

Feminist Theory and Feminist Literary Criticism:

An Analysis of *The Bluest Eye* by Toni Morrison and *The Girl Who Fell From The Sky* by Heidi

Durrow

Birgitte Østergård Jensen

Supervision : Bent Sørensen

Aalborg University

Abstract

This aim of this thesis is to critically analyse the effects of sexism, or the repression of women - as well as racial discrimination as represented in two African-American novels. The protagonists in *The Bluest Eye* by Toni Morrison (1970) and *The Girl Who Fell from the Sky* by Heidi Durrow (2010) are both girls of color which restricts their opportunities in the American society. They belong to the low social class, where mothers have to work outside the home, as breadwinners, and still have problems in supporting their family.

This intersectional reading explores how racial discrimination as well as the repression of gender patterns influence the identities of girls and women. The similarities of the repression of women and racial discrimination are sadly continuous and one of the tools in use to maintain it is Christianity. I am aware of that not all African-American have experienced race discrimination, and likewise not all women have faced sexism, but nevertheless to overcome the repressions, both groups have to engage as a unit despite of social class, as mentioned by Simone de Beauvoir.

Feminist theory such as Virginia Woolf and Simone de Beauvoir both state that the repression of women is linked to finance as well, and women must have equal pay for the same job function as men to overcome the repression of the female gender. W.E.B. Du Bois who coined the term Double Consciousness states that self-respect is more precious than even land which generated an income.

The black feminist bell hooks states that even well educated women are faced with sexism. Therefore from my point of view these forms of repressions are to be solved by both respect, as well as equal pay.

My analysis shows that religion was used in both novels to repress women. It is my hope that people will acknowledge and recognize that it is part of human nature that an individual has double standards. This can be seen in both the theory by Henri Tajfel and W.E.B. DuBois. And in simple terms this is why it is much easier to say what to do than to show how to do it. Religion should simply focus on: Matthew 7.12. In everything, then, do unto others as you would have them do unto you. For this is the essence of the Law and the Prophets. Nevertheless, a person has to be conscious of the double standards and not be tempted to favor biases. My analysis indicates that religion is as embroiled in the intersections of discrimination against African-American women as class and race issues are.

Table of Contents

Feminist theory - Simone de Beauvoir's <i>The Second Sex</i>	6
Black feminist theory - bell hooks <i>ain't i a woman</i>	7
Social identity theory - Henri Tajfel	10
Benedict Anderson - <i>Imagined Communities, 1983</i>	11
W.E. B. Du Bois - <i>Double Consciousness</i>	12
Theory about beauty	14
Problem formulation What role does race play in <i>The Bluest Eye</i> and <i>The Girl Who Fell from the Sky</i> ? How does racism and repression influence the black people in these novels, and what is the outcome? Besides, how does racism and repression influence gender roles in the texts? Furthermore a comparison of the two novels.	17
Toni Morrison and <i>The Bluest Eye</i>	17
The history, setting, point of view, and literary devices in <i>The Bluest Eye</i>	18
An analysis of <i>The Bluest Eyes</i> by Toni Morrison from a feminism and racism perspective	22
White aesthetic in the school.	22
Mrs. Pauline Breedlove and the burden of white standards of female beauty	24
House assistant	26
What Pecola and her brother are facing	27
Interracial- intraracial: Black people keep the ones in the social class below themselves down	30
Female sexual experience in <i>The Bluest Eye</i>	31
Pauline's sex life	32
The outcome of Pecola's life circumstances	33
Soaphead's perverse sexual practice and a criticism of religion and of the church.	34
Morrison provided us with the solution to the race problem through Claudia and her family	36
Heidi Darrow and <i>The Girl Who Fell From The Sky</i>	37
Nella, the mother of the protagonist	39
Rachel	39
Nella racially discriminating her offspring	40
Grandma	41
Anthony Miller - a boyfriend	41
Grandma's prejudices	42
Comparative Discussion and Conclusion of <i>The Bluest Eye</i> and <i>The girl who fell from the sky</i>	45
Bibliography	48

Birgitte Østergård Jensen

Supervision : Bent Sørensen

English Master's thesis

Aalborg University

Januar 11, 2021

The Bluest Eye by Toni Morrison and
The Girl Who Fell from the Sky by Heidi Durrow

Introduction

Morrison explored feminism, race repression and social class in an intertwined pattern. She created this through a path-breaking masterpiece with a deliberate fragmentation plot, in which she elaborated that black lives matter and black is beautiful. In *The Bluest Eye* Morrison invites whites to have a second hand experience of the painful and terrible life circumstances that black people must face just because of a dark skin color. Literature can fulfil a didactic function by creating insight. Most people have the historical knowledge, about how the slave trade and slavery were beneficial to European capitalism, and at the same time damaging to Africa as well as its people. Reading *The Bluest Eye* is to experience this tragedy with all these emotions as secondhand viewer and this will establish the feeling of disgust, pain and generate empathy for the people of the black race.

The language in the novel must have been extremely offensive for some people in the 1960's. Furthermore, the exhibition of rape, even incest, and several sex scenes must have rocked the boat; especially the collective memory of the foundation of United States as the melting pot. Nevertheless, Morrison demonstrated what the white slave-owners did to enslaved black women, and how this torture had established the foundation on which the stereotypes of women and girls are still built today.

The Girl Who Fell from the Sky by Heidi W. Durrow illustrates race discriminations as well as gender repression which both face Rachel. The plot with the parallel storylines explores for the reader how we as humans experience the same incident individually and because of that have different views of the same incident, depending on which side of the line we stand on. In this novel, the capitalists in America focus on race first and then the social status. This "concept of "otherness" and the inability to share a common identity" (Issues in Teacher Education, Spring 2011 p. 112)

Feminist theory - Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex*

The second wave of feminism emerged in France, when Simone de Beauvoir published *The Second Sex* in 1949. In the book, she argued that existential freedom was a utopia. Simone De Beauvoir (1908-86) was a French philosopher, author, and feminist, despite consistently denying this until 1972, where she declared herself a feminist in an interview with a magazine. She studied philosophy in Paris, where she met Jean-Paul Sartre with whom she had a lifelong open partnership. De Beauvoir was bisexual. Her masterpiece was *The Second Sex* from 1952. Her main statement was "one is not born but becomes a woman" She developed the term of feminist existentialism, which she, until 1972, believed was grounded in Marxist theory. Nevertheless, it was developed out of Sartre's existentialism. The core issue was that throughout history, men have objectified women as *Others* and viewed themselves as *subjects*.

The sex-gender distinction, which is the difference between the biological sex and the gender conventions/expectations of male-dominated society, goes back to Aristotle, who said that women are "female by virtue of a certain lack of qualities". Beauvoir claims that women have been suppressed, not only by men but also by women themselves, since upper-class women associated themselves with men from their social class. Additionally, there is no cooperation between the women of the upper class and the women of the proletariat, and additionally between white women, and with women of color. Therefore, even though women make up just about half of the population they do not collaborate, and thereby women contribute to their own oppression. Beauvoir states "humanity is male, and defines woman, not in herself, but in relation to himself," (*The Second Sex* Beauvoir introduction)

An important strategy to escape this role is for women to participate in society on equal terms as men, and here come the most significant challenges to humanity if no marriage and children can only resolve the repression of gender, which was what kept women subordinated to men. As already mentioned, Beauvoir chose not to get married or have children. She signed a paper that she had had an illegal abortion in an attempt to get the right to legal abortion. Her ideology dictated that women should be as men, which can be said to be unsustainable for humanity since only women can give birth. Beauvoir felt herself how the burden of free love also was unequal for a woman then for a man (*The second sex*, Simone de Beauvoir introduction). Sartre once gave Beauvoir the compliment that she was as intelligent as a man was and when she realized what was intended in this statement her "twin ship" with Sartre was never the same. (*The second Sex*, Beauvoir introduction)

Black feminist theory - bell hooks *ain't i a woman*

“Institutionalized sexism- that is patriarchy- formed the base of the American social structure along with racial imperialism.” (*ain't i a woman* 15)

When slaves were shipped to America, they were from different parts of Africa to ensure that no common language existed. The slaves were de-humanized and terrorized to “breaking them in or taming them” (idb19), and most females were pregnant by the white crew when they came to America.

Under slavery, the offspring of a black woman would legally be slaves, her owner’s property and livestock. The situation was different for the outcome of reproduction between black men and white women, where the infant was born free. Since the outcome of black female slaves was considered as livestock and as the value of female slaves rose, there is no evidence found that this had any effect on the respect or life circumstances for black women and not at all girls. (idb16)

The black male consciousness has been researched by scholars and sexist historians and sociologists have come up with the assumption that black males have suffered the most compared to women because “black men were stripped of their masculinity, which scholars then argue resulted in the dissolution and overall disruption of any black familial structure.” (idb20)

To make a connection between masculinity and patriarchal status and furthermore state that the lack of patriarchal power de-humanized black men, must be seen as out of proportion, from a feminist point of view. It is reasonable to question this research. As hooks states, enslaved black men had lost the social status they had in Africa. Nevertheless, masculine healthy strong young African males were the prime target when men were kidnapped since they had the highest market value and therefore gave the highest yield for the slave traders. Few men were castrated under slavery, and when it occurred, it was done to deter men from whatever they had done. (idb21) Masculine slaves were not humiliated by female tasks.

Sexual exploitation was a constant menace to enslaved women and girls. Nowhere could they find a safe place. Not even white women tried to protect black women or black girls. When black females worked as maids in the white household, they were constant targets for sexual harassment and violation from all males in the household. The black female slaves were dehumanized and reduced to sexual objects. White women viewed their husbands as the victims since it was the black females that tempted the men. “Enslaved black woman was the culprit and their husband innocent victims” (idb37)

A white woman walked in on her middle-aged husband while he raped a black child. Even that woman saw her husband as the victim and beat the girl daily and kept her trapped in a smokehouse for weeks to teach her to behave better in the future.

A woman of childbearing age had a higher value than the ones too old for reproduction. (idb39) Furthermore, biracial slaves were much coveted and therefore easily sold, as they had a higher value on the market. (idb41) This might explain why some slave-owners raped female slaves, from a financial point of view as well as the egocentric perspective. I will do it; I have the power to produce as many children as possible. “Girl, you’ve got to yield to me. I’ll have you now; if it’s only to show you that I can... You’ve got to be mine. I’ll give you a fine calico dress and a pretty pair of ear-bobs!” (idb26) As already mentioned, black females had no right to protect their body from sexual harassment, and it was not considered prostitution since the female had no choice or any influence on the payment for the service. If black a female did not act passively to the rape, she directly challenged the social order and was violently punished. (idb27)

The black girls were seen as sexual targets from as early an age as thirteen to sixteen. (idb24)

When it came to agricultural labor, black women and men worked side by side in the fields. In addition, when a woman did not produce the work expected by her from the owner, she would be punished, and this was done as harshly as what men faced. “the negro woman is unprotected either by law or public opinion[...]they must be entirely subservient to the will of their owner on pain of being whipped as near unto death as will comport with his interest or quite to death if it suits his pleasure.” (idb26) The forced hard work had the consequence that pregnant women often miscarried.

Not surprisingly, the black woman also had to do all the work in the household: cook, clear, child caring and even milking the cow. To milk a cow was out of the question for a masculine slave, even if the wife and children were ill. (idb21) (This was not a sign of the responsibility for the upkeep of his family)

The social hierarchy of black people was obvious, social equality was only found in agricultural labor. Furthermore, the male’s masculinity put him above the exposed female. (idb45)

The social hierarchy under slavery showed the black female position as subordinated, the very lowest. Some slave owners gave a favored black slave the freedom to marry the one female slave he wished, regardless of the female desire. However, this did not reward anyone. (idb)

“Black slave girls were taught, like their white counterparts, that virtue was woman’s ideal spiritual nature and virginity her ideal physical state, but knowledge of the acceptable sexual morality did not alter the reality that no social order existed to protect them from sexual exploitation.” (idb54)

A key determinant, a significant concept to describe this perpetual lack of respect for black women in a permanent situation of repression. This by-product of slavery, to strip all power from black females, seems to have maintained and generated the static picture of black females as if they had the human nature of “sexual savage” (idb33), a constant craving for sexual intercourse. This incorrect assumption of a sexual behavioral pattern seems more like a reflection of the white man’s sexual desire than that of the black female.

In Africa, women breastfed their babies until they were two years old, and during that time she had no sexual intercourse to separate her pregnancies. (idb39) That women had two years without sexual intercourse definitely proves that they did not have the sexual behavior that the stereotypical image of the black woman portrayed. However, as slaves, black women were seen and valued as livestock and therefore expected to deliver offspring, progeny, yearly. What was intended as a catalyst to hasten reproduction, by contributing to a women’s motivation to become pregnant, was the reward of a new pair of shoes or a week off from work, which in no way compensated for the high risk a pregnancy constituted for women at this time.

Some black men left their huts to make room for the white master to sexually violate his wife and daughters. (idb35) Furthermore, black males adopted the white master’s behavior of raping black women. (idb) As the black activist Angela Davis claimed, it was not just the matter of sexual lust that made white men rape black women, it was “an institutionalized method of terrorism which had as its goal the demoralization and dehumanization of black women.” (idb27)

This opportunistic self-interest displayed by white men, white women and even black men through institutionalized sexism had been integrated into the social patent. When a black woman tried to uplift herself by dressing as a “lady”, she would usually be met by the white public assumption that she was not worthy of any respect. (idb55)

No matter how well a black women was educated - it could be teacher, lawyer or doctor - she would be labeled by white men as a whore or prostitute, and by that all black women would be within the “category of available sex objects.” (idb58).

A just married young woman experienced that the master of the house forced her to kiss him. She went straight home to inform her husband who defended her with the outcome that the husband faced corporal punishment and was arrested! Besides, he was fined \$25. When in court, the old

judge said: “This court will never take the word of a nigger against the word of a white man.”
(idb57)

Slavery contributed to capitalism. Nevertheless, the industrialization pulled black people from the agrarian south to the north that was dominated by trade and industry. Unfortunately, white racist employers who denied black men employment dominated the job market. The outcome was that few black men had a job. The opposite situation was facing black women; they could have the unfavorable domestic service jobs, which never received much respect in a patriarchal world. Even in households with unemployed men, they never did the house work for the breadwinning wives.

“No other group in America has so had their identity socialized out of existence as have black women. [...] When black people are talked about the focus tends to be on black men; and when women are talked about the focus tends to be on white women. No where is the more evident than in the vast body of feminist literature.” (idb7)

Social identity theory - Henri Tajfel

The notion of social identity, a social psychological theory by Tajfel, explains that social groups are the foundation on which individuals view and value themselves in their identity and self-esteem. Social groups establish and build an individual’s social identity through group membership. Human desire is to create a positive social identity. There are three mental steps to reach the categorized “in-group” versus “out-group”. The “us” is known as the in-group, individuals from our social group, and people outside of our group are the out-group, or “them”.

In the first stage in this cognitive process, we categorize people into groups based on ethnicity, family, social class, religion and so forth. This is done to understand the social hierarchy; therefore, humans categorize people into groups. Since social groups represent the cognitive tool for an individual to associate and identify with other people, in the in-group. An individual can identify, and thereby place oneself in society and feel membership in the group by being included in this group. This social identification establishes, protects, and strengthens our self-identity.

The third stage is a social comparison where people compare the in-group with other groups to confirm their identity by using a positive bias statement about the favorable in-group value and attributing negative value to the out-group. This explains how stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination work, significantly how conflict arises since the two groups view themselves as enemies to maintain their self-esteem.

It is a human desire, a narcissistic trait, to increase one's self-esteem, and belonging to a group facilitates this, if the group is better than others are. We view the in-group as superior, characterized by positive stereotypes and others as inferior. Negative stereotypes are applied the out-group to improve our self-esteem. This affects our attitude and may lead to prejudice, discrimination, and stereotypes.

Benedict Anderson - Imagined Communities, 1983

"It is *imagined* because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion." (Anderson, 6)

The concept of an imagined community is a tool to analyze nationalism. Anderson describes a nation as consisting of individuals who identify themselves as belonging to that group. Besides, they even feel a connection to their ancestors and children, not yet conceived or born. That men, soldiers, are ready to kill other soldiers from other nations is one thing, but having the will to die for these limited imaginings explains the powerful feeling of belonging.

"Finally, it is imagined as a *community*, because, regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship. Ultimately it is this fraternity that makes it possible, over the past two centuries, for so many millions of people, not so much as to kill, as willing to die for such limited imaginings." (idb 7)

"The two most significant factors generating nationalism and ethnicity are both closely linked to the rise of capitalism. They can be described summarily as mass communication and mass migrations." (Anderson, 1992: 7)

The enlightenment with its rise of newspapers made it possible for people to receive the same information simultaneously. This gave a local and national feeling of connection that made it possible to relate and interact with other people. (Anderson 36). For example when a ship ported with slaves and when markets were held, one knew where and when slaves were for sale. This made it possible for people to get the same information at the same time quickly, and this created unity when people interacted and talked about the same topic. The rise of written media also affected the language. When a large number of people read the same text and information, they get a similar vocabulary, and newspapers likewise influence the formation of public opinion. (idb 36).

W.E. B. Du Bois - Double Consciousness

Double consciousness in, *The Souls of Black Folk*, the title itself emphasizes that this soul is a destiny that African-Americans share. This is the consequence of hardly having the opportunity, or not even the right, to dream the American dream. It is the consequence of being limited in liberty because the African-Americans had never been respected as human beings with the human rights to live a life under the same circumstances as a Caucasian.

Actually, the norm was, and still is found to be, on some level, that America is for white people, and brown-skinned African-Americans belong to Africa rather than America. African-Americans were only working capacity, a servant with the primary mission in life to satisfy the Caucasians' needs.

The concept of double consciousness by W.E.B. Du Bois is the feeling of two-ness in an African-American. Two souls and two thoughts in one dark body, the outcome of observing and judging oneself through the eyes of a white man. (Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy) The concept of double consciousness is a useful tool as a theory to understand and explain the psycho-social diversity that has existed in the U.S.A. since Africans were kidnapped and brought to America. This was what Du Bois criticized the white man for doing and getting away with, due to social and historical conditions.

Furthermore, the impact creates this inner world disaster. It is an outcome of racial discrimination that is fatal to the self-confidence. The prejudice, and for African-Americans, the ethnicity are very easily recognized, and therefore, it is simple to pinpoint them and consequently simple to stereotype them, at least for the group that cannot pass for white. Racial discrimination and prejudice create false self-consciousness, which will only end when respect is given to African-Americans and they are no longer looked down on as inferiors. (Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy 2.4, An Analytic Decomposition) Especially relevant is this uncertainty within one individual, which is not a split psyche, but the outcome of a conflict in the individual, because of society with two races living a parallel life where the superior race is the only race that is valued as full members of the community. (Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy)

What double consciousness also involves is "Second sight", or the "discovery of personal whiteness". Due to the segregation and the supremacy by the Caucasians, "the humiliated" know the

whites and the whites are aware of this. In other words, to have an insight into the psyches of the white people is what Du Bois called the power of "clairvoyance". "Knowing the thoughts" is the outcome of the attitude that arose because of social relations at the time, the beliefs and attitudes among Caucasians. This Du Bois specifies as a circumstance where the oppressed can see that the white man has accepted the supremacy to live and enjoy privileges that are obviously for whites only. (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy 4.1, "The Souls of White Folks") The upper classes in the segment of African-Americans are desperately anxious not to be characterized as the underclass. Therefore, the effort is pushed to the extreme by the upper classes to avoid contact with the underclass. Du Bois classifies this as being ashamed of members from one's group and indirectly ashamed by one's own ethnicity. Du Bois considers this race suicide. (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy 4.2, "On Being Ashamed of oneself: An Essay on Race Pride" (1933))

"I was by long education and continual compulsion and daily reminder, a black man in a white world; and that white world often existed primarily, so far as I was concerned, to see with sleepless vigilance that I was kept within bounds. All this made me limited in physical movement and dream. I could not stir, I could not act, I could not live, without taking into careful daily account the reaction of my white enviroing world." (Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy 4.3, *Dusk of Dawn* 1940). This book can go under the concept of an "autobiography of race". Du Bois was an old man when he wrote this comprehensive text, and he emphasized the phenomenon straight-forwardly as perhaps more the outcome of contradictory forces, facts, and tendencies. It was a hope for Du Bois that one day the African-American can be respected as both a Negro and an American: "he simply wished to make it possible for a man to be both a Negro and an American, without being cursed and spit upon by his fellows, without having the doors of Opportunity closed roughly in his face." This is what Du Bois considered to be genuine equality. (887, *The Norton Anthology of America Literature*) The American dream is alive, and Du Bois wished for the black people to have their part in this dream and not to be excluded forever. Taught by experience, we accommodate on the visions of ourselves and others, and we use our self-assurance to trust our own ability to decide from our belief in what is visible.

"At the most basic level, we are subjects constituted by our visions of ourselves and others, and we trust that our ability to see and read carries with it a certain degree of epistemological certainty." (Sánchez and Schlossberg 2001, 1).

Theory about beauty

Research proves that physically attractive people are likely to be assumed to have a higher intelligence and a nicer personality, and this even affects an individual with a beautiful partner as this generates benefits by being assumed to have more favorable qualities.¹ Our physical qualities are the first impressions and are easy to judge in a split second, whereas intelligence and a nice personality take interaction to observe. It is no surprise that a handsome man gets more attention than an ugly man and the same with a beautiful woman, as they also have a higher amount of social power. “As Sartre points out, human relations revolve around the experience of the look” (Davis 1998, 28) (Jerome Bump 2010, 154) When Morrison makes Pecola ugly, the reader is able to associate with her vulnerability since this is part of human nature.² Bump states “This is one of those embarrassing facts of life, even more taboo to talk about than incest, a deep secret that is always between us but we feel we must keep from our consciousness.” (ibid) Does this make some people more afraid of ugliness than incest? Incest is a universal taboo. When it comes to animals, the strongest or most beautiful male has the right to reproduce his gene to ensure a stronger and healthier offspring. Incest is inappropriate and unforgivable.

The social identity theory behind the “us” versus “them” theory is established in the fear of abandonment, which back in time could mean death, if an individual were abandoned by the group.

¹ Radiating Beauty: Effects of having a physically attractive partner on person perception. By Harold Sigall and David Landy, University of Rochester

² In general, when we look at beautiful people or something else that is pretty, like nature or art, the brain's reward system will be activated. Such as endorphins, dopamine and serotonin. They are referred to as the body's natural drugs, as all of these substances are linked to the reward system. All three hormones contribute to the feeling of well-being, satisfaction, wellbeing and joy. From nature's side, we are equipped with these built-in drug-promoting substances, which are released and become influential through special activities and impressions. These specific chemical activities start in the brains' pleasure center. Intoxication can be both pleasurable over time and the more intense moments, ranging from slight exhilaration to ecstasy. Endorphins are generally considered to be the body's happiness hormone and morphine. When you do something that makes you happy, endorphins are secreted in the brain and can give you a feeling of euphoria. Therefore, you experience kind of intoxication of happiness. By looking at beautiful faces, the release of endorphins in the body is increased and thus the reward system is activated. Dopamine is properly regarded as the most crucial neurotransmitter related to pleasant experiences and reward. This signal substance is linked to motivation- to continue or repeat the experience. Serotonin is also released through joy and passion. When we enjoy something, the hormone oxytocin is also secreted. This hormone has, among others, to do with attachment, one feels like growing close bonds. This provides satisfaction, peace and security and is essential in social interaction.

The fact that man is capable of action means that the unexpected can be expected from him, that he is able to perform what is infinitely improbable. (Hannah Arendt *The Human Condition* p. 178)

Research survey of *The Bluest Eye* and *The Girl Who Fell from the Sky*

The Bluest Eye

“...many readers remain touched but not moved” (*The Blue Eye* p xii). First of all, the human brain finds what it searches for and to makes the Caucasian reader of these books realize that this repression is grounded in the history of slavery, which is beneficial for the capitalist, Caucasian-dominanted economy in the USA, where underpaid black workers contribute to the upkeep of capitalist liberal society. Therefore to move the majority of the population in this matter would affect the social hierarchy. Slavery is the other side of the coin of American capitalism. In 1960 during the cold war, the countries with a market economy and democracy were concerned about communism. From my point of view, this was why Morrison used ugliness to illustrate racism and the limitations for black people in the USA.

This statement deserves a remark: “Morrison’s level of consciousness about the primary cause of the nature of the African’s oppression in the United States as well as in the rest of the world was considered weak, for she not only subordinates the role of economics to racism, but also neglects to show a causal relationship between them, that an exploitive economic system gives rise to racist ideology.” (Bloom’s Guides Comprehensive Research & Study Guides Bloom’s Literary Criticism P28)

That Morrison is weak in class, I find out of proportion. Pecola was the poorest and ugliest, and the well to do family was only represented by Maureen Peal, who described herself as cute and even told the other girls that they were ugly. Morrison was aware of the consequences of economics, and she also wished to have her book published. If she had made it crystal clear that if racial discrimination has to stop, black people need to be financially uplifted, would she not have asked for a reevaluation in the liberal United States within the social structure of the so-called American Dream? See also this quote from the novel as an indication of Morrison’s awareness of the intersectional issues: “Although their poverty was traditional and stultifying, it was not unique. But their ugliness was unique” (*The Bluest Eye* p. 36).

Michael Wood, (1936-) was a professor of English at Princeton University. He writes: “Each member of the family interprets and acts out of his or her ugliness, but none of them understands that the all-knowing master is not God but only history and habit; the projection of their own numbed collusion with the mythology of beauty and ugliness that oppresses them beyond their already grim social oppression.” (*Bloom’s Guides Comprehensive Research & Study Guides Bloom’s Literary Criticism* p7)

I agree with Wood that the “grim social oppression” is extremely damaging. Furthermore, I assume that it is common knowledge that God is not answerable for what happens to humankind. Therefore, it is not reasonable to blame a tragedy in one’s life on God.

It is correct that this racial discrimination is based on habit since this is generated through behavior, and it can be traced back to the beginning of African Americans entering the USA. That it is the ugliness that represses African Americans is because they have been forced to mirror themselves in the Caucasian standard of beauty. “the projection of their own numbed collusion with the mythology of beauty and ugliness that oppresses them beyond their already grim social oppression.”

From my point of view it is crucial to recognize this repression; one has to be careful not to blame this repression as seeded in the African Americans’ own worldview, if that is what Wood suggests. That they only had to view themselves as beautiful when they are being faced and treated with disrespect will not suffice to solve the issue of discrimination.

Another quote deserves comment: “Does Pecola come to live with the MacTeers after the Breedloves’ abandoned storehouse is burned, or does Cholly burn some other, prior dwelling place, and then the Breedloves move into the abandoned store? Such questions arise because of Morrison’s clumsy handling of time throughout the novel. She is not yet skilled in structuring plot.” Once again I am afraid I have to disagree. Morrison used to work for Random House publishers, and would this job together with her education not give her the ability to structure her plot in the manner she wishes? When Morrison created a bit of uncertainty about time, for me this contributed to the chaos that was facing especially Pecola. One thing is for sure: I as a reader was left with a feeling of being spiritually raped. This is of course also because one wishes to help Pecola who was so unfairly treated by almost everyone, and it angers the reader to be a passive witness to this racist repression and destructive life circumstances.

Nevertheless, Morrison did admit in an interview with Robert Stepto that she had severe problems writing the section of Pauline Breedlove (idb37)

The Girl Who Fell From The Sky

The theme of this novel is also racial discrimination, class, and beauty in a racialized America (Book Review *The Girl Who Fell from the Sky* p. 121)

“The inherent inequalities of social positions, however, dictate that individuals who are born into various positions will therefore expect different outcomes, even if they are blessed with the same talents. In the novel, the characters are thrust into a society that refuses to see an individual without acknowledging their race first, including the social status and discrimination that are seemingly inherent within.” (idb122)

I agree with this statement that the United States’ population must be aware of black people's repression. It must be in the interest of everyone to acknowledge this dark side of the social pattern in the United State and as suggested by the authors of the article quoted from, the solution to this repression can be found through visualizing what Durrow so quickly mastered since she was eleven years old when she first encountered this destructive behavior facing black people: “Throughout classrooms across the United States, students will undoubtedly recognize Rachel’s struggle to belong, while teachers will appreciate the opportunity to facilitate meaningful discussion related to the hegemonic practices present in our schools and the greater society. It is this type of honest dialogue that will promote understanding, empathy, and acceptance of others.” (idb 125)

Problem formulation

What role does race play in *The Bluest Eye* and *The Girl Who Fell from the Sky*? How does racism and repression influence the black people in these novels, and what is the outcome? Besides, how does racism and repression influence gender roles in the texts? Furthermore a comparison of the two novels.

Toni Morrison and *The Bluest Eye*

Morrison was the first black American female author to receive the Nobel Prize in literature in 1993. In 2012, Barack Obama awarded her with the Presidential Medal of Freedom, which is the highest civilian honor in the USA. She was born in 1931 in Lorain, Ohio and died in 2019 in New

York. She had a B.A. from Howard University and an M.A. from Cornell University. In 1955, she started teaching at Texas Southern University and ended in Howard. She was married to Harold Morrison, a Jamaican architect. They had two children but were divorced in 1964. She worked for Random House in New York until 1983. Her writing explores the repression of black people that slavery created. The critical stereotype that prevents black people from receiving human rights is the means by which she shows a crucial characteristic of the reality of US society today. A society is not any better than how it treats the weakest members; this was what Morrison gave voice to. She described how a little innocent girl without any protection at all has nowhere to find any safeguard and is just as helpless as under slavery. The history of slavery is available for the critical reader with knowledge of the slave history. The sugar plantations were in lack of human work force to develop sugar for the Europeans' demand. Rapes were a tool to keep black people in repression and Morrison's use of sexism through incest brings out frustration and powerlessness in the reader. This way the reader is offered a preview of what this race discrimination is about.

First, an introduction to the historical setting is given with background information of the time it was written as well as the time *The Bluest Eye* explored. Furthermore, how the inspiration for the book emerged.

The history, setting, point of view, and literary devices in *The Bluest Eye*

The Bluest Eye was written in 1962-5 and was her first novel, written during the passing of the Civil Rights Movement, the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965, which outlawed racial discrimination in public accommodations and schools and removed obstacles to voting. The Black is Beautiful Movement aims to dismiss the racist notion that black people's natural features such as skin color, facial features and hair are inherently ugly, a negative view fostered in slavery. It is immediately obvious that such a belief is intensely damaging to black people's self-esteem. To rise out of this repression, they dressed in sophisticated, expensive colorful dresses to generate respect and stop the connotation to slavery, where slaves were excluded from wearing dresses made from expensive fabric. Politically and culturally, black people demanded to be used in film as more than just slaves. Morrison, a black feminist, wished through literature to develop a larger empathy for whatever a person is not conscious about, so the didactic function of literature is

considerable in the understanding of minority issues. Furthermore, literature gives the opportunity to cultivate a person's insight and knowledge and, likewise, to develop the vocabulary on the issue and raise their consciousness of the given problem, in this case forms of repression of females, such as sexism and racism.

In this novel, Pecola is not faithful to her race either; in African American literature, the heroine is punished for this lack of respect for her own race, but we cannot blame her. To be continuously treated as a second-rate human being damages one's self-confidence. It is in interaction with other people that a person gets to understand oneself and develop. Furthermore, it is the relationship with other people that makes most people experience happiness. Moreover, Pecola was lonely, isolated and invisible, as she did not belong anywhere.

The setting is Morrison's hometown, Lorain Ohio, in 1940-1. The Great Depression had ended, and the USA entered the Second World War in 1941. Many black people, including Morrison's family, moved from the more racist south in search for a better life in the north of the USA.

The inspiration emerges from a childhood experience, where a friend of Morrison wished to have blue eyes, and the same girl told Morrison that God does not exist because she had prayed for blue eyes for two years and her eyes had not changed color. This made Morrison angry, not to be faithful to one's own race. Later, after Morrison's divorce, she was lacking a book to read that addressed this repression of a race and how African Americans learn to hate their own identities and how especially females, and in particular the female children, suffered the most.

Toni Morrison's goal was to explore the burden for black women and female children. She desired to establish consciousness of race repression through class and gender. This double-consciousness and the reproduction of repression, intersectional racism, are also created by black people themselves but primarily by society. To hit the raw nerve of racial self-contempt, she had to write that book herself. Therefore, she invited the reader into the world of African Americans by the voice she knows, she had the knowledge of how people on the edge of society lived, and she herself had the intellectual gift to demonstrate this repression of a race.

Furthermore, only an author with a black identity has the authority to do this, so she gave the Caucasian as little voice in the novel as possible, and she minimized the white gaze. In addition, the narrator was a female child, but at times an adult looking back on her childhood experiences. The

book was written in a time of great patriarchal power, and children were seen as the parent's property, a biological lump. The blame was always put on the children, and they were only supposed to be seen not heard. Nevertheless, Morrison gave voice to the most vulnerable in society, the black female child, which she even made ugly. By this, she visualized a dark and hidden part of the American culture, in which black people are continuously kept in repression. The reader was introduced to powerful harming abhorrent incidents, and thereby the reader receives knowledge of how race discrimination damages the oppressed, the African American, by always judging them as being inferior to Caucasians. This can establish the fundament for development by gaining empathy for the African American and perhaps make Caucasians realize that they are responsible for this lack of respect toward fellow citizens only because of the color of the skin.

"Quiet as it's kept" This is the case with both the incest rape of Pecola and the repression of the black race. She was so badly beaten by her mother that she was lucky to be alive, and she received no helping hand or any support from anyone. This culturally constructed hierarchy of white man over white woman, white children over black man, in fact this complete social pattern of an unequal level of life, helps keep African Americans subordinated to Caucasians in social and economic matters, where the civil rights for African Americans have not yet been established.

How could things go so wrong? "The damage done was total." (202). The effect of colonization, the racial discrimination where white people dominate the black race, was what Morrison wished to put on the agenda. Morrison also presents us with the solution to the problem of double consciousness by showing us a family, where the mother sings Jazz, and even though they are poor, the mother was a homemaker /stay at home mother, the parents gave love to their children and protected the vulnerable girl, Frieda, when Mr. Henry tried to sexually abuse Frieda.

As mentioned before in the problem formulation, the aim of this thesis is to critically explore: What role race plays in *The Bluest Eye*, how racism and repression influence the black people in this novel, and what the outcome is? Besides, how does racism and repression influence gender roles in the text?

Toni Morrison demonstrates race discrimination, and the intersectionality of race, gender and class to the world. She illustrates how privileged people that are victims themselves act as oppressors and

dominate and repress others of their own race, namely the social class below, or the more disadvantaged. She likewise illustrates how America, after the abolition of slavery with race discrimination as a social structure, kept colored people repressed and how this repression damages the self-respect of black people. The majority of Caucasians still identify themselves as *us* and the African Americans as *them*.

In addition, the American dream was not within the reach of black people, since the job market only provided them with low paying jobs, which makes it impossible to rise out of poverty. She analyses the impact of this lack of respect, which castrated the men, and the powerless turn to violence. This makes the men irresponsible and effects the interaction with men's close relatives such as their wives and children. The state was active in race repression through the education system where teachers, as well as textbooks, generated the repression.

In addition, she addressed how incest and ugliness influence most people and, on the other hand, why beauty affects all of us so tremendously. Pecola and the repression of the black race in African American literature and how it creates double consciousness. The outcome of teachers' behavior, and the Western standard of female beauty and how it can be traced back in history. To explore how and why Pecola's life ends in tragedy, we must examine the social heritage of the Breedlove family. Cholly Breedlove, Pecola's father, is introduced with his guardian Aunt Jimmy and the little we know of his mother. Pauline, the mother of Pecola, had a childhood in lack of any love but never questioned the damaging effect of lack of love herself. Sammy, Pecola's brother, had other and better opportunities since he was a male. Cholly burns down their home, therefore Pecola was housed a short time at Mrs. MacTeer's who introduced Pecola as a "case", which provides us with the Shirley Temple cup incident, which for Pecola and Frieda creates double consciousness. In addition, Pecola and the shopkeeper demonstrate race discrimination and ignore from white people, which could be labelled psychic violence. In Fisher's white household, Pauline's obsessions with the white standard of beauty and luxury are explored. Furthermore, attention is drawn to the relationship between Pauline and her white employer and their child and how she neglects her own child and Pecola's two friends. Geraldine contributes internalized racism and the understanding of double consciousness. Next, I will present sexual interaction, and the frequent lack of male, in female sexual satisfaction.

**An analysis of *The Bluest Eyes* by Toni Morrison from a feminism and racism perspective
White aesthetic in the school.**

At the beginning of the book, the reader is introduced to textuality from a book for grade one pupils: "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" When a black person learns to read by being immersed in white aesthetic, this was a deadly kind of poison, because it emphasizes the social hierarchy that exists in God's Own Country, the land of opportunity. Here it is of crucial importance to be Caucasian. The paragraph is reprinted a second time without any punctuation, capitalization, and a third time without any space between the words, which makes it difficult to read, and this can show Caucasians what it is like to read a text where there is nothing to identify with. This white aesthetic creates double consciousness, since it is how value is depicted, and this happens even in the education system, "teacher education to instruct black children in obedience" (81). This does not help African-Americans to pursue the American dream or just to be included as full citizens in society. "Her teachers had always treated her this way. They tried never to glance at her and called on her only when everyone was required to respond." (43-4) To be ignored by the teachers is very harmful to the acquisition of knowledge, when there is no relationship between the student and the teacher, the students will gain no learning, and it is education that best uplifts an individual to a better life standard. Furthermore, a complete lack of attention destroys one's self-confidence, as it is badly harmed by being ignored, which places one in isolation: "the slippery light in the eyes of our teachers when they encountered the Maureen Peals of the world." (72) When considered beautiful, one is praiseworthy and here beautiful is classified by Western white standards of beauty. The outcome is double consciousness, where the black people sees and judges themselves through the eyes of Caucasians, and this is obviously extremely damaging for the African-American self-confidence, since it develops a hate of one's own race. (Du Bois)

"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. She was the only member of her class who sat alone at a double desk" (*The Bluest Eye* p.43)

The social heritage of the Breedlove family

Cholly Breedlove, the father of the protagonist Pecola, was an orphan. He was rejected by his own mother when she left him as an infant; his father was also unknown to him and when he saw him "The man's eyes frightened him." (154) The last words he heard him say were "Something wrong with your head? Who told you to come after me? [...] Tell that bitch she get her money. Now get the fuck outta my face!" (idb) There was no interest in a father-son connection. Cholly had run away since he was afraid that he had made Darlene pregnant. The hope for understanding and a father figure is not available.

"God was a nice old white man, with long white hair, [...] little blue eyes [...] He never felt anything thinking about God, but just the idea of the devil excited him." (132)

Aunt Jimmy

"She beat his mother with a razor strap and wouldn't let her near the baby after that." Aunt Jimmy raised Cholly herself but took delight sometimes in telling him of how she had saved him. He gathered from her that his mother wasn't right in the head" (130). Aunt Jimmy beats the mother instead of helping her to take care of the baby; the mother relation was forever gone: "when she made him sleep with her for warmth in winter and he could see her old, wrinkled breasts sagging in her nightgown—then he wondered whether it would have been just as well to have died there." (130-1) If Aunt Jimmy had established the mother relation to Cholly, he would not wonder if it had been better to die when his mother left him. This was furthermore what he had never experienced: love from a close relative. Therefore, he was badly harmed by his social setting, and he had not been introduced to a role model that could show him how to take care of a family.

When his guardian, Aunt Jimmy, died, he had his first sexual experience the very same day as the funeral. However, while he made love to Darlene, two white armed men interrupted them, and this established his hate for white people. At first, he hated the girl because she had put him in a very private situation with his pants below his knees. Furthermore, a blame for not being able to protect her emerged in him. Darlene was under him in the social hierarchy, and it is always easier to direct your anger towards people below yourself. And this illustrates how vulnerable the female sex is. The two white men psychologically raped Cholly.

During his very first intercourse "Get on wid it, nigger," said the flashlight one. [...] I said, get on wid it. An 'make it good, nigger, make it good," [...] 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. [...] Cholly wanted to strangle her," (147-8)

Powerlessness can trigger destructive behaviors such as violence, and here Cholly experienced a deep humiliation that was linked to his first intercourse and thus developed an unhealthy sexual behavioral pattern. Morrison shows that the privileged white men have the power to mentally rape Cholly. Nevertheless, when a victim is constantly treated with disrespect, the victim may go from passive to active and act out the hidden frustration: "Cholly heard nothing. The insult were part of the nuisances of life, like lice." (151) This repression can develop violent behavior. He later took his revenge, when he killed three white men. (157) Then Caucasians are responsible because of this disrespectful attitude and behavior toward black people.

We had dropped our seeds in our own little plot of black dirt just as Pecola's father had dropped his seeds in his own plot of black dirt. Our innocence and faith were no more productive than his lust or despair. What is clear now is that of all of that hope, fear, lust, love, and grief, nothing remains but Pecola and the unyielding earth. Cholly Breedlove is dead; our innocence too. The seeds shriveled and died; her baby to. There is really nothing more to say- except why. But since why is difficult to handle, one must take refuge in how. (The Bluest Eye)

From the very start, the reader was made aware of this awful, damaging sexual abuse, and this flash-forward sets the stage for the behavior of humans when they have faced too much repression, and the lack of love, and are not included in the family because they are never accepted. From now on, the reader is prepared for everything; it can hardly become any worse, and this is not a coincidence. Morrison wishes us to be familiar with how the influences and circumstances we experience during our lives affect us and make us a product of society, and here it is racism in the most violent and mad form. To illustrate the repression of black people, Morrison portrays the main character Pecola, a black female child, with two parents who have the surname Breedlove. Nevertheless, none of them has the capability to give love to their child, and Morrison portrayed Pecola as being an ugly girl. The ugliness runs in the family, her vulnerability is overt to herself by the way society treats her. This self-estrangement that Pecola experiences makes her feel alienated from society.

Mrs. Pauline Breedlove and the burden of white standards of female beauty

Caucasian movie stars fascinated her mother Pauline, and she enjoyed sitting in the dark cinema watching beautiful women and handsome men. This generated a white aesthetic and developed her double consciousness. She thought that beauty belonged to Caucasians only and that her black race was ugly.

This cultural phenomenon in the Western world that blond hair and blue eyes are the standards of female beauty can be identified and traced back a long time in history. Even the Virgin Mary is portrayed as a blonde-haired woman in the Catholic Church. Yet at that time, it is not believed that there were blonde women in Bethlehem. Anyway, blond hair was associated with divinity/godliness and virginal youth and cleanliness, and Hollywood reproduces this belief.

Pauline buys dresses and styles her hair; she cannot wear high heels due to her one foot, she wishes to be acknowledged by the other black women. When they moved north for a better life, she had no network of family or friends, and in her childhood, she had stayed in the house. Therefore, she did not have much experience with social interactions. Sitting in the dark cinema eating sweets, she lost a front tooth. Not only did she lose a tooth, she also lost that bit of self-respect she had. And from then on, she does not care about her looks, and even worse, she does not care to love her husband and children anymore. “White men taking such good care of their women, and they all dressed up in big clean houses with the bathtubs right in the same room with the toilet. Them pictures gave me a lot of pleasure, but it made coming home hard, and looking at Cholly hard.” (121)

This Hollywood production of love stories was so far away from her reality. Cholly cared for her at the beginning of their relationship, and they had a good sex life, but they went from love to hate. “Breedlove fought each other with a darkly brutal formalism that was paralleled only by their lovemaking. Tacitly they had agreed not to kill each other. He fought her the way a coward fights a man—with feet, the palms of his hands, and teeth. She, in turn, fought back in a purely feminine way—with frying pans and pokers, and occasionally a flatiron would sail toward his head.” (41)

When Pauline gave birth to Pecola, she experienced to be associated with animals - more specifically a horse. A horse often foals alone and easily, and similarly, when black women were slaves they worked until they gave birth and continued work after the baby was born. “these here women you don't have any trouble with. They deliver right away and with no pain. Just like horses. The young ones smiled a little.” (125) The doctors did not see her as a person; they only examined her as an object, checked her stomach and looked between her legs. Not speaking to her like a doctor would speak to white women. The only interactions were by a person who looked at her

face, and he blushed, embarrassed by how his colleagues dehumanized a woman due to the color of her skin. This lack of respect, not to talk to a person due to the color of the skin, is the worst punishment one can face - to be ignored, not seen, to be invisible; this of course creates loneliness and isolation. The doctor dehumanized her and treated her as if she were livestock.

“Pecola look like she knowed right off what to do. A right smart baby she was. I used to like to watch her [...] Eyes all soft and wet [...] But I knowed she was ugly. Head full of pretty hair, but Lord she was ugly.” (124) Pecola was easy to breastfeed and there was a connection of love, but this was ruined, because Mrs. Breedlove lacked the ability to perform the mother role, since she herself did not receive the love needed in her childhood, and she never questioned what this lack of love resulted in. Furthermore, she was not proud of being black, and this destroyed her opportunity to see her daughter as beautiful because of Pecola’s skin color, which did not fit into the white standard of beauty.

House assistant

Instead, she found the pleasure of being a perfect servant in Fisher's white household. Additionally, here she even got a nickname, Polly, which she never had as a child. She blamed the lack of attention and love, in her childhood, on her foot. She had a deformed foot, because she stepped on a rusty nail that went through her foot, when she was only two years old. Her mother did not know what her favorite meal was; no anecdotes were told about her. In her childhood, she enjoyed housekeeping and in particular organizing the stock of food, and she was a good housekeeper. This pleasure she rediscovered as a housekeeper for the Fisher's, and the white aesthetics and bourgeois values, which she was introduced to at the movies, she could experience here. She felt privileged she could not hear her deformed foot on the exclusive carpet, and she could enjoy the cleanliness. By the end of a day, she enjoyed looking at the job done in the clean kitchen. “Here she found beauty, order, cleanliness, and praise.” (125). If her blueberry pie had the value that Mr. Fisher praised her for, he would enjoy selling her bakery products, instead of real estates, she had a business which could support the family much better than the low income she had from the work in his house. She gets obsessed with white standards and that she can live out as a serving at the Fishers, who said: “We'll never let her go. We could never find anybody like Polly. She will *not* leave the kitchen until everything is in order.” (126).

What she was not aware of was from the chain of slavery to the chain of racial discrimination. She works long hours for a low wage as a servant in white interest. She had only the early morning and late evening for the children, thus she neglected them. Her children use the surname when addressing their mother, whereas the white girl calls her Polly. “Pauline kept this order, this beauty, for herself, a private world,” (126). She gives love and care to the white child. When Pecola was told not to touch or ruin anything, she could not help but to touch the just made pie still warm on the table. Nevertheless, unfortunately, the pie soon lands on the floor and this floor was probably clean enough to eat the dropped pie off. Mrs. Breedlove does not see the opportunity to give the dropped and damaged cake to the children. Instead, she gave her child a telling off and blamed Pecola for the trouble she had caused by making the kitchen dirty, and at the same time gave love and comfort to the daughter of the white family.

Mrs. Breedlove passed on the belief of black ugliness to Pecola. “into her daughter she beat a fear of growing up, fear of people” [...] “she bore him like a crown of thorns, and her children like a cross” (125-6). She believed that she was a good mother by constant reminding the children of their father’s errors always focusing on what not to do, instead of being a role model.

What Pecola and her brother are facing

Her brother Sammy had the solution to end the fighting between his parents, which made their home a battleground. In a fight, his father was on the floor by Sammy’s bed and he hit his father in his face with both hands and recommended his mother to “Kill him! Kill him!” Instead, Sammy chose to run away when life at home became too hard to handle. This practice was for boys only; Pecola was trapped in their house. She could only pray to God “Please, God, she whispered into the palm of her hand. Please make me disappear.” (43) Another solution to the problem was blue eyes for which she prayed for a year. “Because if those eyes of hers were different, that is to say, beautiful, she herself would be different. Her teeth were good, and [...] her nose was not big and flat. If she looked different, beautiful, maybe Cholly would be different, and Mrs. Breedlove too. Maybe they'd say, Why, look at pretty-eyed Pecola. We mustn't do bad things in front of those pretty eyes.” (44) What Pecola had learned so far in her life was that beauty was the most important quality; it was favorable, and beauty generated social capital. Nevertheless, her father was a handsome man but unfortunately with an ugly heart. He found pleasure in drinking with other men and thus became the absent father figure, instead of performing the role of the husband and later the

father. He was irresponsible and showed no sign of any interest in supporting his family. He spent his salary on alcohol, which made Mrs. Breedlove the breadwinner of the family; this degraded him in the patriarchal society.

“And once when a drunken gesture catapulted Cholly into the red-hot stove, she screamed, “Get him, Jesus! Get him!” If Cholly had stopped drinking, she would never have forgiven Jesus. She needed Cholly's sins desperately. The lower he sank, the wilder and more irresponsible he became, the more splendid she and her task became. In the name of Jesus.” (40) “Holding Cholly as a model of sin and failure, she bore him like a crown of thorns, and her children like a cross.” (124-5).

This very destructive behavior from a mother, not to care for either husband or children, can be interpreted as a protest aimed at the white repressors of African Americans. Cholly was unemployed, there was no job for him, since he lacked qualifications. This highlights the importance of the caring mother in a home: children can live without a father, but when there was no caring mother to protect the children and give them a childhood where they could develop healthy relations and by that gaining the foundation for a better life.

Pecola was housed at Mrs. MacTeer's, because her father had burned down their home. Mrs. MacTeer told her children to be nice to the girl coming, but after Pecola drank too much milk out of a blue-and-white Shirley Temple cup, she blames Pecola for the overindulgence. Pecola was so fascinated by the blue cup with the beautiful white girl on it that she kept drinking white milk out of it. This incident, furthermore, shows how it is much easier to say what to do than to show how to do it. This is the same with race repression, it is without cost to state that you are against the repression of a race, but it is action that counts. ““Mama didn't know "what got into people," but that old (17) Dog Breedlove had burned up his house, gone upside his wife's head, and everybody, as a result, was outdoors.”” Of course, such an incident will affect his offspring; Morrison dehumanizes Cholly Breedlove by calling him a dog. “He had joined the animals; was, indeed, an old dog, a snake, a ratty nigger.” (16)

Pecola had her menstruation for the first time, and nobody had told her about a woman's biology so she was afraid that she would die. This was one of the few incidents where Pecola experienced a bit of respect, from Claudia, Frieda and Mrs. MacTeer, and she was told that now she could have a baby, if someone would love her: “How do you do that? I mean, how do you get somebody to love you” (30). For Pecola, love and acceptance would change her life, if she had the power to make somebody love her, because she had so far had a life with no love, and love is important for a person's wellbeing and development.

Pecola and the shopkeeper

This was one of the few interactions with whites in the novel, since Morrison chooses to immerse the reader in the African American society. Nevertheless, the statement of the universal belief of white superiority was made crystal clear, and in the capitalist hierarchy in society the race repression was easily adopted even for an immigrant. The phenomenon was also described with the technique of both showing and telling. Furthermore, we are told that Mr. Yacobowski was a religious man, and yet he still treated Pecola as though she was nothing. “she has seen interest, disgust, even anger in grown male eyes. Yet this vacuum is not new to her. It has an edge; somewhere in the bottom lid is the distaste. She has seen it lurking in the eyes of all white people. So, the distaste must be for her, her blackness. All things in her are flux and anticipation. But her blackness is static and dread. And it is the blackness that accounts for, that creates, the vacuum edged with distaste in white eyes.” 49

This explores the crux of the matter: the repression of a race. This Morrison explores in a powerful manner, furthermore the trading of sugar and the European craving for this product established the demand for workers (slaves) to work on the sugar plantations in the new world, America. Only 4 % Africans came to North America. (A History of World Societies 606) Nevertheless they are the ones that never fully integrated in society because they were not allowed to be integrated, and it is the winner that writes history. Perhaps that was why black women were not mentioned in literature. In a patriarchal and capitalist society, a white male shop owner was among the highest in the social hierarchy. Pecola was his customer, and he does not even bother to look at her. Not having the right to be welcomed by a greeting, not even having the right to be seen. When one is not acknowledged, one might just as well not be there. The shopkeeper neglects her, and he wishes to neither see nor touch her. “He hesitates, not wanting to touch her hand.”(47)

Pecola buys Mary Janes candy because she was obsessed by Caucasians’ beauty “admires the beauty of the white girl printed on the wrapper. She eats the candy as if she is eating her eyes. She wants to be as beautiful as Mary Jane.” “Three pennies had bought her nine lovely orgasms with Mary Jane. Lovely Mary Jane, for whom a candy is named.” (48).

It is easy to identify with the wish for beauty, since almost every human being enjoys looking at something pretty and, second best, being friends with beautiful people. The teacher looks cheerfully on Maureen Peal, the pretty girl, and tries not to look at Pecola at all. This disgust of facing what is socially considered as ugliness is universal, “[...] he need not waste the effort of a glance. He does

not see her, because for him there is nothing to see.” [...] "Yeah?" She looks up at him and sees the vacuum where curiosity ought to lodge. And something more. The total absence of human recognition—the glazed separateness. She does not know what keeps his glance suspended” (46)

The European immigrant Mr. Yacobowski denied Pecola any positive attention, she was invisible to him, and he did not wish to interact with Pecola. This constitutes an act of psychological violence toward an innocent little girl who only desired a piece of candy. Sugar was the very reason her ancestors from Africa were kidnapped, enslaved, and shipped to America. Mr. Yacobowski had come to America voluntarily in the pursuit of happiness.

Neither the teacher nor the shopkeeper respects her; instead, they ignore her. Furthermore at school if “one of the girls at school wanted to be particularly insulting to a boy [...] "Bobby loves Pecola Breedlove! Bobby loves Pecola Breedlove!" and never fail to get peals of laughter from those in earshot, and mock anger from the accused.” (44)

Interracial- intraracial: Black people keep the ones in the social class below themselves down

Wherever Pecola went, she was a scapegoat; she hardly had any positive interactions with anyone. Maureen, a school friend, once gave her an ice cream on a walk home from school, a split second of happiness ended by Maureen stating, “I *am* cute! And you ugly! Black and ugly black e mos. I *am* cute!” (p.71)

No wonder Pecola desired to pass for white, as she was constantly reminded that black people are the inferior, and this racism discrimination damages Pecola’s self-images. Being white would change her world to a much better place. If she only had blue eyes and therefore received positive and respectful interaction with other people.

Geraldine was a well to do black woman, who gave her son the care that was easily seen by the eye; he was clean and well dressed. Unfortunately, she gave her cat all the love she had, and “She had explained to him the difference between colored people and niggers. They were easily identifiable. Colored people were neat and quiet; niggers were dirty and loud.” (85) Not receiving love from his mother and seeing her giving love to the black cat, he began finding pleasure in harming the black cat and other black children. He invited Pecola home to see his cat's kittens, but he threw the cat in Pecola's face, and when Junior picks up the cat, he takes it by its leg and spins the cat in the air, and

the cat hits the window, and Pecola got the blame. Geraldine said “You nasty little black bitch. Get out of my house.” (90)

Geraldine discriminated Pecola "everything she has sought to escape - everything associated with the poor, struggling African masses: their physical appearance, their behavioral patterns, their lifestyles, and the speech patterns" (Mbalia, 1991:3). Junior wished to play with the black boys, but they were not good company from his mother's point of view. This discrimination toward one's own race was extremely damaging. When the other black boys are not good company, what human value was he then to his mother? It is double consciousness. This behavior prevents black people from rising out of the race repression (Du Bois). This was what Morrison, like Du Bois, worked hard to establish: this fundamental and essential knowledge that “-ultimate assimilation through self-assertion, and no other terms. [...] that self-respect is worth more than lands and houses,” (The Norton Anthology American Literature 896-7).

This repression at the hands of a social group above one's own was also what Simone De Beauvoir emphasized in the feminism statement *The Second Sex*.

Female sexual experience in *The Bluest Eye*

When having sex with her husband, she had taught him to be on his elbows and not coming too close to her, since she disliked the warmth from his body, and she was concerned that her hairstyle for tomorrow would be ruined which would make her appearance less African. Furthermore, she disliked his sperm, she was polite to act out an orgasm (82), and she had wondered for years “what it would be like to have *that* feeling while her husband's penis is inside her.” And when he was done it was a liberation for her. (83)

While she was having her menstruation, she had a mishap with her sanitary belt. “It moved gently between her legs as she walked. Gently, ever so gently. And then a slight and distinctly delicious sensation collected in her crotch. As the delight grew, she had to stop in the street, hold her thighs together to contain it. That must be what it is like” (83).

The effect of not having an orgasm together with her husband, which releases oxytocin which develops the bond between the two having sexual intercourse, this was not beneficial to the marriage. It put her husband down below the cat in the hierarchy, since she instead found sexual pleasure with her black blue-eyed cat. When standing working in the kitchen, she enjoyed how the cat would circle around her legs, which would “make her fingers tremble a little in the pie dough.” (idb).

When she sat and read, her cat would “jump into her lap[...]let the warmth of the animal's body seep over and into the deeply private areas of her lap[...]she opens her legs just a little, and the two of them will be still together, perhaps shifting a little together, sleeping a little together” (83-4). The reader knows that both the cat and the boy know that she loved the cat most and dearest. (84) “What they do not know is that this plain brown girl will build her nest stick by stick, make it her own inviolable world, and stand guard over its every plant, weed, and doily, even against him” (idb) This makes it a house for some in the family, but the head of the family, the woman, decides who would to be included in the home.

Pauline's sex life

I don't make no noise, because the chil'ren might hear.[...] I begin to feel those little bits of color floating up into me— deep in me. That streak of green from the june-bug light, the purple from the berries trickling along my thighs, Mama's lemonade yellow runs sweet in me. Then I feel like I'm laughing between my legs, and the laughing gets all mixed up with the colors, and I'm afraid I'll come, and afraid I won't. But I know I will. And I do. And it be rainbow all inside. And it lasts and lasts and lasts. I want to thank him, but don't know how, so I pat him like you do a baby. He asks me if I'm all right. I say yes. He gets off me and lies down to sleep. I want to say something, but I don't. I don't want to take my mind offen the rainbow. I should get up and go to the toilet, but I don't. Besides, Cholly is asleep with his leg throwed over me. I can't move and don't want to. (129)

I know he wants me to come first. But I can't. Not until he does. Not until I feel him loving me. Just me. Sinking into me. Not until I know that my flesh is all that be on his mind. That he couldn't stop if he had to. That he would die rather than take his thing out of me. Of me. Not until he has let go of all he has, and give it to me. To me. To me. When he does, I feel a power. I be strong, I be pretty, I be young.

At the time of this orgasm, they have two children. Moreover, they still have a good sex life. They respect each other's right to sexual satisfaction. Pauline experienced a power while having sexual intercourse, by suppressing her climax of the sexual satisfaction she determined the length of the sexual intercourse, and this gave her a feeling of superior power over him. That they had a good

sexual relation presumably must have boosted Cholly's masculinity. However, he was only capable of the act of reproduction, as he showed no responsibility in terms of economic support. Even before they had children, he asked Pauline for money to finance his alcohol.

"But it ain't like that anymore. Most times he's thrashing away inside me before I'm woke, and through when I am. The rest of the time I can't even be next to his stinking drunk self. But I don't care 'bout it no more. My Maker will take care of me.(129)

This can be interpreted as a critical view on Christianity. That religion through the Bible had been used to legalize slavery in a democratic society. This might be what Morrison wished to highlight by making Mrs. Breedlove religious "my maker will take of me". That it is more important to live by the rule of the Bible, to be a good Christian, than to take care of one's close relations.

The outcome of Pecola's life circumstances

With the life experience of being disqualified from the right to interact with her surroundings, she thought that if she had beautiful blue eyes, she would see the world differently and the world would be for her too. Society had no role for her. She prayed for blue eyes for a year, and Soaphead manipulated her to believe that God had blessed her with the bluest eye.

Because of the lack of love and acceptance both at home and in society, she develops schizophrenia, and she believes that people look away because they are jealous of her blue eyes. However, people have never looked at her because to her surroundings, she had been invisible, and this had made her lonely and isolated. As a result of her mental illness, she invents an invisible friend to talk to; it was her inner voice.

No one saw Pecola or paid any attention to her. Furthermore, her parents never received love in their childhoods, so they are not able to show love for any close relations such as their own children. The parents can have a sexual relationship, since sex is based on an instinct to reproduce. Yes, Cholly touched her, but here we cannot trust the narrator, the rape and her mother's lack of insight and understanding of the damages the rape had on Pecola. For Mrs. Breedlove, the rape makes clear that she as a mother had not been able to protect her daughter, and this sin of incest lays bare the dysfunctional family structure. Her father "wanted to break her neck-but tenderly." But the abhorrent incest only damages her "He wanted to fuck her-tenderly [...] The tightness of her vagina was more than he could bear [...] snatched his genitals out of the dry harbor of her vagina." (161-2) If this was love, one was better off without. She was a rape victim, and the rapist was her father,

who should protect her, instead of practicing his destructive power towards his daughter. Moreover, this was what Morrison desired to explore: the outcome of racist repression. When you take away a person's human right, it often creates dysfunctional behavior. This was what Caucasian culture in this context was responsible for, and this we have to interpret and construe ourselves, if things are to change. When this is not understood, the reader is only touched but not moved toward a respectful attitude toward fellow human beings, no matter ethnicity or race. "Oh, some of us "loved" her. The Maginot Line. And Cholly loved her. I'm sure he did. He, at any rate, was the one who loved her enough to touch her, envelop her, and give something of himself to her. But, his touch was fatal, and the something he gave her filled the matrix of her agony with death. Love is never any better than the lover. Wicked people love wickedly, violent people love violently, weak people love weakly, stupid people love stupidly, but the love of a free man is never safe. There is no gift for the beloved. The lover alone possesses his gift of love. The loved one is shorn, neutralized, frozen in the glare of the lover's inward eye."(idb204)

Furthermore, the rape scene emphasizes especially the white male authority; rape of black women was a commonly used praxis during slavery, where black women were stereotyped as having a stronger sexual drive, and many slave owners dehumanized slaves. This did not stop the slave owners from demonstrating their power by raping black women, who were considered as the slave owners' livestock. This was also a method to harm black men, since they had no opportunity to protect mothers, sisters, wife or daughters (Angela Davis)

From a feminist point of view, this also demonstrated the true value of women; children can live without love from a father, but the lack of love from a mother can be very harmful.

Soaphead's perverse sexual practice and a criticism of religion and of the church.

Cholly was a "Dirty Black" whereas Micah—Elihue Micah Whitcomb, or Soaphead Church is a clean man who gives candy to girls while he sexually abuses them, and they all have a party.... "A little black girl who wanted to rise out of the pit of her blackness and see the world with blue eye His outrage grew and felt like power. For the first time he honestly wished he could work miracles." (173)

The little girls. The little girls are the only things I'll miss. Do you know that when I touched their sturdy little tits and bit them—just a little—I felt I was being friendly? I didn't want to kiss their mouths or sleep in the bed with them or take a child bride

for my own. Playful, I felt, and friendly. Not like the newspapers said. Not like the people whispered. And they didn't mind at all. Not at all. Remember how so many of them came back? No one would even try to understand that. If I'd been hurting them, would they have come back? Two of them, Doreen and Sugar Babe, they'd come together. I gave them mints, money, and they'd eat ice cream with their legs open while I played with them. It was like a party. And there wasn't nastiness, and there wasn't any filth, and there wasn't any odor, and there wasn't any groaning—just the light white laughter of little girls and me. And there wasn't any look—any long funny look—any long funny Velma look afterward. No look that makes you feel dirty afterward. That makes you want to die. With little girls it is all clean and good and friendly. (179)

Elihue Micah Whitcomb, called Soaphead Church, was out of a lineage with the main goal to marry a person that would produce less pigment in the skin and by that develop a whiter skin for generations to come. His father used his leather belt to whip his son, as slave owners had whipped slaves to make them stay in place. Men are masculine and their physical condition is superior to that of females. Nevertheless, the father uses a leather belt as a whip, which definitely does not provide a human with self-respect and a social behavior pattern. Soaphead only had a short marriage, since his wife left him. He disliked the smell from an adult body. Therefore, he turned his attention for sexual pleasure toward children; first boys because “He could have been an active homosexual but lacked the courage” (164). Nevertheless, boys were too problematic to handle since they were brought up with a higher sense of respect and therefore had more self-respect and a higher self-esteem, which made them a more difficult target for sexual child abuse. Nevertheless, Soaphead’s desire for sexual interaction with girls was a perverse activity. Soaphead had large sympathy for Pecola since he liked old things, and Pecola was an innocent young girl, nevertheless worn out by patents and society.

“Dear God: The Purpose of this letter is to familiarize you with facts which either have escaped your notice, or which you have chosen to ignore.” (idb 174) Forceful interaction in Christianity, the Church, and its clerics as the institution of religion had been used as a tremendous tool to suppress slaves. In addition, men headed the church, Clerics were always men, but unfortunately, members of this institution have performed sexual abuse of children. This can be interpreted as Morrison stating that the sexual abuse carried out by the colored men also takes place in the white man’s world, and they are not even as repressed as the colored men.

Furthermore, it can be understood as a feminist statement: if women were at the head of the church, things might be different. The burden of child abuse would probably have vanished.

[...]the nonlife he had learned on the flat side of his father's belt. (168) We mistook violence for passion(175)

Morrison provided us with the solution to the race problem through Claudia and her family.

Her mother Mrs. Macteer was angry for a long time because of the loss of milk, which demonstrated her poverty. Nevertheless, Mrs. Macteer was not a perfect mother, but children can handle a few disrespectful incidents. When her anger had disappeared, she turned to singing which has deep roots in African culture. Furthermore, it was a tool to generate happiness under slavery. The father, the provider of the family, was often absent, because he had to work long hours to support his family with a stay-at-home mother. When Mr. Thomas sexually abused her, the father threw Mr. Thomas out of their home. Mr. Macteer was the head of the family; he could protect his family when work did not take him away from his home.

She hated white baby dolls, what good are they for? This hard-cold plastic was not a good sleeping companion. She preferred to destroy the white baby doll to explore what was inside. No wonder. Why should a black girl find any pleasure in playing the role of mother to a white doll when white people treated her as inferior?

The double-consciousness, which the whole society pattern was constructed upon, forced black people to admire white the standard of beauty. "And all the time we knew that Maureen Peal was not the Enemy and not worthy of such intense hatred. The *Thing* to fear was the *Thing* that made *her* beautiful, and not us." (72)

The value of a person is judge by the Western standard of beauty instead of reciprocal respect for a fellow human. This social construction disqualifies individuals born in the nation from being full citizens and by that not fully part of the community. This is what can be understood by Benedict Anderson's Imagined Communities, namely that it is imagined that people felt a sense of belonging. Unfortunately, African Americans, as a united group, had never been fully integrated in this imagined community, even though they were born in America. European immigrants are united in this Imagine Community which in America is the so-called American Dream.

Conclusion of the analysis of *The Bluest Eye*

Toni Morrison permitted men to have sexual intercourse with their wives, but when Morrison illustrated men's sexual activity, they have been denied the capability of giving their wives sexual satisfaction, which is the climax of having sexual intercourse. On the other hand, men definitely have the physical power to harm. In particular the abhorrent incest rape which was fatal for Pecola. At this time, children had no rights, they were regarded as the parent's property, and were not raised with much respect. Therefore, it was no surprise that Pecola had not been informed about the changes in her body from child to teenager. The fact that Mrs. Breedlove was fascinated by the western standard of beauty and her double consciousness made her give love to the Caucasian girl at the Fisher's house, where she had to work long hours as the breadwinner of her family. This work however kept her subordinated to the male of her own race as well as the Caucasians. She participated in society, but it was the capitalist Caucasians who had the benefit of this uninspired job and under paid, important which kept her continuously subordinated with no chances to rise in society.

Mrs. Breedlove suffered from double consciousness; from the first time she looked at Pecola, she found her ugly because she was black. She never received love, and she the right to belong anywhere. This made Pecola mentally ill. Pecola believed that pretty blue eyes would bring radical changes to her life, beauty would make a platform for her. Consequently, her mother would love her, and also her parents would behave nicely around her, and the teacher would talk to her, and also her classmate would interact with her in respectful manners. In other words, she would have a place of belonging in society; the essence of her problem was race discrimination.

Heidi Durrow and *The Girl Who Fell From The Sky*

Durrow, born in 1969, is biracial: her father is African-American, employed by the US Air Force, and her mother is a white Danish women. Durrow favors to identify herself as Afro-Viking. When her parents married in Denmark in 1967, mixed-race marriage was illegal in many US states. Durrow lived the first ten years of her life in Europe, in Turkey and Germany, and most vacations were spent in Denmark. In Europe, the only black person she knew was her father, and she did not experience racial discrimination in Europe.

In her childhood in America, her mother took a writing course and wrote an essay on "hygge" which was later published. She received a 10-dollar check and happiness shone out of her mother; this was the seed for Durrow to become an author.

After her parents divorced, her mother supported her family through welfare and food stamps in the US. Durrow was the first in her family to attend college, and she chose Stanford University. She has a degree in Law and is a journalist from the Columbia Graduate School of Journalism. Many publishing houses let her down; they argued that there was no market for Afro-Viking literature since no one could relate to it. Her breakthrough was winning the Bellwether Prize for Socially Engaged Fiction.

The inspiration of the book came from a newspaper story about a family tragedy, where a white mother pushed her biracial children off the roof of a building and then jumped down herself.

Durrow had felt race discrimination first hand when she moved to America from Europe. She did not know the racist social pattern established on the rule of one drop of black blood. Therefore, she was faced with prejudice when she stated that she was half-white and half-black. She was more familiar with Danish traditions. She speaks Danish, which makes her bilingual. She had no insight into African traditions or African-American traditions, which made her identify herself primarily as white rather than black. However, this unacceptable behavior is viewed as an attempt to pass for white or try to uplift oneself to the privileges of being white, which is a threat to the established racist social pattern in the US.

The setting of the novel is the author's hometown, Portland, and the protagonist has, like the author, a Caucasian Danish mother and an African-American father and is, therefore, half-white and half-black. The mother in the novel was called Nella. This can be interpreted/construed as an homage to the author Nella Larsen, who already in the 1930s gave voice to the repression of colored people in the US.

If a man calls me a nigger
It's his fault the first time, but
Mine if he has the
Opportunity to do it again
-Nella Larsen, *Passing*

With this epigraph Durrow uses intertextuality by reprinting this statement by Nella Larsen in the very beginning of the book. By doing this she brings attention back on Larsen. It is furthermore also

a gesture to call the Danish mother in the novel for Nella. The author Nella Larsen also had a Danish mother, who probably did not know the USA's racist social pattern when she chose to have a child with a black man. Larsen was sent away from her home when her mother married a white immigrant, because a colored child would ruin his opportunities for favorable jobs. Larsen never reunited with her family since a reunion would be inconvenient for the Caucasians in her family. Her mother chose actively not to have Nella in her life.

Characters in The Girl Who Fell from The Sky

Nella, the mother of the protagonist

“The Danish mother was not aware of the racist discrimination facing colored people in USA, I think it sometimes that to come here was a mistake. I did not think it would be so hard.” (110). This is the core of the novel and the problem of racial discrimination. The racial discrimination can turn a mother into murdering her children and commit suicide. Even though women are inferior to men, and men have the opportunity to run away from any responsibility, a mother leaving her child is rare since the mother often has a stronger connection to her children than men. This connection is based on biological circumstances and the time invested in this relation. The mother carries the baby in her womb for 40 weeks and does most of the infant's nursing.

Rachel

“Make my first deals with myself. I will not be sad. I will be okay. Those promises become my layers. The middle that no one will touch” (*The Girl Who Fell from the Sky*5). Rachel, the protagonist, is, like Durrow, half Danish and half African-American. For the first ten years of Rachel's life, she lived in Europe, a life without race discrimination, which had allowed her to establish healthy self-respect, which gave her the ability to protect herself from this racist self-effacing. She had never considered herself as inferior to people with white skin. Therefore, she does not know the phenomenon of double consciousness. Before the tragic murder of her siblings and her mother's subsequent suicide, she had lived in a normal and healthy family. This enabled her to view her life as worthy of living and with a positive goal to get the best out of it by not destroying it herself.

Rachel's father, Roger

“Roger liked white girls, but not American white girls. They didn't do much for him, because they acted like you were supposed to be happy just because you got to rub your brown on their cream. But not these European girls — they loved the black boys they met in the bars near the American base. Roger loved them back.” (71). In the social hierarchy in patriarchal America, white women knew they could be valued as superior to the black man, and this was what Roger faced - being valued as inferior to a white woman. This is destructive behavior, to value one's partner instead of respecting this individual. The white European girls are fascinated and do not oppress the black American. This explains the core issues of feminism, just with an example with a male as the victim. He was valued only by the color of his skin - his race. This was just what women have faced throughout history: to be valued and repressed because of their sex and therefore categorized in a restricted gender pattern, which prevents equal social and moral rights.

“Before we lived in Germany, we lived in Turkey. Pop never wanted to be stationed in the States.” (14) The relationship, or more precisely the segregation of the black race in America. This has been ignored, kept as the best hidden secret, by the majority of Caucasians, because the repression of black people also contributes to the capitalist hierarchy in society. This is due to the fact that African American are not gaining the profits from their labor power, resources, which black people pays the highest price for, in the world's most liberal society. Therefore, the repression of black people has been harshly controlled in the USA because it benefits most Caucasians. It keeps the black people in the lowest social class, with almost no chances to develop out of this repression.

Nella racially discriminating her offspring

Nella had laughed as if she had been tickled. “It's from my little jigaboos.” She said it with all love. “Your?” Laronne paused. “My little jigaboos. That's what Doug calls them. It's so cute.” “Nella. Don't say that again. It's not cute.” [...] *Nigger, jigaboo* — they were the same. (154)

Nella was not familiar with the connotation of *jigaboo*, but it revealed the challenge facing an immigrant who has to learn the language and the social behavior. Her boyfriend had the disrespectful behavior to call his girlfriend's children for jigaboo; this was of course not something she expected from a partner. This made her realize that she could not protect her children against this racist environment in the American Melting Pot, where one was included as long one was from Europe, in contrast to people from Africa. Whether the horrible family tragedy was rooted in race

discrimination or “just” the result of a mother out of mental balance and therefore takes her children’s life as stated (Obligations to Negroes who would be kin if they were not Negro, Werner Sollors, p 147). During slavery the only thing that could not be taken away from the slaves was the love for their children.

Grandma

“Grandma Keeps saying what I need to study is typing. That way I can work in a nice office one day. [...]The way Grandma paints her dream for me, there’s a low sky.” (148-9)

Grandma was extremely fascinated and limited by social structure. She was restricted by gender norms. Rachel was an A student, and the best job grandmother could imagine was a job as a secretary. This old-fashioned worldview keeps women repressed, as if a woman’s only goal in life was to satisfy men’s needs.

Anthony Miller - a boyfriend

“We kiss sitting up then laying down. I let Anthony Miller take off my shirt so that he can see what he’s touching.” [...] “You’re so beautiful. So beautiful.” “He says it over and over like it is a spell being cast over him. He closes his eyes. His hands are hungry to touch me. Whatever it is I am at this moment, it is something I want to be.” (171). They were both attracted to one another and Anthony was fascinated by her appearance, her beauty. He was the active male who took her shirt off; so far she was happy that her body was getting ready to make love to a young man she was fascinated by.

“ But the way Anthony Miller kisses me is fast. The way he touches me is hard. I feel like I’m going inside farther and farther the more he touches me.[...] “Please let me see what it feels like,” he says. I fell his weight on me and his hands spreading my legs farther apart. Anthony Miller is taking the thing I thought I was giving. He is not big enough to make it impossible to fight back, but I don’t. It’s like my body thinks: surrender, beautiful. “you are so beautiful,” he says, and Grandma opens my bedroom door[...] “ I should have known,” she says and then walks out of my room.[...] “Anyway, thanks,” he says. Anthony Miller leaves without kissing me.” (171-2)

When Anthony had had what he wanted, sexual intercourse, he left. He was very active just before and during the intercourse. She was passive, and she did not even spread her legs herself. He spread her legs apart, and he only had his own pleasure in mind. He keeps saying that she was beautiful, but he had no eye contact with her, he chooses to close his eyes and cannot read his partner's pleasure, which vanished and developed into pain.

She was passive, froze her body, to the extent of being compliant with his expectations. She started to count each of his movements and by that her mind wanders off. She was capable of stopping him physically, nevertheless, she did not even try to slow him down and make him tender again. He thanks for the sex he had or, more precisely, took. When you love somebody and have sexual intercourse, the outcome is a biological reward that develops a stronger connection to your partner. Yet he acts contrarily by leaving without a kiss, and kisses are emotion-carrying interactions. Then again, Anthony was obsessed with her beauty but closed his eyes with the outcome of a lack of benefit from her beauty.

When it comes to sexual intercourse, women are faced with two issues: dignity and fear of pregnancy. However, we do have birth control, when this has been taken care of, the next concern is a matter of the woman's dignity. This is another burden that has been put on women by both men and women. "free love, Beauvoir would discover, was grossly unequal for a woman and for a man" (*The Second Sex* introduction)

Grandma's prejudices

"It ain't respectable. Don't be like your mama — sniffin around life like the only nose you've got is the one between your legs." (150) "Don't act like trash like your mama. It's not something a black girl can afford." (237). When it comes to free love, equality between woman and man has not yet emerged. Nevertheless, dignity is still an issue today, which must be part of our social pattern. With birth control, a woman does not have to fear pregnancy when having sexual intercourse.

Rachel - a pretty blue-eyed black girl

"Why do the other kids talk about my eyes?" "Why?" Aunt Loretta says [...] "Because they're such a pretty blue." "I giggle [...] because it's school picture day and it's important to be pretty. "Yeah, they're just like Mor's," I say, and I feel something like happy. I have said "Mor" out loud and made some of the inside sounds outside. I have said "Mor" and the glass inside me didn't shake." (11-12) "When something starts to feel like hurt, I put it in this imaginary bottle inside me. It's blue

glass with a cork stopper. My stomach tightens and my eyeballs get hot. I put all of that inside the bottle” (10-11)

Rachel sheltered herself against disrespectful behavior; she encapsulated the harm facing her in an imaginary blue bottle inside her. She captured her frustrations into the blue bottle is a self-defense, instead of letting the disrespectful attitude destroy her, she encapsulates it.

““Such a pretty black girl,” the photographer says. “Why won’t you smile?”” (13)

The label of black will not be obliterated, even though beauty greatly impacts how humans value one and another and particularly how women are valued. The history of slavery and the cultural patent that continues to repress especial black females seem too beneficial for the privileged.

"I know how to answer the question differently now. I’m black. I’m from Northeast Portland. My grandfather’s eyes are this color." No matter how much self-confidence one may have, the black person will be faced with race discrimination once in a while.

“She a smart girl. That’s good. Just don’t be too smart, young lady. The men don’t go for that.” (16)

It seems like the belief of women playing the role of inferior to men was agreed by both some men and women. So when a woman has a high IQ, she better hide that she has intelligence, since men dislike this since a high IQ would be a threat to their superiority. This socially constructed pattern of submissive behavior was old-fashioned. Even Virginia Woolf stated that women needed to be educated with the outcome that they could be their husbands' sparring partners and their knowledge would of course also benefit their offspring positively both genetically and in terms of the milieu.

“It’s strange doing these kinds of things with a boy. I never really thought of boys as people to talk to. Jesse asks me questions about what I like and what I want in my life. And it’s like I don’t have to worry about being a girl around him.” (idb201)

This demonstrates a social development as a woman and a man can have conversations with no concern of gender pattern but grounded in respect for the other individual regardless of gender or race. But one thing is to state one’s ideology by telling another more difficult act to show this by outing out this ideology especially when deep feelings are involved.

““A scream. “Nigger!” “Nigger!” And then “Nigger lover! Again and again and again.

“Assholes,” Jess yells. The motor revs. A screeching stop and then the powering forward sound again. And laughter. They keep laughing. “Don’t mind them,” Jesse says. But I do.” (idb233) When an individual faces disrespectful one-way interaction, it is difficult to ignore this. Nella Larsen stated that one must stand up against disrespectful behavior to stop it. This repression of black

women that can be traced back to slavery is explained by bell hooks in *ain't i a woman*. The only reason this has been able to continue is pure and simple that it benefits men, white as well as black. "I've never done it with a black girl before," (idb234) "Good night, good night mocha girl. My mocha girlfriend." (idb235) That Jesse needs to inform Rachel that the color of her skin matters to him makes it clear that race repression is in the DNA of the US population.

"I scrub off the smell, the color, the words. I scrub between my legs until I am raw. I scrub between my legs like I am erasing what's down there-what it makes me, what it might make."(idb245) Rachel was trying to wash away the guilt and shame of having sex. This punishment by both for female having sexual intercourse or free love, the beautiful Beauvoir, one of the most intelligent scholars and by that among the most influential philosophers of her generation, also faced.

Grandma's double consciousness

"Miss America is black today, and she has blue eyes [...] She doesn't look black to me. Grandma [...] is happy that a black woman is the most beautiful woman in the world [...] Not Grandma nor the grocery store clerk looking like the white-looking black woman with blue eyes [...] and then I think: I could be Miss America if I got prettier." This explains the very discriminating "One Drop Rule" once again, if one has a black ancestor, one has black blood running in one's veins, and one is categorized as black, a second-class citizen. Miss America was European-looking with white skin and belonged by appearances and therefore represented the Caucasian standard of beauty. Nevertheless, grandma was proud; she lived by the social pattern of race repression and does not question the social hierarchy. Rachel realizes that she might also have the ability to become Miss America if she will only grow more pretty.

Conclusion on the analysis of *The Girl Who Fell from the Sky*

How can a woman find death more favorable than life for herself and her children? In this situation, a newly divorced woman found a new boyfriend who had a violent and abusive behavior toward her and her children. She got lost in her life; she could not face the unknown social pattern with the racist repression of her children. A father can, without any prejudices, run away from his responsibility. This liberty is extremely rare for a women. Women have been brought up to understand that they must and can do what is expended from them: to take care of the offspring to ensure the next generation to come.

That black people are repressed by race discrimination is beyond doubt, especially in US. In addition, I will give the mother the benefit of doubt; Nella probably took her children's life to protect her children from race discrimination.

Grandmother represents the repressed black woman of the South. Nevertheless, she also wishes on some level to lift up her children and grandchild, however only to the degree of an office job for Rachel. Furthermore, Rachel was told not to be too smart since men dislike women being smart. This way she restrictions on an A student by not giving the right to develop her grand potential. Rachel's sexual experience hitherto was that even though she loved the man she was having sexual intercourse with, she was the object that gave men what they wanted, and afterward she was left with the guilt and shame. This shame can furthermore be traced back a long time, the shame connected to women and sexual intercourse might be linked to reproduction and legacy or it just might simply be another way to keep women inferior to men.

Comparative Discussion and Conclusion of *The Bluest Eye* and *The girl who fell from the sky*

The Bluest Eye and *The Girl Who Fell from the Sky* are novels that challenge the fixed collective social structure, such as race, gender and social class. The world is changing faster than ever before, and people are immigrating to other countries than they are born in and countries are becoming less ethnic homogenous and more polarized. In the social hierarchy privileged groups exert power by oppressing individuals from inferior groups.

The structure behind race discrimination is extremely simple, like the repression of females. Du Bois explained how double consciousness damages the self-respect. Like De Beauvoir who explained how society had always repressed women to make life easier for men. Scholars have

highlighted the repression of black people as well as repression of women. Here *ain't I a woman black women and feminism* by bell hooks confirmed and clarified how black women are doubly repressed. These scholars make the social pattern of repression visible. Nevertheless, *us vs them* makes it difficult to change and overcome this destructive behavior since it is part of human nature to categorize people into groups.

The novel mainly uses a child narrator, which emphasizes how simple disrespectful behavior can be pointed out in both stories. The heartbreaking life circumstance and extremely unfair treatment face both protagonists.

At first glance one could mistakenly view both the protagonists' mothers as independent women who were working outside their home, and even though the stories take place in 1940 and 1980, 40 years apart, a woman was not capable of earning a salary sufficient to support her family. They worked out of necessity. And the social construction of race discrimination was still deeply rooted in the US in the 1980s.

When one is not being repressed, it is convenient not to acknowledge the oppression of the inferior, especially when it benefits one's own financial circumstances. The impact of being black in USA is still a limit.

The Bluest Eye portrayed race discrimination intertwined with gender-based oppression. Morrison was a black feminist who had the power to visualize these two repressions inseparably. The theory behind feminism by Virginia Woolf and Simone De Beauvoir also emphasizes the importance of women being financially independent to rise out of gender discrimination. This goes hand in hand with race discrimination, when the repressed is kept down financially as well as in social activity and excluded from belonging in the society, improvement will never occur.

To understand one's identity, one has to know one's roots, and for African Americans their history started with slavery, and this definitely did not stop after the Emancipation from slavery. Black men have been discriminated by lack of education, and they had no opportunity to develop in parallel with the job market. Black females were withheld by racist discrimination by the institutionalized crime of rape during slavery. The rapes that were committed by mostly white men out of pleasure or for well as financial benefit. This extremely egocentric performance developed an image of the black women as a prostitute, a whore, simply a "fallen" women. This extremely damaging behavior repress the social status of all black women permeated.

Durrow is a third-generation African American author. She takes two of her foremothers by the hand and brings Nella Larsen, a first generation African American author back in the public eye, and this furthermore demonstrates the moral indecency established on the horrible circumstance of taking a person's freedom.

Both Durrow and Larsen had Danish mothers who had lived their youths in Denmark. Both authors illustrated how biracial people have difficulties in grounding their roots and accepting the racist discrimination with its limits.

Miss America was black according to the one drop of blood rule. But when it came to appearance, she looked Caucasian, which is Western standard of beauty. This made Grandmother honored, and it revealed her double consciousness and praised the Western standard of beauty instead of recognizing blackness as beautiful.

Morrison belongs to the second generation of African American authors. Durrow also managed to contextualize Morrison into *The Girl Who Fell from the Sky* by emphasizing the mystifying effect that Rachel's blue eyes had on her surroundings. Even though Rachel was a pretty biracial girl, she still had to be careful not to state that she was half white and half black. It had to be the other way around: black before white to be an acceptable label of her ethnicity. On the other hand, her beauty made her attractive among young Caucasian men. Even though she was beautiful, her ethnicity still affected the young men. They had to inform her that they had never had sex with a female of color. Nella was beautiful and had blue eyes, and this was exactly what Pecola desired to have and by that she imagined her interaction with people would change dramatically, but nevertheless Nella faced racial discrimination despite of her beautiful appearance and blue eyes.

Gender and race discrimination of black women are appropriately viewed by most people as white men being superior to white women also white women being superior to and black men who are superior to black women. However, the degree of repression of the black women is like comparing a tremor with an earthquake.

Bibliography

- A History of World Societies* McKay, Ebrey, Beck, Crowston, Wiesner-Hanks, Da'vila
Bedford/St.Martin's Boston New York
- Anderson Benedict *Imagined Communities Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*
VERSO 2006 London • New York
- Book Review *The Girl who Fell from the Sky: A Novel* by Heidi W. Durrow. Revisited by Elisabeth Zarkos, Heather Mills, Monica Killen 6 Marisol Rexach Chapman University published in *Issues in Teacher Education*, Spring 2011
- Beauvoir Simone de *The Second Sex* Vintage Books a division of Random House, Inc. New York
Bloom's Guides Comprehensive Research & Study Guides Bloom's Literary Criticism an imprint of Infobase Publishing New York 2010
- Durrow Heidi *The Girl who fell from the sky* Oneworld Publications London 2010
- hooks bell *ain't i a woman black women and feminism* by Routledge, New York and London
- Morrison Toni *The Bluest Eye* Penguin Random House UK 1994
- Radiating Beauty: Effects of having a physically attractive partner on person perception. By Harold Sigall and David Landy, University of Rochester *Journal of personality and Social Psychology* 1973, Vol 28, No.2, 218-224
- Sollors Werner, *Obligations to Negroes who would be kin if they were not Negro* by the American Academy of Arts & Sciences 2010
- Tajfel Henri, *Social identity theory*
The Norton Anthology of America Literature Eighth edition volume C: 1865-1914