

post-colonial cultural productions by promoting the idea of homogeneity of human culture.

Then he denies the nationally oriented aspect of this experience too and suggests him to use far less demarked vocabularies like “collective or cultural experience” instead. (Ahmad 25) He knows well that if the cultural productions come under the guise of nationalistic demarcation it will lose its influence as the post colonial theorists like Fanon, Chatterjee etc also earlier have abolished the notion of nationalism in their theories. As I told earlier especially after world war many believed that the war was waged by nationalistic provocation hence nationalism got a taboo implication since then. We see even Aijaz Ahmad tries to lessen the negative impact of nationalism on the so called third world cultural productions by denying the notion of national allegory. Basically the sweeping nature of the claim will open way for interfering of a hegemonic power to prescribe an alternative remedy let say for example post-modernism which tends to confront with the imaginary construct nationalism. He also refers to it by saying: Jameson's haste in totalizing historical phenomenon in terms of binary opposition (nationalism and postmodernism, in this case) leaves little room for the fact... (Ahmad 79) Here, there are two different embattled notions. On one hand to counter this hegemonic tendency we have the specificity of so called third world literary production which is far from imitation as Aijaz Ahmad emphasizes as a part of his literary canon and on the other hand the imitating tendency of third world text and simultaneously nationally allegorical as Jameson deduced it. He calls it “national allegory” (*Key Concepts* 157) because he believes in third world countries capitalism has not yet separated the “private experience from public sphere therefore the story of the private individual destiny is always an allegory of the embattled structure of public...culture and society”. (*Key Concepts* 157). Having said so; if we assume that *The Black Book*, another hugely acclaimed novel of Orhan Pamuk, is a so called third world text in a specific way because according to Jameson's ramification Third World texts are those which are produced by non-Europeans and according to what Jameson says, All third world text are necessarily nationally allegorical then; Is *The Black Book* merely a nationally allegorical text? To avoid this over generalized deduction, which is aimed at a divisive ramification and colonial demarcation, as Frederic Jameson's rhetoric firstly involves the broad category of First World, Third World and secondly the sensitive concept of nation and to “establish much less radical difference” (25) as Aijaz Ahmad believes we raise this essential question; Isn't this nationally allegorical third world text, *The Black Book*, if the answer is yes; analogous to a rather individual and sometimes collective experience than a national experience? Or will it not be better to call it an allegorizing individual experience rather than national allegory as Aijaz Ahmad also believed that even though it may include national concerns too? Before we answer this question we should know the text first. *The Black Book* is a story of a Turkish lawyer whose wife is missing. Roya has left a goodbye letter for her left alone husband named Galip with no trace of her whereabouts. As he makes an attempt to find a

clue to track her down, he speculates she might have eloped with her ex husband, a famous columnist, Celal, who is missing too. When he embarks on the searching mission he slowly finds himself to have occupied Celal's identity and becomes him. And finally he returns to his own identity when he finds both Celal and Roya dead. The novel starts with the image of a Turkish woman immersed in her thoughts and seemingly unhappy in second marriage and her second husband tries to permeate in her thoughts. He envisages his wife's ex husband in a fraternal way asking Galip: "Excuse me, brother, when exactly did you run into my wife, or were you introduced?" (*The Black Book* 3) From his answer we know they are married now for three years. We soon realize that the setting of the novel takes place in Turkey as he describes a string of the prevailing Turkish lifestyle in a meticulous narrative skill we know from his other works too where he says:

Roya was lying face down ... The sounds of winter morning seeped in from outside: the rumble of a passing car ... the rattle of copper kettles that the salep maker shared with pastry cook, the whistle of parking attendant at the Dolmus stop... (*The Black Book* 3)

We see from these lines a fantastic blend of illogical love of his wife and his rival are juxtaposed with the description of Turkish lifestyle which all of them demonstrate the versatility of the novelist in the best possible way. One characteristic feature of any celebrated text, regardless of Jameson's ramification, is, the description of the personal and versatile experiences of its writer, and the writer cannot exclude the possible circumstances associated with his own self for example his national concerns like when the West Indian novelist George Lamming expresses in a personal way some of the enduring issues concerning his Caribbean culture in his essay "The Occasion for Speaking" where he argues:

My role, it seems, has rather to do with time and change than with the geography of circumstances; and yet there is always an acre of ground in the New World which keeps growing echoes in my head ...the pleasure and the paradox of my own exile is that I belong wherever I am. (17)

Like George Lamming, Pamuk's mainstream national concerns can find rooms for expression at times in this novel. This reminds us of the irrefutable fact that says "all the intellectuals of post- colonial societies have been grappling to articulate their own mode of cultural production." (*The Post-colonial reader* 7) In spite of that *The Black Book* by no means is a national text This book is comprised of thirty six chapters which all of them start with epigraphs that are the famous citation of intellectuals all across the globe from Dante, Coleridge, Dostoyevsky, Rumi, Adli, Lewis Carroll, Attar etc that are belonged to either category of Jameson. *The Black Book* instead is an individual experience which is not necessarily confined to Turkish nation. It is a versatile text. This in fact signifies the multifaceted conceptualization of Orhan Pamuk as a universal writer:

Ever since we opened our column to the fearsome examination of the things we human beings care about, no matter who they are or where they are from, we have been inundated with letters. While it's

touching to see how eager our readers are to speak openly about their own lives, and certainly they have had to wait for this privilege, I regret to inform you that some of them are so impatient that they don't stop to write their experiences... (*The Black Book* 59)

There is no doubt that neither *The Black Book* nor any other so called Third world text can take place in vacuum and a text is basically produced by an individual who is first connected to a collectivity e. g a person and his connection to his political background rather than the nation as Aijaz Ahmad also believes that the act of writing a novel is linked with the novelist's personal experience which is indeed connected to a "collectivity in terms of class, gender, caste, religious community, trade union, political party etc..." (8) On this ground; therefore the Third world literary production can further give way to a profound understanding of various experiences of its writer in terms of his relation with issues which are not necessarily national but are collective and a cultural production of any community according to these distinctive experiences are quite unique which may have a national sense in it but unlike what Jameson says they are not necessarily nationally allegorical texts.

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Sula: A Search for Self

- Geeta Rani

Abstract: Sula, the protagonist of the novel *Sula* (1973), a black female is a continuum of self discovery. At the tender age of twelve she finds no role models in her grandmother Eva and indifferent mother Hannah. She suffers rejection in her childhood and negation in her adulthood by her society. She does not receive the necessary nurturing to create a self within her own black culture. Her search for self is to the exclusion of her community of which she was a part. It is the black culture which imposes and enforces its own definition of a woman as wife, mother and man's lover. The racist and sexist realities in which Sula is placed, she challenges and subverts for forging an African American female identity. Sula and her friend Nel are versions of the same personality. Nel's final self-realization is a necessary prerequisite for female selfhood through the metaphorical rebirth of Sula. While Sula defies black values for forging her own individual self, Nel attempts to posit a self through tradition rooted in the black culture. Sula's Search culminates in her premature death at the age of thirty in 1940.

Keywords: African-American female Identity, Sula

"Wives submit yourselves unto your own husbands," pronounces Paul in the Epistle to the Colossians. Seventeenth century warnings about women take hideous forms:

Eagles eat not men till they are dead, but women devour them alive, for a woman will pick thy pocket and empty thy purse, laugh in thy face, and cutt thy throat. They are ungrateful, periured, full of fraud, flouting and deceit, unconstant, waspish, toyish, light, sullen, produe and discourteous and cruel." (Swetnam 1617: p.16)

This evil creature, therefore, had to be held in check and shown her proper place. What then of the black woman? Cruelly caught in the double jeopardy of race and sex, she may well express her dilemma thus:

First/ A woman should/ Be / A woman first / But/ If she's black, really black/ and a/ woman/ that's special, that's real special/ (Lee, 39)

June Jordan articulates the special paradox of black womanhood:

To be black and to be a woman/ To be a double outsider/ To be twice oppressed/ To be/ more than invisible / That's a triple vision.

Even after the abolition of slavery, white America has continued to hold the black woman in enslavement by keeping alive a series of distorted psychological images of black womanhood. These popular stereotypes are those of "the hot blooded exotic whore, and the matriarch" (Washington, 1974: p.10). For the black woman double consciousness tends to foster an image of ugliness in contrast to the images of purity chastity and beauty associated with southern white womanhood. Black psychiatrists analyze the crippling effects of double-consciousness on the black woman whose Blackness is the antithesis of a creamy white skin,

her lips are thick, her hair is kinky and short. She is, in fact, the antithesis of American beauty... There can be no doubt that she will develop a damaged self- concept and an impairment of her feminine narcissism which will have profound consequences for her character development. (Grier & Cobbs. (1968). 33) Alice Walker gives a poignant account of her mother, a maid, who was convinced that she did not exist compared to them the white people. She subordinated her soul to theirs and became “a faithful and timid supporter of the “Beautiful White People.” She thought of them as “jest naturally smarter, prettier, better” (Walker, 1983: p.123). The most sensitive portrayal of the self-hatred that the black woman experiences is seen in the story of Pecola, (*The Bluest Eye* 1970). Pecola is tormented, criticized, laughed at by schoolmates, her neighbors, even by her mother, and prays passionately for a pair of blue eyes-the Shirley Temple variety. Raped, deprived of love, and reminded constantly of her own ugliness, she escapes at last into madness -a total and complete victim of whatever is around her.

Pretty eyes, Pretty blue eyes ... each night, without fail she prayed for blue eyes. Fervently for a year, she had prayed. Although somewhat discouraged, she was not without hope. To have something as wonderful as that happen would take a long, long time. (B.E., p.34)

Pecola inhabits an illusory world of beauty, love and acceptance. She draws this ideal of beauty and love from a culture that fosters her; a white culture. It imposes its own definition of beauty and love, and a black culture that imbibes it, hence encourages the mandates of the dominant culture. Morrison writes:

Beauty love... actually, I think, all the time I write, am writing about love or its absence. ... which is how people relate to one another and miss it ... or are tenacious about love” (Bakerman, p.60)

Throughout the novel, *The Bluest Eye*, Pecola, the girl protagonist ponders on the nature of love “what did love feel like?” even as she fantasizes about it. This dream predetermines the distortion of that love through rape by her own father. Pecola's desire for blue eyes synonymous with her search for the American myth of beauty as self-virtue is what Langston Hughes calls “an urge to whiteness within the race.” (Pecola's seeking for blue eyes is symbolic of her need to “Get somebody to love ... “her and therefore accept her and hence she pursues it to the exclusion of everything else. Disillusioned by the horror of it following the rape by her own father, her search culminates in her descent into madness. At the vortex of two conflicting white and black cultural forces, Pecola becomes a vulnerable scapegoat, as the novel documents the crucial episodes in the little black girl's life. It is Morrison's indictment on the western standards of female beauty and the blacks who fall prey to the debunked white value system. As she states, “The concept of physical beauty as a virtue, is one of the dumbest, most pernicious and destructive ideas of western world” Pecola is never allowed to flower and flourish from childhood. She suffers a foreclosure of her childhood and is forced into a premature adulthood, “little girl-gone-to-woman” and is impregnated by her own father through rape. All

her traumatic experiences force her into self denial. Morrison writes, I wrote about a victim who is a child and adults don't write about children. The novel is about a passive kind of person and the people around her create the kind of situation she is in" If she is a victim, it is because she is vulnerable, her vulnerability is apparent in her concept of herself as ugly. Her passivity is the offshoot of white culture around her. It oppresses her which imposes its own definition of her, makes her the kind of person she is and eventually precipitates her psychic death. The whole society, the blacks no less than the whites are responsible for victimizing Pecola The society is culpable because it has given her values and ideals through the education system and other ways. They are inaccessible but she has fully internalized them. The blacks are responsible and the novel concentrates on her victimization by her own people because they haven't learned to accept their blackness and are trying to deny their blackness and other evils that go with it By presenting Pecola as a victim Toni Morrison is actually indicting the whole society and this society includes not only those who had contempt for Pecola but those who like Claudia and Frieda loved her and who fought with Maureen Peal for her. They too -in course of time lost their childhood pride in themselves and joined the band that learned to worship Shirley Temple. The pattern of scapegoating in *The Bluest Eye* suggests -that Toni Morrison's characters have all accepted white American standards of beauty and love. They are divided selves, acute conscious of their blackness but forever trying to erase this stigma.

Sula Morrison's second novel can be termed as a sequel to *The Bluest Eye*. The main characters Claudia and Frieda of *The Bluest Eye* are now seen in their grown up form and are named Sula and Nel. While Claudia and Frieda struggle against the fixed white standards of physical, beauty, Sula and Nel fight against the fixed ethical and moral standard of society. The novel is divided into two parts. Sula has black parentage while Nel is a mulatto. In the first part, Sula and Nel become childhood friends in a black community and together become involved in the death of a young boy. In part two, Sula returns to the community as an adult after ten years absence which is never explained. The book has eleven chapters, each located in a specific year 1919, 1920, 1921, 1922, 1923, 1927, 1937, 1940, 1941 and 1965. The ellipses of years points to the choice of the novelist which highlights the dramatic incidents in the life of Sula. *Sula* is set in the "squishy little town" named Bottom of Medallion, in the state of Ohio. The story begins with the history of the locality. The prologue to *Sula* points out the black neighborhood now called suburbs, but when only black people lived there, then it was called "Bottom." An interesting account is given by Morrison as to how a slave served his white master with full earnestness and sincerity. The white owner promised him his freedom and a piece of valley land. When the moment of freedom came, the whiteman gave the poor slave the Bottom land. Morrison ironically calls it a nigger joke. The place acquired its name from the cruel jokes the enslaved were subjected to.