Abstract
Marginalization of race, culture, color or religion has been abundant throughout history. This exercise of exclusion has developed into unnaturally natural practices that are accepted by people as a model. In the United States, as in many other countries, marginalization of and bias against some or all small minorities is a common phenomenon. Talking about racial bias in the United States, for example, should necessarily encompass talking about the American minority communities; namely, Indians, Black Americans, and Chicanos. As a counter-measure, the ethnic and cultural identity dimension in the writings of black American writers is obviously detectable. It might be attributed to a number of factors among which is the context of white domination in America. Many black/African American authors, including Tony Morrison, have addressed that kind of cultural distinction. In that order, Tony Morrison can be said to have mounting concerns over literalizing and textualizing racism and discrimination in literature and in a counter attempt is deconstructing its discourse. Correspondingly, Morrison regards the writing of fiction by black Americans as a rebirth for blacks; she regards it as a significant development and an expression of opposition and rebellion.

Key Words: Race, Marginalization, Black Fiction

Introduction
Well known internationally as a novelist, editor and a Professor Emeritus at Princeton University, Tony Morrison is one of the leading literary figures in contemporary American African literature. Born in Lorain, Ohio in 1931, she spent her early childhood reading frequently and enjoying her father’s traditional African American folktales. Her parents, George and Rahmah, migrated from the south to Ohio to escape racism and sought for social, political, economic and educational opportunities for the family. In Lorain, Morrison was enrolled in school. In her first grade class, she was the only black child and the only one who could read. She also “recalls her mother’s resistance to the racism of Lorain,” (Gillespie,200:4).

Fascinated by the family history and heritage of storytelling helped in moulding herself into a creative writer. Her educational background played an inspiring role in her fiction with social and political consciousness. Morrison continued her education despite the familial, social and economic problems. As a student, she earned money by cleaning houses. She went to Howard University graduating in 1953 with a B.A. in English. During the years in Howard University, she made several tours to the South. This had great influence in her writings in
depicting the black life. In 1955, she obtained a Master of Arts from
Cornell University. She started teaching at Texas Southern University for
one year, and then she joined the Howard University Faculty. In 1957,
she married Harold Morrison, but the marriage broke up in 1965. The
same year she left teaching and joined the Random House as an editor.
Two years later, Morrison became the Senior Editor.

In 1978, Morrison won the National Critics Circle Award for
fiction and the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters
Award for *Song of Solomon*. She was the first African-American woman
to appear on the cover of Newsweek. In 1988, she won the Pulitzer Prize
for her work *Beloved*. In 1993, she won the Nobel Prize for literature, and
became the first and the only Black American woman writer awarded the
Nobel Prize for literature. Her works reveal a brilliant and strong
ambience sense of history and contemporary reality.

Morrison recalls her childhood with stimulating and enriching
image. Her works persistently show the heritage of her ancestors,
particularly the stories and the resonance of music. Her citations of her
ancestors’ experiences and stories clearly explain the source for her
inspiration. The presence of her ancestors is felt in all her works, as she
recalls her accompanying of her mother, grandmother, and great
grandmother. This makes her realize her position as a descendent of this
line of women. Morrison, in an interview with Zia Jaffrey, states:

> I think I merged those two words, black and feminist, growing up, because I was surrounded by black women who were very tough and very aggressive and who always assumed they had to work and rear children and manage homes. They had enormously high expectations of their daughters, and cut no quarter with us; it never occurred to me that that was feminist activity. (1)

In *Playing in the Dark*, Morrison states how the white writers
present the Afro American culture with a sense of neglect that their main
focus is on the majority or the elite groups of the society. She argues that
the white writers implicate what she has called the Africanist presence.
She explains how racism is central to the American culture and literature.
Analyzing some American canonical works by authors such as William
Faulkner, Ernest Hemingway, Edgar Allan Poe, Willa Gather, and Mark
Twain, Morrison shows how Black characters are used by the white
characters and writers to define the identity of the whites. Thus, this
overwhelming presence of the Black people influences the black writers.
Morrison states:
What happens to the writerly imagination of a black author who is at some level always conscious of representing one's own race to, or in spite of, a race of readers that understands itself to be 'universal' or race free? In other words, how is 'literary whiteness' and 'literary blackness' made, and what is the consequence of that construction?" (xii-xiii)

Having satisfied her thirst for writing on black racial issues, Morrison turns into a new genre in 1999. In that year, she published The Big Box, which is a children’s book. Collaborating with her son Slade, Morrison followed that book with four other books. The Poppy or the Snake? And (Who’s Got Game?) were accessible to the public in 2004, (Kort ,2007:211). In 2003, Morrison published a novel; Love, and Remember: The Journey to School Integration in 2004 which is a work of nonfiction. Inspired by her previous novel Beloved which “was chosen by a select group of writers and critics as the best work of American fiction published since 1980” (Ibd), Morrison wrote the Liberetto that was performed for the first time in the opera Margaret Garner.

Until now, Tony Morrison is celebrated as one of the most prominent American literary figures ever. Morrison is deemed by many as “one of America’s foremost contemporary novelists,” who “has had a profound influence on America’s national literature (Ibd:212). She is appraised by readers and critics alike as “the closest thing the country has to a national writer,” according to the New York Review of Books, (qtd. Ibid: 211). During the life span of Morrison’s literary career “as a writer, editor, professor, public speaker, mentor, mother, and grandmother,” she has endeavored to learn “how and why we learn to live this life intensely well.” (211). Nonetheless, it could be rightly assumed that “the story of Toni Morrison’s life and works can never be inscribed or contained in a single work,” (Gillespie ,2007:xi).

**Review of literature**

Toni Morrison's fiction reveals numerous preoccupations and concepts such as historical consciousness, racial consciousness, feminine/feminist aesthetics. In *Fiction and Folklore: The Novels of Toni Morrison* (1991), Trudier Harris interprets and analyses the inextricable connection between the Africanist oral folklore and the literary works of Morrison. Barbara Hill Rigney in *The Voices of Toni Morrison* (1991) highlights the significance of the language in Morrison's works and how her works depicts the black feminist aesthetics. In "Contemporary Fables of Toni Morrison" (1993), Barbara Christian points out Morrison’s employment of historical consciousness to reveal the intricacies of racism. Lucille Futz, in *Toni Morrison: Playing with Difference* (2003),
highlights the significance of the narrative strategy deployed by Morrison in her works. Andrea O’ Reilley applies an interesting approach to the works of Morrison. In *Toni Morrison and Motherhood: A Politics of the Heart* (2004), she explores how Morrison depicts the treatment of black motherhood as a strategy of empowerment, resistance and interrogation. Unlike other writers, her fiction has been set in the common life shedding light on family relations, love, domestic relations and all that concerns around the house.

**Tony Morrison and Writing Black**

Marginalization of race, culture, color or religion has been abundant throughout history. This exercise of exclusion has developed into an unnaturally natural practice that is accepted as a model. In the United States, as in many other countries, marginalization of and bias against some or all small minorities is a common phenomenon. Talking about racial bias in the United States, for example, should necessarily encompass talking about the American minority communities; namely, Indians, Black Americans, and Chicanos. In literature, as in media, it is easy to observe various aspects and representations of bias promoted by the dominant whites like racial bias. And in America there exists a long history and rich literature of white American bias against black Americans, and other minorities like Asian Americans, Indo Americans, Hispanic Americans and Chicanos, for instance.

This systematic process of marginalization brings about negative effects on its subjects. It is performed for the purposes of ruling and controlling the marginalized. This process results in the loss of identity for the marginalized. It also fabricates a distorted history; one that meets the requirements of the dominant class to maintain its control. In consequence, the choice left for the marginalized is to perform within a particular mode that necessarily spells a cultural loss as well. Accordingly, it is assumed that in the United States the traditionally long established concepts of race and color contributed to the sustenance of white class domination and thus need to be dislocated.

Tony Morrison could be deemed to be working within that stream of disrupting those traditional notions of race and color so that to expose and resist them. Nonetheless, Morrison meets in agreement with those who suggest that disrupting and resisting those traditional constructs is not to be perceived as merely issues of political or social significance, but also of literarily narrative representations of paramount importance. In that view, it is quite possible to observe that Morrison always attempts to avoid taking sides and passing judgments. It is true that most of her writings revolve around black issues, blacks history and racial
discrimination; yet, she is concerned with the effort of reminding the people of their past, and of reviving it to help those marginalized recover and heal. She is not a hate writer or a bigot; she is simply an observer.

Black slavery was common in the Western world in general, and in America in particular. The causes and forms of black slavery varied from exploitation and profiting; to imperial interests and domination. Conversely, slavery in the United States took other forms besides those mentioned earlier. It is assumed that slavery in the United States was also used as a mechanism to boost and buttress chauvinistic assumptions of white Americans superiority. Black Americans were regarded not only as people who are lacking in identity and absent in history, but also as people who are racially and even biologically inferior species to white Americans. Thus the stereotypical representations—literary and otherwise—of blacks evoked by white Americans were those of cultural and racial inferiority as well.

There had been “systematic debasement and self-debasement of the Negro in this white world,” (Sundquist, 2005: 49). Segregation was a common practice in schools, public service facilities, government institutions and in all aspects of public life. Although the end of slavery for black Americans had been declared many years earlier, it was obvious that “for African Americans the end of slavery did not result in the end of institutionalized racism,” to say the least, (Fishkin, 1988: 722). They were called Negros or niggers and not even black; a term which is considered today to be offensive, an act of racism and one which will incur legal consequences. At that time, Martin Luther King who was the most prominent name and leader of the “Black civil rights moderates” (Sundquist, 2005: 90), was assassinated during his advocacy for blacks’ equality.

Therefore, it is no wonder to noticeably observe a couple of references to black Americans in some literary works of fiction like Thomas Pynchon’s The Crying of Lot 49 as Negros who are meant to serve, because it is, assumingly, their only profession and “a nigger [should] know his place,” (Haggins, 2007: 3). Although they are rare and can be numbered, these references to black Americans as Negros and niggers in places demanding physical work are noteworthy to have an idea about their inferior status during that time. Oedipa, who is the hero of the novel, on a couple of occasions, encounters blacks: when “poorer Negros” (Pynchon, 1965: 4), are coming to purchase cars from Mucho’s place, Oedipa’s “riding among an exhausted busful of Negros going on to graveyard shifts all over the city” (Ibd:98), and when shifting to “a negro neighborhood,” (Ibd:99). Or when Winthrop Termaine tells Oedipa that
he “got a dozen of your niggers,” in his arms factory and that he “had to hire two extra niggers last week,” (Ibd:123). And while catching a flight to Miami, “a negro woman with an intricately marbled scar” (Ibd: 100), is also referred to by the adjective or description ‘Negro’; and not African American, or even black American.

As a consequence the black American or Negro image in the mind of white Americans surfaced as a label that was as well institutionalized through literature and culture. Nevertheless, Tony Morrison endeavors to deal with that literary and cultural stereotyping of blacks in a way that ensures their permanent place in history, but a way that can also positively relocate their identity now and in the future. The age old claim of the universality and unshackling value of literature is thus debated. That assertion gets obviously debunked in the way literature deals with issues of race, color, gender and identity, for instance. Therefore, it is presumed, as new historicism asserts, that the literary text gets locked in, in most cases, in the writer’s, the reader’s, and the critic’s preconceived notion and favoritism of history.

In that order, Tony Morrison can be said to have mounting concerns over literalizing and textualizing racism and discrimination in literature and in a counter attempt is deconstructing its discourse. Some writers and literary authors have gone in line with the literalizing of racism and discrimination in their literary writings; some others have chosen to evade the whole issue and turn a blind eye to it. Tony Morrison, on the other hand, neither promoted that line of writing, nor ignored it; she uniquely has chosen to embrace a third path. The discourse taken by Morrison is that she is deconstructing this institutionalization of racism and discrimination in literature, and is resurrecting its history for the purpose of helping its subjects to mend.

Within the American context, the presence of African American writers in the American literary scene not only revisited the blacks’ issues of race and inferiority, but also represented an intellectual challenge. This literary black turnout put the traditional assumptions to a test; the supposition that black Americans were not capable of any intellectual, literary or educational activity was contested by the wide recognition and artistic writings of black authors like Tony Morrison. In the art of writing, literary production was assumed to be a white privilege of reasoning and cultivation, while blacks were downgraded in mere existence, let alone writing worth.

Correspondingly, Morrison regards the writing of fiction by black Americans as a rebirth for blacks; she regards it as a significant development and an expression of opposition and rebellion. For
Morrison, the fiction written by African American writers has become the most overriding form of expressing and ventilating the blacks’ complex issues such as race and color. She makes certain that in order to deconstruct the dominant narrative of white racism, it is imperative for black writers to counter-write this racism narrative by writing black fiction. Thus, American literature can be observed to have national diversity, and to have addressed different American localities rather than being produced to one national audience.

As a result, the ethnic and cultural identity dimension in the writings of black American writers is obviously detectable. It might be attributed to a number of factors among which is the context of white domination in America. Many black/African American authors, including Tony Morrison, have addressed that kind of cultural distinction. That cultural domination has produced an ethnic tension between the different ethnicities on one side and the dominant ethnicity on the other, the white ethnicity. The way in which the dominant culture has represented these ethnic cultures has caused those ethnic writers to confront and reflect as well those issues of ethnicity, culture and tradition in their writings.

Tony Morrison—who is a Nobel Laureate, but first a black writer—has considerably contributed to that stream of writing. She believes that a good writer is one who could conflate permanent beauty with categorical politics, but with a moral commitment. As a novelist, Morrison addresses the cultural issues of America ranging from ethnicity, racism, to identity, class, and discrimination. Against all odds, Tony Morrison could flourish and persist on pursuing her career as a writer at a time in which the people and the society did not expect any kind of intellectual achievement from blacks in general, let alone a black woman.

Writing on racism and black marginalization has always accompanied Morrison from the early stages of her writing career. In *The Bluest Eye*, which is Morrison’s first novel (Gillespie,2008: 6), the writer explores the environment of whitely manufactured convictions in which young black boys and girls are raised and brought up. She critically investigates and questions those convictions and beliefs which, according to Morrison, are a white production. As the title suggests, the novel revolves around a young black girl who is obsessed on getting blue eyes. The young black girl has discarded any other criteria for beauty and confined it to solely having blue eyes. The girl believes that once she gets blue eyes, she is becoming a real beauty.

That narrow-minded and disturbing assumption for the definition of beauty on the part of the girl indicates the kind of prevalent culture of the time. It demonstrates to the readers that the dominant culture is white;
and is celebrated and in a sense is to be recognized as a model. The writer draws the attention to some common cultural practices of the time in which, for instance, black girls, rarely if ever, are given the spotlight. That attitude, in the view point of the writer, spells lack of confidence and self respect on the part of blacks which ultimately brings about detrimental outcomes. The young black girl in the novel ends up being raped by her own father which is a disconcerting warning of that fragile marginalized spirit. Therefore, the “process of location (or relocation) is no less dehumanizing in Th Bluest Eye. At first glance Morrison’s treatment of the transplanted Southern girls is a positive connection between identity and place. Having soaked up the “juice of their hometowns,” they have deep roots and firm stalks, (Russell,2006: 41).

In her other two novels, Sula and The Song of Solomon, the writer continues to probe into the issue of black identity and the pursuit of black true self. However, in these two novels, the writer departs from her traditional approach of putting the blame on white dominant culture and embarks on an expedition for finding and strengthening black identity. Sula depicts the life and friendship of two black women who have opposite philosophies on the culture of the status quo. One woman has no objection going along with the traditionally established culture of white domination, while the other is getting less or no satisfaction on that kind of conformity. And thus, she is in a relentless quest for real self, for real black self. Sula is “a quest and respect for ancestral experience and knowledge, encapsulates her revisionary perspective on the classically-influenced practice of mainstream American historiography, (Roynon,2013: 60). The novel also “explores the catastrophic effects of intra-racial racism through depicting communities that subject members of their own to misguided practices of alienation and expulsion,” (Ibd: 113). In The Song of Solomon, the pursuit for real black self extends beyond the borders of the United States to Africa. The main character in this novel not only celebrates the blackness of African Americans, but also finds pride and glory in the African culture of their African forefathers. It is believed that “the legend of Solomon derives from a Yoruba story of Africans who flew away from slavery,” (Lister,2009: 38). The novel further deplores the American celebration of individualism, and accentuates the paramount worth of community and the family of origin. The novel, according to Morrison, “illustrates her emphasis on the centrality of community and the individual’s relationship to it,(McCarthy,1995: 217).

The following novel, Tar Baby, maintains that hunt for black identity and celebrates it. The novel inspires its very title from African folk
literature. It narrates the story of a young black man who was taken as a slave by white colonizers, but who could snatch his freedom from the tightening fists of his presumed masters by virtue of intellect and smartness. Tar Baby “is an assimilation and advancement of the primary theme of her three earlier novels. For the first time, Morrison frees her work from the narrow geographical boundaries of American society,” (Mbalia, 2010: 29). The novel celebrates the black brains capacity and debunks the established stereotypical image of blacks as absurdly dumb and unfit for intellectual activity. In that vein, the novel deconstructs class superiority on the basic claim of skin color and family origin. It as well exposes the anxiety that emerges and fully operates among classes on the basis of color, race, or origin.

Later on, on her literary career, Tony Morrison revisits her primary topics of white domination and black marginalization. The writer goes back to addressing the racial and class discrimination exercised against blacks in the dominantly white American society. At one point, Morrison resorts to celebrating her black roots and regards her black African origins as the basis of the present and the future as in Rootedness: The Ancestors as Foundation. On another level, Morrison goes back to brooding over and exposing white favoritism and bigotry against blacks. In Dreaming Emmett—which is a play—Morrison unstitches the American claim of equality and equity and exposes its bias and prejudice when it comes to blacks. In this play, a young black man is put to death for a placid misdemeanor which is supposedly an innocuous attempt to court a white woman. The writer wonders if that young black man deserves that spiteful punishment, and asks what if the offender was a white young man.

Morrison works are deemed in their totality to be literarily successful. However, one of Morrison’s later works, in particular, has achieved a huge success and popularity—her novel Beloved. Beloved has also earned tremendous acclaim and notable literary prizes like the Pulitzer Prize: “Morrison has been recognized by the New York Times Review of Books as having written the best novel of the last 25 years, Beloved.” (Gillespie, 2008: xi) Tony Morrison through this novel has established herself as a universal literary figure who is recognized on a world level. Still, all this repute and fame accomplished by Morrison in her works has been mostly attributed to writing black. Beloved breathes new life into the long forgotten miseries and suffering of black Americans. It recounts the tragic story of a black mother who was subjected to slavery along with her offspring. In a desperate but motherly measure to protect the child against slavery, the mother does the unthinkable and decides to take her
child’s life away and not let it be sold as a slave. Being a slave herself, the mother is well familiar with the amount and intensity of pain and agony she has to go through all her life as such. She comes to the conclusion that death for her child is much more endurable than leading a life of slavery. The traumatic experience the readers experience by reading such a story passes on to us how harshly horrific, mortifying and dehumanizing the life of black Americans as slaves used to be. People might surmise how and what the mother felt by killing her own child for protection; and how galvanizing that experience can be. The haplessly defenseless position of black American slaves at the time, and treating them as mere objects produced stunning stories as the mother’s in *Beloved*.

Tony Morrison in almost all her works continues to remind people of the devastating effects slavery brought on black Americans:

In each of her novels, Morrison explores some aspect of and/or solution to the oppression afflicting African people. *The Bluest Eye* examines racism; *Sula*, gender oppression; *Song of Solomon*, the necessity of knowing one’s family, community, and heritage; *Tar Baby*, the class contradictions that keep African people divided; and *Beloved*, the solution that will help solve the class exploitation and racial oppression of African people. (Mbalia, 2010: 9)

She is an adamant advocate of blacks who, according to her, were not meant to be created slaves or inferior. They lost their dignity and innocence, Morrison asserts, not because they did not have it in the first place, but because they were intentionally and systematically made to be as such. Morrison emphatically voices her conviction in blacks that they can be as free, equal and intellectual just as whites can. Yet, she is confused whether that journey of moral healing would come by means of forgetting the past and letting it go, or by constantly remembering it.

In *Paradise*, Morrison reiterates her convicting assurance in blacks’ capacity to be fully free and just human beings. In this novel, Morrison in a work of fictionality creates a utopian-like city solely occupied by black people. In this city, all people are free and satisfied with their life and what they possess. There are no malpractices, no injustices, and more importantly no slavery. Morrison’s utopian city is intended to showcase that black people can live freely and perform independently of any white custody or guardianship. Morrison is shown to be so passionate about black community. She is fully aware of blacks’ history of loss and suffering, and she considers herself in a solemn mission to help them recover and get going. Morrison takes as her duty to enlighten the black
community and preserve their past so that they become totally aware and active agents in the process of their community’s recovery and flourishing.

Blending fact with fiction, Toni Morrison’s writings do the job of documenting the white prejudice and racial bias against black Americans albeit in literary production. It is usually perceived that Morrison could not go beyond the limits and obstacles produced by her local reality. She herself is to be regarded a locality product of her community; a community that has been the subject of racial discrimination and historic exploitation. In addition, Morrison feels the need to struggle and fight against other social constructs such as sex and gender, not only race. Therefore, it was requisite for Tony Morrison to think of her own freedom not just twice but many times before she decides to write about anything. Accordingly, it can be said that the social and historical conditions of existence do reflect themselves on a writer’s production. And that can equally be true on readers and critics alike; an assumption that might provide an explanation for this particular genre of writing Morrison has adopted.

**Conclusion**
The present paper investigates the issue of marginalization of race. It also aims at discussing Morrison portrayal discrimination in her novels. It discusses the notion of Race, colors, Black history and Racial discrimination in her literature as the main theme. Black slavery was very common and it took other sides in America. In Morrison’s novels, Sula explores the catastrophic effects of intra-racial racism through depicting communities that subject member of their own to misguided practices of alienation and expulsion. Black people are the main theme in (paradise). They live in a free way and she was shown in loving black community.

**References**


