



## Discourse Diversity in White and Black Mothering and Daughtering

Bingqing Jiang<sup>1\*</sup> & Farzaneh Haratyan<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1,2</sup>Hunan University of Humanities, Science and Technology, Loudi, 417000, Hunan, China

### ABSTRACT

Mothering is not unanimously a unitary relationship between mother and daughter while the concept and ideology of motherhood symbolizes a collective set of activities across cultures. It largely depends on social and cultural contexts framed by intertwining structures of race. Survival, power, and identity stand as the primary function of Black mothers besides nurturing, protecting, training, and transmitting cultural messages, traditions, and values. Redefinition of black womanhood leads to discovering new ways of understanding motherhood. Difference engenders multiplicity of resistance to varieties of domination. It is about difference within sameness. White mothers see staying at home as a misery and oppression while Black mothers feel blessed with stay at home motherhood for they can get rid of the unfavorable drudgery.

Black mother-daughter relationship differs from that of Whites due to injustices of poverty, history of Slavery, and patriarchal oppression of racial and gendered domination and exploitation as Morrison depicts in her novels. Extracts from her novel *The Bluest Eye* are analyzed and interpreted here. White motherhood is constrained by patriarchal society while Black motherhood is exempted from its boundaries and limitations; liberated, and empowered by resisting against White patriarchal socio-cultural stance.

**Keywords:** *Discourse, Black and White, Mothering, Daughtering, Morrison, The bluest Eye.*

**Citation:** Bingqing Jiang & Farzaneh Haratyan (2021). Discourse Diversity in White and Black Mothering and Daughtering. *International Journal of Arts, Humanities and Social Studies*, 3(6), 112-120.

### INTRODUCTION

*"The concept of a multiple, shifting, self-contradictory female identity is made up of heterogenous and heteronomous representations of gender, race and class across languages and cultures..."* (Teresa De Lauretis, *Feminist Studies, Critical Studies: Issues, Terms and Contexts,*). Mothering is not universally a private, unitary, identical, and singular relationship between a mother and her daughters [1] and largely depends on social and cultural locations or "specific historical contexts framed by interlocking structures of race, class, and gender" [2]; therefore, the myth that mothers are the "source of children's current and later personal stability" is not universal [3]. Survival, power, and identity stand as the primary function of Black mothers. However, the concept and ideology of motherhood embodies a shared set of activities though diverse across cultures [4] like nurturing, protecting, training, and transmitting cultural messages, traditions, values, and experiences to children. Jana Sawicki values difference, diversity and heterogeneity in the mothering experience among women for it brings "the common interests of a diverse group of people". Difference engenders multiplicity of resistance to varieties of domination forms that circulate their favored discourses. "If there is no central locus of power, neither is there a central locus of resistance".

Redefinition of differences among women lead to discovering new ways of understanding women" (ibid:45). According to Rita Felski, "it is all about difference within sameness and sameness within difference which strengthens feminism legacy;" focusing meticulously on "difference can just as problematically construct an Other who is an exotic alien, a breed apart" [5]. White motherhood is constrained by patriarchal society while Black motherhood is exempted from its boundaries and limitations; liberated, and empowered by resisting against White patriarchal socio-cultural stance. Unlike White mothers who take care of their children alone, Black mothers enjoy women-centered community network and ties under the title of other-mothering, surrogate, or community mothering to help them with their children.

### LITERATURE REVIEW

Nancy Chodorow's most-quoted theorizing mothering and daughtering frame is criticized by Patricia Hill Collins for her decontextualisation of race. In "Shifting the Center: Race, Class, and Feminist Theorizing About Motherhood"(1994), Collins purports that Black mother-daughter relationship differs from that of Whites due to injustices of poverty, history of Slavery, and patriarchal oppression of racial and gendered domination and exploitation. Deborah McDowell's explanation of ambivalence in Morrison's novel *Sula* [6] is responded by

Hortense Spillers [7] to articulate the spaces of contradiction in order to move beyond ambivalence as part of African-American politics of resistance and double-consciousness. Mother-daughter relationships among women of color tend to emphasize not only personal but also social, cultural, and political dimensions of the relationship, as Rich believes. In her essay, “Mothers and Daughters: Another Minority Group”

Natalie Rosinsky [8] indicates that Black daughter reconciliates with her mother and identifies with her when she sees her “as fellow victim rather than total villain”(286). Shirley Geok-lin Lim’s “Japanese American Women’s Life Stories: Maternity in Monica Sone’s Nisei Daughter and Joy Kogawa’s Obasan,” also emphasizes that “the Japanese mother is the figure not only of maternity but also of racial consciousness”(293) which is true and applicable for Black mothers as well.

Black families suffer from racial discrimination, economic exploitation, and psychological traumas; therefore, traditional psychoanalysis cannot be applied for Black women as they ignored these mechanism as Gloria Joseph and Lewis claim in *Common Differences: Conflicts in Black and White Feminist Perspectives* [9]. She holds White and Black women cannot be studied under identical concepts unless racial and cultural factors are counted. Jane Wyatt’s “giving body to the word: the maternal symbolic in Toni Morrison’s *Beloved*” also claims that psychoanalytic theories based on White western families cannot adequately analyze African American Texts.

Elizabeth Abel in “Race, Class and Psychoanalysis” [10] contends that “psychoanalysis has no innate political desire.” It has no monolithic discourse or uniformity to social domains. To her, psychoanalysis whether Freudian, Lacanian, object relations or any other theory that tend to homogenize and uniform all the people of the world should be blamed for decontextualizing gender, race, culture and class (186). It does not mean that the whole system of knowledge and psychoanalysis should be rejected for cultural exclusions though hooks purports (*A Conversation*, 66) that these theories should be revised or expanded to include social critical issues of race and class and challenge White male hegemony and supremacy.

In “Mother-Daughter Plot: Narrative, Psychoanalysis, Feminism” Marriane Hirsch acknowledges that “psychoanalysis still is the best approach to account for the analysis of mother-daughter relationship though it has limitations and flaws though theorists should include other influential social and cultural factors in its issues” [11].

Patricia Hill Collins’ “Shifting the Center: Race, Class and Feminist Theorizing about Motherhood” contends that Black women’s subjectivity is largely related to the socio-cultural context where “one does not exist without the other”(47). The major flaw, which needs to be revised, is the fact that motherhood here is objectified, selfless, powerless and silenced. She advocates empowering mothers by giving them the voice to find their identity and power. “In *Feminist Theories and the Voices of Mothers and Daughters in Selected African- American Literature for Young Adults*,” [12] Hilary S. Crew also contends that Black mother–daughter relationship cannot be explored regardless of a clear understanding of Black Womanism. Correspondingly, Gloria I. Joseph asserts the inadequacy of White feminist psychoanalytic perspectives in the discussions of Black mother-daughter relationship as they disregard contextual mechanisms. White feminist theories cannot fit the analyses of the connections between Black mothers and daughters as socio-economic contexts extensively affect Black mothering styles and the emotional intensity of Black mother–daughter relationships. Chodorow’s universality of the theory cannot explain Black mother-daughter relationship [13] in a different racial and cultural context. Feminist theorists such as Nancy Chodorow and Adrienne Rich consider women’s mothering another site of patriarchal oppression while Black theorists such as Collins, Joseph, Spelman, and hooks regard Black mothering a site of female empowerment to raise empowered children.

Spelman’s *Inessential Women: Problems of Exclusion in Feminist Thought* (1988) focuses on the importance of race and class variables in the discussions of motherhood. Spelman holds that “[m]uch of feminist theory has proceeded on the assumption that gender is indeed a variable of human identity independent of other variables such as race and class, that whatever one is a woman is unaffected by what class of race one is” (81). Her essay “Gender in the context of Race and Class: Notes on Chodorow’s *Reproduction of Mothering*” also finds Chodorow’s theories problematic for the gender configuration in isolation from social variables like race, and class. Moreover, Hirsch believes that Chodorow’s notes on the continuity with mother and lack of separation and differentiation between mother and daughter though having significant implications concerning female identity formation are criticized for eliminating the socio-cultural context. Jane Flax’s “Thinking Fragment: Psychoanalysis, Feminist, & Postmodernism in the Contemporary West” [14] similarly argues about Chodorow’s failure in positioning mothering into “a political, economic and social context” (165). Moreover, Joseph contends “Chodorow’s mothering role as the root of men’s supremacy” contradicts with the research done on Black people (Traditional 95). White psychoanalytic theories cannot support Black psychoanalytic issues as in “*Psychoanalysis and Black Novels*” Claudia Tate explains, they are ignoring the social forces posed on Black family life and the way it

“effaces racism and recasts its effects as a personality disorder caused by familial rather than social pathology”.

Lacanian discourse cannot be applied to the idea of the Black mother-daughter bond where gender is determined by domesticity [10] as the Black slave father is mostly absent and is not the establisher of “The Law of the Father” at the symbolic stage. African American maternal theory disagrees with the notion of public and private sphere, the masculine and the feminine. According to Patricia Hill Collins, this dichotomy never existed in Black mother’s house as they are always under the harsh influence of socio-cultural forces [15]. Joseph also claims that for Black people the child’s emotional care and physical survival is very important. Black mothers should be “resourceful, assertive, and self-reliant to survive” for the absence of Black men in families. Although I find the basics of object-relations theory useful in analyzing the Black mother-daughter relationship here and share some critical lines of thinking with Chodorow—such as the lack of differentiation between mother and daughter and the continuity of the mothering process from one to the other, I should argue that some of her findings can be applied only to western families for Black family suffer from absence of father who according to Chodorow can help daughter’s independence from the mother. Black women’s desire to stay in private sphere is against what Chodorow believes regarding women’s oppression in private sphere.

Black home acts as a place where resistance to the dangerous effects of the hegemonic forces of institutional racism is both initiated and sustained. In “Homeplace: A Site of Resistance.” hooks discusses the functions of the Black home as a safe place of healing, affirmation rest, warmth, comfort, shelter, freedom, soul nurturing, resistance, and survival where “we learned dignity, integrity of being...we learned to have faith”(1990: 42). Therefore, I also assume her theory fails to account for the heterogeneity that exists among women. Many African-American feminist critics encourage the political reading of Black mother-daughter relationship while conscious of the impact of the socio-political context and manipulability of power and control. Black women’s powerlessness, power, and identity are shaped in community under the influence of socio-cultural context where the discursive practice of Slavery stands detrimentally salient.

### **Discursive Practices of Slavery, Race, and Class**

*“History has consequences.”*

*“Slavery severely ruined the primary relationship between the Black mother and child”(Rodgers-Rose, 1980:19).* Industrialization in America in nineteenth century legitimized White people the right to have Black slaves for labour. Black People were shipped to America for Slavery and were denied of any rights of having family, privacy, or property. Black women had to contribute to the White family economy by giving birth to children that were considered as the commodity and property of White family. They were brutally abused, exploited, and deprived of agency, autonomy, and individuality by handling diverse jobs even masculine duties. They regulated Black women’s sexuality and reproduction and looked down at them as commodity, capital, or property. They used different tactics and approaches to perpetuate their subordination by valuing motherhood among Blacks and offering them less workload, attention, and bonuses. Plantation owners and overseers severely punished those women who were suspected of abortion and whose children died during or soon after childbirth. Enslaved women were abused and denied of the joys of motherhood [9]. In “Black Women Mothering, and Protest in 19<sup>th</sup> Century American Society (2007),” Marci Bounds Littlefield holds the way oppression, bondage, and capitalism interacted to redefine, shape, and determine the lives of Black mothers in the context of Slavery. She placed motherhood at the center of Black women’s existence.

Young slave girls watched their mothers on the plantation (in the master’s house and the field) and learned that it was necessary for survival. There was no doubt that a Black woman would never gain the respect of White men, no matter what she did, so she learned to wear a mask of silence that allowed these men to relax around her and trust that she would consider only their needs and wants as important. Their self-value was destroyed by White masters who thought of her and her loved ones as less than human. While her White counterparts could be held with passion and security, Black women had to digest the fact that their world was unprotected, unfair, and unhealthy. They were suffocating with fear of intimacy, abandonment, and rejection. For many, the past has been so painful to relive through conversation and reenactment that many Blacks and Whites chose to keep quiet about. In a suffocating society with the oppressor looming and social inequality, Black women were regarded as inhumane and selfless. They had to become strategic and simultaneously learn how to code, decode and encode.

Motherhood ranging from blood-mother, other-mother, to community mother are recognized as a symbol of power within women-centered kin networks through their ethic of community service, caring and personal accountability. “Political movements which are rooted in women’s defense of their roles as mothers and protectors of their children” [16] is the core of Black feminist maternal politics. The notion of motherhood is traditionally regarded with worth, respect and high value and can function as an efficient strategy to challenge social oppressive discourses. As cited in Collins [17], “in a 1904 letter, a Black mother in the South wrote to a national magazine:” I

dread to see my children grow. I know not their fate. Where the White girl has one temptation, mine will have many. Where the White boy has every opportunity and protection, mine will have few opportunities and no protection. It does not matter how good or wise my children may be, they are colored. When I have said that, all is said. Everything is forgiven in the South but color.”

Launching from critical scientific inquiry, Black Womanism examines Black mothers’ choices and decision making regarding the significant Slavery-inflicted issue of survival. Black mothers are considered as potentially active agents of change in social ideologies, meanings, and values [17]. Black women placed at a disadvantaged position are multiple oppressed, victimized and marginalized under multiple discursive practices of gender, class, and race. In “Shifting the Center: Race, Class, and Feminist Theorizing about Motherhood” [2], Collins articulates the socio- cultural forces that affect Black motherhood contextualized in the history. In “Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment”(2000), Patricia Hill Collins critically analyzes the controlling image of Black motherhood as an all- powerful “superwoman” who sustains a “life of sacrifice” (116). Collins regards Black motherhood as a “dynamic” institution that allows Black women to access the power of “self- definition and self- reliance”(118). Home and Black familial bond are important tools in resisting the damaging negative images of the hegemonic culture. Black mothers are liberated to protect their children by resisting the White dominant cultural stance.

According to Collins, Black mothers should find a way to redefine the negative perception and impression of Black motherhood that was previously defined wrongly [18]. As Collins advises: “Black women’s ability to forge these individual, unarticulated, yet potentially powerful expressions of everyday consciousness into an articulated, self-defined, collective standpoint is key to Black women’s survival”. Black motherhood as a site of liberation and empowerment ignore the social and cultural limitations and constraints under the category of racism, sexism, and class and act to protect and empower her daughters.

According to O’Reilly, the heart of Black motherhood, “in both practice and thought, is how to preserve, protect, and more generally empower Black children so that they may resist racist practices that seek to harm them and grow into adulthood whole and complete”[19]. Master narratives referring to White patriarchal values and discourse helped Morrison reveal the causes of inferiority in Black women that projected them as objects of contempt and shame. Morrison offers empowering identity to mothers in her novels in a rejection of repressive discourse of White motherhood.

African American mothers develop an extreme sense of child protection and survival practices as a model of power and defiance against patriarchal coercion for White motherhood. Stephanie Demetrakopoulos, Diane Gillespie, Missy Dehn Kubitschek, Jane Kuenz, and Jennifer Gillan bring forth inspiring ideas about the dominant and resistant discourses about Black motherhood displayed in Toni Morrison’s texts. Sethe enjoys Black womanist self-sufficiency as a strong independent woman “outrageous, audacious, courageous, willful behavior, love of struggle, and regardless” [20]. Morrison sees motherhood as a site of power for Black women where ““motherwork” is an enterprise of profound social significance” [21]. Linda Krumholz argues that Morrison’s texts, discourse, and language generate greater maternal self-knowledge and self-appreciation. Patricia Hill Collins stresses the complicated nature of Black mothers as they should “ensure their daughter’s physical survival [by]...teach[ing] them to fit into systems of oppression” at the “high cost of their emotional destruction” though “emotional strength is essential, but not at the cost of physical survival”.

Black daughters should learn skills and develop strength, strategies and techniques to gain self-reliance as she is “denied by male protection,” self-actualization, and self-esteem to survive in the society that devalues them and expect a lot from them (ibid). Gloria Wade-Gayles supports Collin’s characterizations of Black motherhood particularly in literature: “mothers in Black women’s fiction are strong and devoted...but...are rarely affectionate” as “the exigencies of racism and poverty in White America are sometimes so devastating that the mothers have neither time nor patience for affection”. For Black mother and daughter, “affection does not equal bonding” (10). Wade-Gayles advises that daughters should understand the context and enhance their bond with their mothers.

Black mothers transmit skills of independence and self-reliance to their daughters to empower and enable them to shield their self-esteem in daily confrontation of oppressive factors of race, gender, and class. Joseph believes, “There is a tremendous amount of teaching transmitted by Black mothers to their daughters that enables them to survive, exist, succeed, and be important to and for the Black communities...Black daughters are actually ‘taught to hold the Black community together’”[19].

Mother characters in Morrison’s novels enjoy the extreme preservative love for their daughters such as Sethe, Eva, and Mrs. Macteer. They liberated themselves from any maternal restriction and limitations imposed on them

by White or patriarchal discourses. As Gloria Wade-Gayles points out, “Mothers in Black women’s fiction are strong and devoted;... they are rarely affectionate”. For example, in Toni Morrison’s *Sula*, Eva Peace’s husband ran off, leaving her with three small children and no money. Despite her feelings, “the demands of feeding her three children were so acute she had to postpone her anger for two years until she had both the time and energy for it”[17].

The oppressive economic status is so painful for Black mothers that no space is left for them to pamper their daughters[22]. Bell hooks’s *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center* (1984), Patricia Hill Collins’s *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment* (2000), and Trudier Harris’s *Saints, Sinners, Saviors: Strong Black Women in African American Literature* (2001) negotiate the representation of African American women as mothers and daughters in Morrison’s narratives as they quest for a new identity formation, selfhood, and agency and many feminist scholars investigate the way in which Morrison manifests the relationship between Black mothers and daughters Brown-Guillory’s analysis of “mother-daughter dyad” (2006) emphasizes on the daughters’ responses to their mothers’ image as they identify with their mothers and assume the same identity, values, and traits or reject their mother’s depiction of womanhood. Here, the identity (of self and other) is evolved, constructed, imitated, negotiated, or, thoroughly rejected.

In her thesis, “The Black Maternal: Heterogeneity and Resistance in Literary Representations of Black Mothers in 20th Century African American and Afro-Caribbean Women’s Fiction”(2008), Kinitra Dechaun Brooks maintains that the mother fails to reconcile the multiple tensions that dominate the physical and mental constitution of Black mothers. As Collins argues, “Black daughters must learn how to survive in interlocking structures of race, class, and gender oppression while rejecting and transcending those same structures”[17]. Teaching daughters the seemingly impossible capabilities of both to reject and transcend the power structures necessitates very skillful and professional mothers. “Black mothers are often described as strong disciplinarians and overly protective; yet these same women manage to raise daughters who are self-reliant and assertive” (ibid:125); however, this leads to daughters’ isolation, limitation, lack of freedom, and many responsibilities which ultimately brings tension in the relationship with her mother.

### **Textual Analysis**

"Three quarts of milk. That's what was in that icebox yesterday. Three whole quarts. Now they ain't none. Not a drop. I don't mind folks coming in and getting what they want, but three quarts of milk! ...".The “folks” my mother was referring to was Pecola. The three of us, Pecola, Frieda, and I, listened to her downstairs in the kitchen fussing about the amount of milk Pecola had drunk. We knew she was fond of the Shirley Temple cup and took every opportunity to drink milk out of it just to handle and see sweet Shirley's face. It was certainly not for us to dispute her. We didn't initiate talk with grown-ups; we answered their questions my mother's fussing soliloquies always irritated and depressed us. They were interminable, insulting, and although indirect (Mama never named anybody--just talked about folks and some people), extremely painful in their thrust. She would go on like that for hours, connecting one offense to another until all of the things that chagrined her were spewed out. Then, having told everybody and everything off, she would burst into song...(The Bluest Eye, 23)

Milk is the symbol of maternal nourishment and nurturance. Pecola’s having all the three quarts show how starving or thirsty of maternal care she is. As an other mother to Pecola now that her parents cannot take care of her, she is tired of meeting the needs of a Black girl, so thirsty for milk or in other words nourishment. The other-mother may take care of the child momentarily but won’t allow her to lavishly spend the materials. They can only survive under the hands of other mothers. The “folks my mother was referring to was Pecola.” The daughters were silently listening to their authoritarian mother nagging and complaining continuously. “The three of us, Pecola, Frieda, and I, listened to her downstairs in the kitchen fussing about the amount of milk Pecola had drunk. We didn't initiate talk with grown-ups; we answered their questions.” In this sentence, the Black family culture is well clarified as the children never initiate talk with grownups but answer. The politeness manners should be well observed by the children when communicating with adults. Black mothers are powerful and controlling and as she believes are interminable, insulting, though indirect “Mama never named anybody--just talked about folks and some people”. When it comes to complain, they hysterically keep on for long time. She does not care about how other family members might think or feel when she keeps nagging and insulting.

"Mama opened the window and looked down at us. What? They're playing nasty, Mrs. Mac Teer. Look. And Claudia hit me 'cause I seen them! Mama slammed the window shut and came running out the back door. "What you all doing? Oh. Uh-huh. Uh-huh. Playing nasty, huh? She reached into the bushes and pulled off a switch. I'd rather raise pigs than some nasty girls. Least I can slaughter them!"

"We began to shriek. No, Mama. No, ma'am. We wasn't! She's a liar! No, ma'am, Mama! No, ma'am, Mama! Mama grabbed Frieda by the shoulder, turned her around, and gave her three or four stinging cuts on her legs. Gonna be nasty, huh? Naw you ain't!"

"Frieda was destroyed. Whippings wounded and insulted her. Mama looked at

Pecola. "You too!" she said. "Child of mine or not!" ..... "What the devil is going on here?" Frieda was sobbing. I, next in line, began to explain." (*The Bluest Eye*, 30-1)

In the course of socialization when children learn to behave to be socially acceptable, mothers play important roles. The way they deal with children at the time of wrong actions can affect their identity formation. The quick judgmental response of Mrs. Macteer in "she slammed the window shut and came running out the back door" with the use of material process of slamming and running indicate how fast she wanted to stop her daughters of their wrong action as she was verbally disparaging them. "What you all doing? Oh. Uh-huh. Uh-huh. Playing nasty, huh?" She did not truly know what they were doing, so without any thinking or questioning.

The mother thinks she is doing it for the benefit of children as she wants them to grow good. However, it did them more disadvantage than advantage. Frieda was destroyed. Whippings wounded and insulted her. Haphazard actions under the title of teaching on part of mother who is considered as the head of Black family can ruin the children. Here Morrison is calling for awareness among Black mothers to be careful of hasty decisions over children.

"Please, God, she whispered into the palm of her hand. Please make me disappear. She squeezed her eyes shut. Little parts of her body faded away. Now slowly, now with a rush. Slowly again... Try as she might, she could never get her eyes to disappear. ... Long hours she sat looking in the mirror, trying to discover the secret of the ugliness, the ugliness that made her ignored or despised at school, by teachers and classmates alike. ...If she looked different, beautiful, maybe Cholly would be different, and Mrs. Breedlove too"(45).

Here Pecola is imploring god with the use of request word of *please* in the theme status with *whispering* "into the palm of her hand." Desire for self-annihilation occurs as a result of seeing oneself not in harmony with dominant discourses. Here Pecola's ugliness and lack of sense of belonging and relationality to community put her in a strong wish to die. Then her deliberate attempt to die shows how determined she is as she sees it as the only way to save herself from the miserable and intolerable situation of solitude. She spends long hours "looking in the mirror, trying to discover the secret of the ugliness." As a Black girl, she is frustrated with being ugly. Beauty is a social standard put by White patriarchal hegemony that eliminates and victimizes those who lack it. The ugliness brought her a lot of disadvantages as it made her ignored or despised at school by teachers and classmates alike. Morrison is indirectly attacking the ridiculous standards of beauty that can affect people's attitude toward an individual even the close family members.

"Polly, come here, the little girl called again."

"It may have been nervousness, awkwardness, but the pan tilted under Pecola's fingers and fell to the floor, splattering Blackish blueberries everywhere. Most of the juice splashed on Pecola's legs, and the burn must have been painful, for she cried out and began hopping about just as Mrs. Breedlove entered with a tightly packed laundry bag. In one gallop she was on Pecola, and with the back of her hand knocked her to the floor. Pecola slid in the pie juice, one leg folding under her. Mrs. Breedlove yanked her up by the arm, slapped her again, and in a voice

The little girl called her *Polly* with the first name and the shortened form even as if she is standing on a higher rank of power and uses the imperative jussive tone "Polly, come here." She was looking for protection behind the strong Black maid from the strangers that caused her *nervousness* as the negative attributes asserted. She was a shelter and safety to that *little White girl* but not to her daughter who was severely burnt. The intensity of burn and its pain caused her cry. However, her sudden act of *jump* when her expected-to be protective mother Mrs. Breedlove entered manifests her lack of trust in her mother's maternal affection. Uncaringly ignorant of the burn, pain, and tears of Pecola, "she punished her in one gallop she was on Pecola, and with the back of her hand knocked her to the floor." "Mrs. Breedlove yanked her up by the arm, slapped her again, and in a voice thin with anger, abused Pecola

directly and Frieda and me by implication.” “Crazy fool... my floor, mess ... look what you...work get on out now out crazy ... my floor, my floor ... my floor,” she was very concerned with her floor. She uses the possessive pronoun My for *floor* as she felt the kitchen and the domestic sphere with all its parts belong to her. She didn’t care at all for the pains of the Black girls. Black daughters are aware of their Black mothers’ attitudes towards them as they “backed away in dread.”

“On up till the end I felt good about that baby. I went to the hospital when my time come. So I could be easeful. I didn’t want to have it at home like I done with the boy. ... The pains was coming, but not too bad. ....They deliver right away and with no pain. Just like horses... He dropped his eyes and turned red. He knowed, I reckon, that maybe I weren’t no horse foaling. ... I seed them talking to them white women: How you feel? Gonna have twins? Just shucking them, of course, but nice talk. Nice friendly talk. I got edgy, and when them pains got harder, I was glad. Glad to have something else to think about. I moaned something awful. The pains wasn’t as bad as I let on, but I had to let them people know having a baby was more than a bowel movement. I hurt just like them white women. Just cause I wasn’t hooping and hollering before didn’t mean I wasn’t feeling pain. What’d they think? That just ‘cause I knowed how to have a baby with no fuss that my behind wasn’t pulling and aching like theirs? Besides, that doctor don’t know what he talking about. He must never seed no mare foal. Who say they don’t have no pain? Just ‘cause she don’t cry? Cause she can’t say it, they think it ain’t there?”

Here Morrison is depicting the details of a Black pregnant woman at the time of delivery. She is against the way White patriarchy circulates the erroneous ideology of super strong Black women to feel no pain like beasts. In the hospital, it annoys Pauline when doctors claim, “They deliver right away and with no pain. Just like horses.” Nice friendly talk, ” shows the discrimination that arouses her anger. She started to pretend pains so that they do not think of Black women as horses. I hurt just like them White women,” shows her resistance against the false ideologies around Black women. Definitely every woman whether Black and White has the pains of delivery, thus the image of strong Black woman that makes them keep quiet and silenced in expressing their pains and misery doesn’t simply prove their strength. They can only express their complaints to their poor family members. “Who say they don’t have no pain? Just ‘cause she don’t cry? ‘Cause she can’t say it, they think it ain’t there?” In her monologue, Pauline is fighting against the dominant ideology of super strong Black woman who does not feel pain and never complains. She is able to carry whatever hard burden. Morrison is implicitly resisting this stereotypical image of Black woman and is calling for a consciousness rising regarding this issue.

## DISCUSSION

Black mothers’ targets of love, nourishment, and care are not properly directed as they spend all their love for White families for whom they work as maids. Pauline functioning as a domestic maid shows her true abundance of love to the little White girl and denies it from her own daughter whose ugliness and Blackness remind her of her own fears and failures. Pauline praised “the little Fisher girl,” with “yellow hair” and rejected her own daughter who had “tangled Black puffs of rough wool”(127). She was more than interested in the White family’s happy lifestyle and blamed the realities of her own Black family. Instead of injecting love and attention in her own family, Pauline prefers the in genuine care of her employers as she gains the self-assurance, worthiness, sense of security and belonging under the title of the “ideal servant.”

Her aggression, violence, and hostility toward her own daughter contrasts with the love and affection she gives to the White child when she brutally hits Pecola for accidentally toppling the cobbler in the Fisher kitchen. The distance between Pecola and her mother is manifested in the way she calls her mother as “Mrs. Breedlove,” while the little White girl in whose house she works as a maid calls her with her first name. Fairclough’s remark regarding the depiction of power plays through the way people address each other is well manifested here. Pauline exercises ultimate distance and power on her own Black daughter whereas the little girl stands in complete intimacy with her and even on a higher rank of power. Being around White families, which according to discourses should be valued as the top race. It brings Black women fake respect and pride removed from them in Black families as they are all in lowest state of hierarchy. Pauline as a Black mother confronts failure in performing her duty as a mother.

According to Sara Ruddick’s maternal thinking, mother should assume her duty and provide opportunity for a child to explore her self-esteem and gain social acceptability. Thus, she indeed fails in her maternal task. Morrison’s text here aims to remind Black mothers of their primary role by disturbing the dominant stereotypes and prototypes. She is against the circulated ideology of Black matriarch, super strong Black mother and faithful Black Mammy who provide the best strong protection as a scapegoat outside her Black family for the Whites while unable to save and shelter her young daughter from the sexual abuse of her drunk father who rapes her daughter and impregnates

her that eventually winds up in her miscarriage and insanity.

Pauline does not know how to maternally treat her daughter to help her gain a valuable selfhood of independence and trust where she can safely develop a healthy self-realization as she herself never established a true self-recognition but a lonesome life of misery relinquishing hope, subjectivity, and wholeness. Pecola wishes for the symbiosis and intimacy with her mother though the mother wants to liberate herself from the imprisonment of mothering in a Black family that struggles with poverty and low status where she cannot exercise her subjectivity. Pauline is negligent according to patriarchal discourses as she forgets nourishing her daughter. Her daughter is a reflection of her miseries in life as both Black and woman.

## CONCLUSION

Morrison as a well-known African American figure finds her art of writing and narration a persuasive means of awareness, responsiveness, and vigilance regarding the detrimental impacts of White cultural, social, and political discourses on the lives and status of African American women and their images in the socio-cultural context. She has tried to resist the fallacious White portrayal of Black mothers and daughters in her very influential texts by giving awareness to Black women about this forgotten but important pitfall and drawbacks. Here, in her text, *The Bluest Eye*, she is in fact in the revolutionary path toward big changes in ideology creation and circulation. Morrison's discourse of resistance in this novel is in fact an influential discourse of awareness as she calls for a Black maternal consciousness regarding the way their daughters are treated especially in the years where they are developing their feminine selfhood in the intersections of many oppressive social factors and discursive practices.

In her text of resistance, in *The Bluest Eye*, Morrison concentrates on the maternal preservative love as the highest form of maternal child-protection among Black mothering as it embodies detrimental consequences in Black daughter's identity development. She is in fact attacking the socio-cultural discourses for the establishment of wrong norms. Morrison's style of writing and her thematic representation of oppressive discursive practices function as an irresistible discourse of immediate change with an outcry of anger and rage where textual structure, character creation, and alternative communicative devices with periodical silences address gender, race and class oppression. Assimilation or conformity to the ideal constructions of the dominant discourses are harshly problematized and criticized in this text as Black female identity is fractured in the marginalized culture. Pecola is not only double victimized under the discursive practices of racism and sexism being both Black and woman but also she is abused under multiple other social factors. Her silence and voicelessness throughout the whole novel is annoying and enlightening for readers who don't have access to her first-person internal thoughts until to the very end when she is psychologically ill and wounded irreparably. Morrison's use of overt sexualized language manifests the violent human aggression, dominance, resistance, supremacy, and submission.

## REFERENCES

1. Andersen, Margaret L., & Hill Collins, P. (2010). Why race, class, and gender still matter. *Race, class, and gender: An anthology*, 1-16.
2. Collins, P. H. (1994). Shifting the center: Race, class, and feminist theorizing about motherhood. *Mothering: Ideology, Experience, and Agency*, 45-65. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315538891-3>
3. Ambert, A. M. (1994). An international perspective on parenting: Social change and social constructs. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 529-543. <https://doi.org/10.2307/352865>
4. Ruddick, S. (1995). *Maternal thinking: Toward a politics of peace*: Beacon Press. Ruddick, S. (1996). 1 Thinking Mothers/Conceiving Birth. *Representations of motherhood*, 29.
5. Felski, R. (1997). The doxa of difference. *Signs*, 23(1), 1-21. <https://doi.org/10.1086/495231>
6. Morrison, Toni. (1987). *Sula*. New York: New American Library.
7. Spillers, H. J. (2003). *Black, white, and in color: Essays on American literature and culture*: University of Chicago Press.
8. Rosinsky, N. M. (1980). Mothers and Daughters: Another Minority Group. *The Lost Tradition: Mothers and Daughters in Literature*, 280-290.
9. Joseph, G., & Lewis, J. (1999). *Common differences: Conflicts in black and white feminist perspectives*: South End Press.
10. Abel, E. (1990). Race, class, and psychoanalysis? Opening questions. *Conflicts in feminism*, 184-204. Marianne Hirsch and Evelyn Fox Keller, eds., *Conflicts in Feminism*, New York: Routledge.
11. Hirsch, M. (1989). *The mother/daughter plot: Narrative, psychoanalysis, feminism* (Vol. 532): Indiana University Press.
12. Crew, H. S. (1994). Feminist theories and the voices of mothers and daughters in selected African-American literature for young adults. *African-American voices in young adult literature: Tradition, transition, transformation*, 79-114.
13. Spelman, E.V. (1990). *Inessential Women: Problems of Exclusion in Feminist Thought* Beacon Press.

14. Kubitschek, M. D. (1990). *Who Cares? Women-Centered Psychology in Sula*. Paper presented at the Black American Literature Forum. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2904064>
15. Collins, P.H. (1994). Shifting the center: Race, class, and feminist theorizing about motherhood. *Mothering: Ideology, experience, and agency*, 45-65.
16. Wells, J. (1998). Maternal politics in organizing black South African women: The historical lessons. *Nnaemeka (ed.) Sisterhood Feminism and Power*. Africa World Press, Inc. Trenton, NJ.
17. Collins, P.H., Philomena, E., & Theo, D. (2002). Defining black feminist thought. *Race critical theories: Text and context*, 152–175.
18. Collins, P. H. (2012). Social Inequality, Power, and Politics: Intersectionality and American Pragmatism in Dialogue. *The Journal of Speculative Philosophy*, 26(2), 442-457. <https://doi.org/10.5325/jspecphil.26.2.0442>
19. O'Reilly, A. (2004). *From motherhood to mothering: the legacy of Adrienne Rich's Of woman born*: SUNY Press.
20. Walker, A. (1983). Saving the life that is your own: The importance of models in the artist's life. *Walker, Alice (Hg.): In Search of Our Mother's Gardens. Womanist Prose*. New York: Harcourt.
21. Jessee, S. (2006). "Git Way Inside Us, Keep us Strong": Toni Morrison and the Art of Critical Production. *MFS Modern Fiction Studies*, 52(1), 179-186.
22. Joseph, Gloria I. (1984). Mothers and Daughters: Traditional and New Perspectives. *Sage*, 1(2), 17-21.