quivering with rage, the little White boy throws himself into his mother's arms: Mama, the nigger's going to eat me (Fanon, 1986: p.113).

Many characters in *The Bluest Eye* are involved in a quest—Pecola for love and a self-esteem, Cholly for his father, Claudia for meaning, so place. Identity, the ability to find, expression of love, the parent-child relationship, friendship, a White standard of beauty, a faith in “romantic love,” child abuse, and racism are other major themes. Image Images clusters in this novel contain nature, the seasons, eyes, White dolls, and cleavage..

Toni Morrison’s first novel, *The Bluest Eye*, discusses the awful effects of forcing White, working-class American ideals of beauty on the creating female identity of a young African-American young lady amid the mid-1940s. Roused by a discussion Morrison once had with an primary school cohort who longed for blue eyes, the novel intensely shows the mental obliteration of a young Black young lady, Pecola Breedlove, who scans for affection and acknowledgment in a world that prevents and depreciates people from claiming her own race. As her mental state gradually unwinds, Pecola pitifully yearns to have the ordinary American principles of ladylike beauty—in particular, White skin, blonde hair, and blue eyes—as displayed to her by the famous symbols and conventions of White culture.

In *The Bluest Eye*, the majority of the characters and incidents in the story demonstrate how Morrison utilizes time, space, history and individual Black experiences to alluring how race, bigotry and destitution are in the meantime unpredictable and stable social marvels. Cholly Breedlove, a plastered man who assaulted his own particular little girl and beat his better half, was both a sexist and psychologically weak. Cholly himself is a casualty of the White society that censures, aversions and endeavors him. He has had no chance to get confidence. He doesn’t give any office or support to his family; unexpectedly, he mishandles his significant other and the entire family. It is not critical for him what others consider him. Finally, he passes on in a workhouse.

This novel conveys the story of an eleven-year-old Black girl, Pecola Breedlove, who needs blue eyes, because she sees herself, and considers them most characters in the novel, ugly.

Both beauty and racism, which are not equal, but may seem similar, produce anger, shame, self-loathing, and more prominent, they limit freedom. In the text, the racist view of Blacks is revealed as a lack of recognition, a view in which the idea of Blackness negates human identity. A White shopkeeper literally does not see Pecola – “his eyes drawback, hesitate, and hover” (*The Bluest Eye*, p.46)

The beauty standard that Pecola feels she should live to makes her have an identity emergency. Society’s standard has no place for Pecola, not at all like her “high yellow dream child” classmate. Maureen Peals, who fits the mold (*The Bluest Eye*, p.62). Maureen’s impact in the novel is critical.

She enchanted the entire school . . . black girls stepped aside when she wanted to use the sink in the girl’s toilet . . . She never had to search for anybody to eat with in the cafeteria —they flocked to the table of her choice. (*The Bluest Eye*, pp. 62-63).

She alones recognizes the happenings which happened in her community are part of a larger, social building of violence. While not negating her own personal responsibility, Claudia blames “the earth, the land of our town. Even think now the land of the entire country was hostile” (*The Bluest Eye*, p.206). When she learns that a pregnant Pecola, she defying this invisible force, is well-wishing for Pecola and her unborn baby:

More strongly than my fondness for Pecola, I felt a need for someone to want the black baby to live ---- just to counteract the universal love of White baby doll, Shirley Temples, and Mau seen Peals. And Frieda must have felt the same thing. We did not think of the fact that Pecola was not married; lots of girls had babies who were not married. (*The Bluest Eye*, p.190).

Morrison uses character Pecola who is African-American, and other people of color to depiction the lack of self-esteem, as well as, want to be Miss America publicized by Julia Alvarez uses a young Dominican girl to expose it. Pecola and the Dominican girl both are fail to come out that period. Toni Morrison uses her character Pecola to denote the lack of self-esteem as she states:

Long hours she sat looking in the mirror trying to discover the secret of ugliness, trying to discover the secret of the ugliness, the ugliness that made her ignored or despised at school, by teachers and classmates alike. She was the only member of her class who sat alone at a double desk (*The Bluest Eye*, p.45).

Pecola has not yet to distinguish her beauty or her quest because she was told. “The master had said, you are ugly people” (*The Bluest Eye*, p.39) and surrounding society has put this label on her that she fails to come out of. Jenkins agrees that society traps her, according to Fanon he describes this felt “the body is surrounded by an atmosphere of uncertainty” (Fanon, 1986: p.110).

Pecola Breedlove, who is at the end of her adolescence, is aimed African-American girl during the 1940s who longs for her own community as well as a world that diminishes and rejects the value of the members of our own race while defying beauty according to an Anglo-Saxon cultural standard to accept and love her. Pecola believes that she will be loved by everyone, if she has blue eyes because ‘blue eyes’ is a symbol of White beauty and she believes that she will also be beautiful like Shirley Temple with blue eyes. Her desire

for having blue eyes ends in madness. Since black woman believe that beauty means White, they failed to acknowledge their own race when it comes to beauty. The fear of there being distinguished by their surroundings compels them to search for their identity in being White. Though Pecola has a limited sense of self-worth, her anger quickly turns back to self-blaming, overwhelming and self-hating emotional shame. Her surroundings make her feel that she's ugly and every time she tries to live she realises that she is not even worth of touch. Hence, in pursuit of self-respect, Pecola self isolates herself. She closes herself in the room and starts praying to God to make it disappear, whenever her parents and brother start a fight:

Little parts of her body faded away. Now slowly, now with a rush, slowly again her fingers went, one by one; then her arms disappeared all the hardest above the thighs. She had to be real still and pull. Her stomach would not go. But finally it, too, went away then her chest, her neck. The face was hard, too. Almost done, almost, only her tight, tight eyes were left. They were always left (The Bluest Eye, p.45).

Pecola is looked down and treated differently by many people that lead her to isolation and lost her self-esteem. She tries to discover the secret of the ugliness by sitting for long hours staring into the mirror, to understand the ugliness which they were despised and ignored at school by her classmates as well as teachers. Likewise, she also sits alone in her class at double desk and she was forced to sit in the front row because of the first letter of her last name. While one day a group of boys circle around Pecola and start to make fun of her chanting, "Black e mo. Black e mo. Yadadd sleeps nekked. Black e mo black e mo . . ." (The Bluest Eye, p.50). She is named for her darker shade of skin as too ugly to accept by her schoolmates. It is evident that Pecola feels isolated and alone because her classmates as well as teachers are cold to her. Because of all this, she's usually leftover thoughts and she is mostly occupied with the desire for blue eyes.

In The Bluest Eye, Toni Morrison has strongly criticized the White (Western) concept of physical beauty conceived as virtue. She was straightforward, simple and direct in her choice of words, telling the reader(s) what she thought of this idea without mincing her words. One notices words such as 'pernicious', 'destructive', and 'Western world', which suggest that she is looking at the idea and the world as an outsider. Interestingly, the word 'White' is wisely omitted:

The concept of physical beauty as virtue, Toni Morrison wrote in 1974, is one of the dumbest, most pernicious and destructive ideas of the Western world, and we should have nothing to do with it . . . (Hall, p.57).

At the end of the novel, Pecola is seen spending her days walking in the streets while moving her head to the beats of a distant drummer with "her arms like a bird in an eternal, grotesquely futile effort to fly" (The Bluest Eye, p.204). In an attempt to get the model of a culturally different society, Pecola destroys what is unique to her as a person as well as a black person. The damage of the Pecola is very shallow and half-life is filled with hatred compelling her to be isolated from herself. Her mother who considers Pecola as ugly also hates her and she is raped by her father who is not able to live a worthy life leading to constant frustration and eventually driving into madness. More than that, her own people and own race repress her. Pecola craves for belongingness even in her own community. Thus, the psychological damages that are caused to black woman because of communally created Western images of beauty are attacked by Morrison.

II. CONCLUSION

The treatment of slaves by the whites in the United States varied with time and place. Their treatment against the blacks was marked by brutality, lost respect and inhumanity. Blacks are deprived of all their legitimate rights as human beings. They were deprived of education to prevent them from intellectual and cultural liberation, which instills in their ideas a culture of escape and rebellion. Blacks were subjected to horrendous corporal punishments, rape and murder against women, and sometimes they were tortured for no reason in order to enforce their authority. The researcher believes that self-respect can only be achieved in African-American society by rejecting racism and discrimination based on race and color. The researcher recommends that the society should be free of all kinds of discrimination because it creates social and political disasters in the same society and leads to manifestations of violence, murder and extremism, as we noted in our novel, which reflected the problems experienced by the two characters in the two novels. Richard Wright and Toni Morrison have always strived to honestly project the plight of Afro-Americans in the United States, who have long suffered from low of self-esteem. Though after centuries of struggled, the black community attained freedom and achieved a state of liberation, yet continued to face nagging sense of prejudice and inhuman bias. Toni Morrison, through her numerous characters and situations as depicted in her novels captured the lives of the black people in realistic shades of brutality and misery as one of a primary search for identity. In the final analysis, it may be clearly stated the quest for self-esteem, an eternal process emerges as the most dominant theme permeating all the novels, which have been critically analyzed in this work. While critically examining the major characters viz., the Afro-American men and women, a clear narrative of social strife and subaltern existence emerges from the shadows of a racial fault line. All the major characters are haunted by images of an inalienable sense of loss, separation, and dislocation, apart from suppressed reminiscences and nostalgia for the

past that largely characterize their search for identity. In the end, when the actions of the characters are examined in relation to the time factor- past as well as present, a significant truth emerges the quest for identity rarely meant a complete freedom from oppression. The researcher conclude the black self-esteem is insulated from systems of racial inequality, while personal efficacy is not, and suggest that this explains why black Americans have relatively high self-esteem but low personal efficacy. The belief that racial discrimination, rather than individual failure, accounts for low achievement among blacks is irrelevant to personal self-esteem and personal efficacy. In contrast, racial self-esteem is produced by a combination of education, interracial contact, and ideological processes.

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