

**THE REFLECTION OF RACISM ON BLACK IDENTITY
FORMATION: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS BETWEEN
THE BLUEST EYE AND *I KNOW WHY THE CAGED BIRD
SINGS***

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A thesis submitted to the Department of English and Humanities in partial fulfillment of
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Declaration

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3. The thesis does not contain material which has been accepted, or submitted, for any other degree or diploma at a university or other institution.
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Approval

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Abstract

This paper will explore the struggle of the protagonists from *The Bluest Eye* and *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* against racism, focusing on how a racially biased society harms their development. Both protagonists, Pecola and Maya, are the young Black women whose lives revolve around internalized racism. A child's development is significantly influenced by their psyche, yet in a racially prejudiced society, the intense discrimination faced by Black children can severely damage their psyche, leading them to lose their sense of self. Hence, they suffer from an identity crisis. However, there is a way to reclaim identity, and that is decolonization. Therefore, the paper will examine the views of Frantz Fanon on Black identity formation, specifically in relation to *The Bluest Eye* and *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*. In *The Bluest Eye*, the devastating nature of racism results in the downfall of Pecola and her Breedlove family, but Maya from *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* frees herself from the cage created by the White mainstream society. Once she knows how the racial entrapment works, she does not allow herself to be in the cage. She flies away like a free bird. She liberates herself from all oppression. By juxtaposing these two protagonists, this paper would like to draw attention to the process of identity formation.

Keywords: Black identity formation; white gaze; lactification; beauty standard; decolonizing the mind; internalized inferiority

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Table of Contents

Declaration.....	1
Approval.....	2
Abstract.....	3
Acknowledgement.....	4
Table of Contents.....	5
Chapter 1 : Introduction.....	6
1.1 : Synopsis.....	8
1.2 :Objective.....	9
Chapter 2 : Literature Review.....	10
Chapter 3 : Research Methodology.....	20
Chapter 4 : <i>I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings</i>.....	21
4.1 : The Veil in the Southern Part.....	22
4.2 : Coexistence of Self.....	30
Chapter 5 : <i>The Bluest Eye</i>.....	36
5.1 : Role of Media and Education.....	37
5.2 : Self-splitting.....	47
Chapter 6 : Contrast (Reality Vs Illusion).....	50
Chapter 7 : Conclusion.....	59
Works Cited.....	61

Chapter 1 : Introduction

There is a saying that goes, “When the root of a tree begins to decay, it spreads death.” This proverb serves as a powerful metaphor for the psychic death of Black individuals which sheds light on the psychological impact of systematic racism deep-rooted in their childhood. Black people often suffer from an inferiority complex due to racial segregation, an affliction instilled in them from an early age. Childhood, which is typically a time for joy and exploration, becomes a traumatic experience for Black children, leading to what can be described as the “death” of their psyche. Postcolonial theorist, Frantz Fanon, terms the neurotic experiences of a Black subject as psychopathology in his book *Black Skin White Masks* where the pathology is represented through the process of cultural assimilation. There, he discusses that a Black individual does not willingly choose a particular identity but instead accepts the identity imposed upon him by colonial forces. Cultural assimilation is the replacement of the colonized native culture by the colonial culture. This replacement undermines the authenticity of the colonized culture and the development of an identity formation of the colonized people. Fanon argues that colonial ideologies distort the self image of the colonized. To elaborate, colonizers impose colonial ideologies, but these ideologies serve to entrap the colonized, instilling a sense of inferiority. Colonizers will never accept the colonized people as equals. In their eyes, the colonized people are different and inferior. Therefore, the colonized can never escape their internalized feelings of inferiority. The social system and the gaze of others are important to get the external image of self. Through this external image, the child recognizes and develops their sense of self. However, Fanon thinks that colonial narratives distort this self-image. As a result, the child experiences misrecognition. This misrecognition hampers the process of forming an identity. Fanon alerts the colonized people not to fall for this trap. He urges the colonized people to rebel against those imperial doctrines and start a revolution against adopting colonial cultural identity. This

is the only way to preserve one's true self and triumph over colonial rule.

Fanon's insights into colonialism and cultural assimilation can also be applied to the experiences of African Americans under systemic racism in 20th-century America. Although the Great Migration during World War I was beneficial for them to upgrade their socioeconomic status, the White society made sure that they could not reach the peak of their levels. They chose racial internalization as a psychological weapon to suppress African Americans. However, the 20th century was also a turning point for literature. It was the era of modernism. It was an era that shifted literature from tradition to modernity. Writers began to focus on the method of writing rather than the content. The themes African American writers like Toni Morrison and Maya Angelou explored at that time are related to Fanon's psychological effect of racism. The amount of intensity created through a sense of inadequacy is reflected mostly in their works. Their two prominent pieces are *The Bluest Eye*, and *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*. While Morrison gave a sense of the devastating consequence of racism, Angelou experimented with racism for the protagonist's personal growth. Therefore, their works echo Fanon's call for reclaiming identity through resisting the psychological chains of racism.

While showing routes to resistance and empowerment, both writers draw attention to the psychological effects of racism. Emphasizing the necessity to question and destroy both systematic racism and its internalized effects, their writings reflect Fanon's radical ideals. These stories together confirm Fanon's concept of recovering humanity from injustice by showing how the psychological consequences of racism may both be a battlefield and a road toward freedom.

1.1 : Synopsis

I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings is Angelou's autobiography. The story follows an insecure Black girl, Maya, in the South, who experiences frequent displacement while trying to find a secure place called home. At the age of three, Maya and her brother, Bailey, were sent to Stamps, Arkansas, to live with their grandmother, Annie Henderson, after their parents' divorce. Stamps became the place where Maya spent most of her childhood. During this time, she observed the racial prejudices in society and witnessed the humiliation Momma and Uncle Willie faced because of their skin color, even though they were elderly. At the age of eight, she moved to her mother's house, where she was raped by her mother's boyfriend, Mr. Freeman. She was deeply shocked by the experience. After the incident, she moved back to Stamp, but she remained mute. It was through her interaction with Mrs. Flower that Maya broke her silence. Mrs. Flower is a major character who brings about a paradigm shift in her. Maya drew motivation from this woman. At age ten, she worked under a White woman called Mrs. Cullinan, who tried to change her name to Mary. Maya felt disrespected by the act, and one day, she left the job. Though rebellious, her moment of transformation came on graduation day, when she realized that the only way a Black person can fulfill her dreams is by following her own path rather than relying on others. She proved this by becoming a streetcar conductor when she was fifteen. She even became a mother at the age of sixteen. Being a mother gave her an opportunity to keep her dream alive by passing it to her newborn baby.

While Maya passed her dreams to her newborn baby, Pecola, the protagonist of *The Bluest Eye*, could not even give birth to her baby. The opening of the book begins with an image: the

soil itself is infertile and unable to nourish a child, which is why the seed of the marigold that Claudia, the narrator, planted never grew. The book is about a 12-year-old Black girl, Pecola, who was raped by her father. Pecola and her family, the Breedlove family, live in a storefront apartment that feels empty and devoid of love. Her father, Cholly, is an abusive alcoholic, and her mother, Pauline, works for a White family. Pecola also has a brother, but her parents show no affection for their children. They always fight in front of their children, creating an unstable and chaotic environment. To get away from this chaos and to have a beautiful life, Pecola desperately wishes for blue eyes. Neglected by her parents, she believes that only people with blue eyes, like Shirley Temple, can be loved. Like Pecola, her parents' childhoods were traumatic. The trauma that led Cholly to rape his daughter stemmed from a humiliating experience he had as a teenager when a White soldier mocked him while he was intimate with a girl. The unresolved aggression manifested in his violent behavior toward Pecola. By the end of the book, Pecola loses her sanity.

1.2 : Objective

The objective of the paper is to show the complexity of developing identity for Black individuals. Identity formation is a difficult process for them because of the systematic pressure and psychological struggle they face in a racially stratified society. Sometimes they are not even able to shape their identity. They have to live either with an identity crisis or with a fragmented identity. To understand the inner struggle of the Black people while forming an identity, the paper applies Fanon's theory "the psychological effect of colonialism and racism" since it provides a framework for understanding how these psychological struggles are rooted in the colonial experience. It serves the purpose of exposing different colonial ideologies that is a tool for internalizing racism in the citizens. Those ideologies create self-doubt in the Black people because they do not know with whom they should be

identified - with the one who they are or the one whom they are imposed on. As a result, their selves get splitted in two. Therefore, the paper will also talk about psychological confinement that comes from racial oppression. However, Fanon offers a path forward, emphasizing the importance of mental liberation to overcome these challenges which is decolonizing the mind. Fanon inspires the colonized people to bring internal revolution by resisting the construction of colonialism. It is the only way the colonized people can come out of the internalized inferiority and build a whole new unique identity for themselves. By following Fanon's call for mental decolonization, the paper aims to highlight the transformative potential of reclaiming one's identity in the face of systemic oppression.

Chapter 2 : Literature Review

According to Butts et al., Fanon's psychoanalytic perspective is crucial for the debate about racism. Hence, they explain the chapter "The Woman of Colour and the White Man" in *Black Skin, White Masks* where Fanon offers a critical perspective of interracial relationships.

Fanon notes how Black women start to feel as "being whitened" when they start sexual encounters with white men. This view shows the widespread influence of social structures that view Black people as incapable of having such interactions as their entire existence seems to be intrinsically smaller. Fanon questions how institutional and social pressures generate personal neurosis, therefore reflecting the cultural attitudes of his period (1016).

To interact with Fanon's theories, McCulloch in *Black Soul, White Artifact* presents the phrase "psycho-existential complex." Fanon tackles the underlying psychological conflicts resulting from the effects of racism and colonialism, therefore shaping the planet into binaries. This framework marginalizes Blackness to poverty and worthlessness and elevates the white world as a symbol of riches, beauty, and power. Under such regimes, Black people

including those from Martinique often absorb this value hierarchy inside. For many, white represents a means of escape from difficult reality, therefore generating an identity duality that drives them more into inner turmoil. The mental and emotional life of Black men and women is much influenced by these society factors.

The article explores this dynamic even more by talking about the need some Black women have to “whiten” themselves by means of relationships with white men. Considered as “lactification,” this phenomena captures the strong psychological training brought about by colonial ideas. Looking for social approval, many Black women give white men first priority and purposefully shun sexual relationships with Black men. This avoidance results from a fear of losing social position. For Fanon, this action represents the internalization of their own perceived inadequacy, thus it is both tragic and somewhat disturbing. It emphasizes for him the long-lasting psychological harm resulting from colonialism, therefore encouraging a circle of estrangement, self-denial, and inner conflict.

He also emphasizes Fanon’s theory on the psychopathology of Blackness by saying that the only way to escape from this tragedy of Blackness is to step into the world of Europe. Hence, Blacks blend with the social and cultural milieu of Europe. They bring changes in their personalities and behaviors so that they can hide their hatred towards their own “damning” color as if they put a white mask on their face. That white mask carries the qualities that can assure their existence in the world or else their presence does not matter in this world from their perspectives (64-65).

Henke explores that internalized racism inflicts inferiority in such a way that a Black subject often considers itself a changeling. A changeling is a humanoid race that can transform its

appearance for a time being and then it can revert back to the original self. Likewise, a Black subject wishes for a reversion to go back to the original self which is considered to be the White skin. That means a Black subject refuses to accept Black skin as the origin of self. For instance, Maya perceives herself as a racial changeling during her childhood. The construction of beauty standards in the 1930s like Shirley Temple's beauty and Eurocentric ideals of beauty, fueled fantasies in Maya. She denied her own body, and her present self, and wished for a physical transformation. She considered her real face as a mask or persona beneath which cream-skinned, blue-eyed, blonde hair sylphs are hidden. This imagined appearance was her secret identity that nobody knew. For her, living with Black skin was an ugly dream that will be broken soon. She will one day wake out of that dream. Tragedy lies within the dream Maya would never escape it, nor would she ever find the courage to face her true self. Yet, living in the false self-system was the only way to cope with her self-rejection (22-23).

Rania et al. interpret the notion of Maya's twoness or the division self through Du Bois's theory on double consciousness. According to Du Bois, African Americans strive to navigate two selves - "Negroes" and "Americans" - as they cannot afford to lose one. They cannot change their racial identity along with their American citizenship. Du Bois analyzes their situation through a metaphor, the veil. With the veil, Du Bois shows the borderline of the colored people that restricts them from having a proper identity. Du Bois explains the veil in three ways. Firstly, darker skin is the veil for Black people. In the literal sense, dark is the binary opposite of white which brings the orientalist discourse for being other. According to orientalist discourse, White Europeans are the self and non-White Europeans are the other. Therefore, Africans are considered to be different because of their race. In this case, white gaze can be the veil for the Black people. Since African Americans are Black, White

Americans associate them with others and do not approve of African Americans as the true citizens of Americans. The white gaze also reflects on the gaze of others. That means, Black people perceive themselves as others. They do not consider them as an individual entity. Rather, they believe they need to be white in order to get recognition as a subject of the nation. Black perspective towards them as inferior can be a veil as well. It is a veil because it manipulates African Americans to doubt their self-worth. As a result, they devalue themselves and suffer from an identity crisis (09-10).

The mainstream white society manipulates African Americans in such a way that they end up seeing themselves as inferior or from the white perspective. Beauty standards are normalized like this and so “black skin echoes ugliness is anchored even in the black mind” (Rania et al. 22-25). Beauty ideals greatly affect a Black girl’s growth, as she measures herself with the standard. Likewise, Maya from the *Caged Bird* was not satisfied with her skin. She felt ugly and wished to be a white girl. As she cannot do anything about her physical appearance, she starts to hate herself. This article shows the inner turmoil of a young Black girl dealing with a false self-consciousness about the negative stereotypes created by whites. As a consequence, a Black child creates the veil on his community and himself. In other words, double consciousness splits one’s identity (Rania et al. 22-25).

In another article, Munir et al. discuss the internalized sense of otherness experienced by Black women in the *Caged Bird*. According to this article, Angelou makes all the novel’s Black characters in a way that makes them wish to become white to get recognition from mainstream society. However, white people will never accept them as a part of society because they consider Black people as inferior. The White gaze often looks down on the Black people. Angelou in her autobiography describes many incidents she encounters with

the white gaze. She once even witnessed her grandma getting humiliated by some young white school girls in chapter-05. Those girls teased her grandmother by making faces of an old ape. Despite being an elderly figure, grandmother did not get any respect from those girls because she was a Black woman. She was objectified by the girls from another race (11-14).

Another incident of internalizing otherness in *Caged Bird* is described by Choudhary. He explains Mrs. Cullinan's act of altering Marguerite's name was a cunning move to other her subjectivity. Although Shakespeare in *Romeo and Juliet* mentions that name does not matter, a rose will smell sweet even if it has been given any name, a name is crucial for any human being since it carries his identity. It gives meaning to a person's existence. To alter someone's given name or call by any other name is regarded as a huge disrespect to that person. It raises a question of real identity versus replaced identity. It is a dehumanizing act. It is known that this act of dehumanization was one of the prominent tools of slavery where slaves were not considered as humans.

Even after slavery was abolished, Europeans used to alter the names of Black people for their own convenience. They never thought that it could hurt Black people's feelings or make them feel inferior. Marguerite had to face this kind of situation while working at a White woman's house. There, the lady, Mrs. Cullinan, used to call her "Mary" since it was hard for the lady to call her full name. The article shows how cleverly and disrespectfully Mrs. Cullinan removed Marguerite's identity since she is a "Negro girl" in her eyes. Marguerite felt so humiliated and inferior that she said "hellish horror of being called 'out of his name'" (Angelou 106). Yet, there is a resistance in her voice. The breaking plate scene is the representation of open confrontation against racism or the white oppression. Her action clarifies that her self-identity takes precedence over money. For this reason, when she gets proper respect from Mrs.

Flower, she can embrace her black womanhood which helps her to flourish in her life (184-185).

Akhter views racism as a mode of assistance instead of a mode of abuse in African American society. It worked like a vehicle for Maya to access white society and challenge them. She is the actual representative of her race as she takes a stand for them. An appropriate example of this would be the time of her college graduation when she finally realized the true color of white people. She understood very well that the whites would never let African Americans ride the ladder of success. They do not wish any good for African Americans. They want them to be subordinated for the rest of their lives. However, the national anthem sung by Henry Reed was a great motivation for Maya to stand against the whites. Angelou once said, “A bird does not sing because it has an answer it sings because it has a song” (Akhter 26-27). That means a caged bird can only be free if it chooses to fly away. In the same way, Angelou believed that Black people could only achieve their humanity by spreading their wings. Angelou’s constant determination to stand up against the white world opened the door to success for her. Her transformation into a strong, independent woman was a powerful response to racism (26-27).

Laytham discusses in his article how writing an autobiography was beneficial for Maya Angelou in *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*. It helps her to create a persona like Marguerite, through which she could reflect on her past. While the character may be based on herself, it is not an exact replica. Through the character, Angelou was able to make a connection between unconscious and conscious. She could deliver a smooth transition from the historical context to the beginning of her personal growth. Indeed, language is a self-directed tool that could build a bridge between the internal and external world. Time also

played a significant role in this process, reconciling the subject and the writer. The age range, three to sixteen years, allowed adult Angelou to write about her younger self from the perspective of someone in the present.. It justifies the fact that the self's past actions shape the present self. Angelou herself said:

“A good autobiographer seems to write about herself and is writing about the temper of the times...So that a good one brings the reader into a historical event as if the reader was standing there” (Laytham 09)

Therefore, Angelou did not write the autobiography for storytelling to give readers an overview of the dynamics from past to present. Rather, it works for her as a therapy to find herself in readers by expressing individual experiences as if she is determined to “bridge a plurality of persons” (Laytham 09).

Ishimoto gives a detailed overview of the role of beauty standards in the development of the identity crisis in *The Bluest Eye*. At first, the northern city created a sense of lack in Black individuals. Here, he particularly points out the struggles that immigrants face in adapting to life in the North, using the lives of Cholly and Pauline as examples. Both characters carried a sense of identity before becoming detached from their African American community. Moving to the city left them feeling completely lost, as city life represents alienation. Apart from this, the article sheds light on the fact that Lorain, Ohio is a predominantly white society. All the Black people there try in some way to act like white people to gain acceptance. For Black people, the only way to get acceptance is to whiten themselves as much as they can. They think it will eventually get them closer to the White people and they will be well received.

The 20th century Black women like Pauline in *The Bluest Eye* applied many beauty products like body-lightening creams and hair-straightening solutions to whiten themselves. Those beauty products are like the “denegrification” serum Fanon mentioned in his book *Black Skin White Masks*. Fanon said, “ For some years now, certain laboratories have been researching for a “denegrification” serum. In all seriousness they have been rinsing out their test tubes and adjusting their scales and have begun research on how the wretched black man could whiten himself and thus rid himself of this bodily curse” (91). The denegrification serum or the beauty products make them believe that whitening their race can save them from the “Niggerhood” they carry with them. Thus, they end up “nigrifying” their own identities. But the article suggests that those beauty products are just mere business strategies to gain profit out of the consumers. They deceive African American consumers by selling these products because in reality they know that it will not benefit the consumers. Rather, it will only give false hope to get whitened. Therefore, *The Bluest Eye* represents the dilemma that African Americans fell under between the temptation of lactification and the resistance to “nigrification”. It is a no-win situation where a Black person cannot achieve both the dominant beauty standards of society and freedom from the stigma of “Niggerhood”. The narrator, Claudia, thinks that the failure of African Americans lies in following the path of a false desire by denying their own identities. Pecola is one such character who denies her own identity. She at first kills her “self” and then follows the ritual of lactification (61-63).

Klotman analyzes the premises Morrison used at the beginning of the book *The Bluest Eye*. Morrison came up with the phrase “Dick and Jane” in her premises to understand the construction of a family created by the academic institutions. Klotman argues that Morrison juxtaposes the white education system with the reality of life. Usually, these “Dick and Jane” phrases are used as the basic read for first-grade students to give a sense of ideal home and

family. However, it was a false representation of an ideal family. For some of the students, the reality of home life may be different. They may not have a nice, happy family. A Black student learns about a simple, happy family at school, whereas at home, she sees the devastating situation of her family who struggles to live (123).

To understand the reason behind including such a premise in a textbook, Ismail, et al. elaborates the educational system in America more precisely. They think that the school curriculum in the 1940s also idealized Eurocentric beauty standards. Hence, the textbooks and lessons were designed according to the curriculum which means the textbooks promote White beauty as well. Books are the centre for all kinds of learning. They can shape students' perceptions accordingly. But if the books provide a certain kind of knowledge, then it can mislead students towards ignorance. Students can suffer from uncertainties due to the misguidance. If the books are written based on certain perceptions of beauty, it creates uncertainties in student's perceptions. Students then perceive the perception that books have provided. Likewise Morrison in *The Bluest Eye* brings a certain perception of beauty through the premises to articulate the nature of the educational system. The system follows white beauty standards while excluding non-White's perception of beauty which is unpleasant for them. Pecola's mind was filled with chaos because she could not relate two opposite perceptions in her mind. The experience she had at her home and the representation books provided about home are totally different. Yet, she chose to believe bookish words and made herself filled with self-contempt. (04).

Klotman interprets the three versions of these "Dick and Jane" premises. According to him, the three premises represent three status of family that are also included in the novel. The first one refers to the Fisher family, an alien white family. The second one is the MacTeer family

who have a strong bond despite being poor. The bond is the reason why they can fight racism while the Breedlove family, the third version, carries chaos inside them. As a result, they become the ultimate victims of racism.

Through the representation of three versions of “Dick and Jane”, Morrison mocks the white educational system that excludes the Black life experience. It is also a way of devaluing Black students, making them feel alienated for not having an ideal family. Their families are indifferent to them, and they have no one to play with. In Pecola’s case, all she has learned throughout her entire life is that “she is ugly,” even in the eyes of her own mother. The visit to the Fisher house teaches her that her mother is fond of Fisher’s daughter for her pink dress and yellow hair. The devaluation of her identity results in self-hatred. Pecola rejects her own beauty and yearns for blue eyes to gain social acceptance. This complexity drives her to madness. Therefore, this article shows that the absence of proper nurturing can affect a child psychologically (123).

Tanveen regards White ideologies as the “mechanism of panopticon” that determines Blacks’ identity (570). According to him, the White gaze controls the behavior of the Black community. The look gives Blacks a sense of negligence and disgust that makes Blacks believe that they are inferior. That means Blacks see themselves through the eyes of whites. It creates self-loathing in them (570)

Bouson, in his article, explains the “shame experience” depicted in *The Bluest Eye*. He gives a brief idea about what it means to feel ashamed. Shame arises when a person fails to meet the expectations of his ‘ideal self’. In other words, a perceived defect within oneself can lead to experiencing shame. It is a tragedy when an individual is unable to love himself when he

falls under his own gaze. Bousoon stated, “eye is the organ of shame par excellence” (01).

This means one’s flaws can make him feel so humiliated that he does not even dare to look at himself. All he wishes for is to disappear at that moment. This kind of shame-vulnerability is reflected on the Breedlove family’s self-loathing and self-disgust. The shame often manifests as aggression, expressed by attacking others. For example, Cholly Breedlove’s act of raping his daughter is a way of expressing his rage for being flawed as a father, son, and husband (01).

Chapter 3 : Research Methodology

Though the era of colonial rule ended long ago, its effects persist like an invisible cloak through racism. Black people continue to endure psychological trauma in a racially divided society. To understand their trauma, the methodology this research follows is Frantz Fanon’s theory on postcolonialism. His book *Black Skin White Masks* is a well-read book for understanding a Black psyche because he wrote the book based on his own experience. The title suggests cultural assimilation, where any black man or woman must wear a mask to get recognition as a human in the world, particularly in the white world. On the other hand, the title could be used to normalize living with black skin instead of putting on a mask because that can give a Black person an actual sense of being.

Fanon, in this book, states that to understand a black psyche, one must closely study two things: “A psychoanalytic interpretation of the life experience of the black man; A psychoanalytic interpretation of the Negro myth” (117).

In this case, the researcher works on chapter 05 “The lived experience of a Black Man” to get the interpretation. The chapter begins with the inferiority complex and ends with the

determination to embrace self. It is the centre of the book. It talks about all the internal and external struggles a Black has to face and then provides the solution to overcome the struggle. Fanon expresses his hope for reclaiming his Black identity, as he mentions in his conclusion. He suggests that decolonization is necessary to escape the psychological torture.

Chapter 4 : *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*

Maya Angelou's autobiography *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* chronicles her journey of self-discovery amidst systemic racism. Here, Maya shows how to deal with one's racial trauma and raise as an individual. The autobiography covers the age range from three to sixteen which is an appropriate timeline to let the readers view a person's evolution. This period is crucial as it encompasses formative years where a sense of self and self-awareness begin to take shape. In her book, she shares her struggles as a Black person in a predominantly White society. She describes many events regarding racial prejudice in society, preventing African-Americans from living freely and fully. It is indeed an emotional wound for African Americans that they cannot live the way they want. They have no free will. They always put their heads down in front of the White society. Despite the psychological scars, Angelou's narrative reveals how adversity can also catalyze personal growth and resilience. It helps her to confront all types of hardships and deal with them. Through her experiences, Maya transforms the pain of racism into a source of strength and self-awareness, demonstrating the resilience of the human spirit. For Maya, language becomes a tool of empowerment, allowing her to articulate her struggles and assert her individuality in a world that seeks to silence her. To put it in brief, Maya's journey exemplifies the transformative power of resilience and self-recognition, as she rises above systemic racism to reclaim her identity and voice.

4.1 : The Veil in Southern Part

Fanon's idea of double consciousness reflects Du Bois's theory and provides an essential framework for analyzing the continuous inner conflict African Americans go through under social observation. Existing as both "Negroes" and "Americans," two identities that collide because of ingrained racial injustices causes conflict. According to Fanon, the continual assessment the white gaze imposes reinforces this separation. Such outside pressure imposes a value system that alienates and dehumanizes, therefore driving people into a dilemma between honoring their legacy and fitting to a society that naturally marginalizes them.

The white eye reduces people to preconceptions, therefore reinforcing ideas of inferiority. Fanon emphasizes this with lines like "Why, it's a Negro," which objectifies Black people rather than honoring their humanity (Fanon 87). *The Caged Bird* brilliantly captures this phenomena as Maya Angelou notes in Chapter 5 the actions of powhitetrash girls toward her grandma. These young ladies everyday came in front of the store after school and put various distorted expressions of ape on their faces. They made those ugly faces to tease Maya's grandmother Mrs. Annie Henderson (Munir et al. 11-14). They mimic Mrs. Annie Henderson to establish their authority despite their own social challenges. Their extreme distortions minimize her humanity based just on color. Key player of integrity and strength in Maya's life, Mrs. Henderson chooses quiet endurance through the trauma. Maya calls the girls "powhitetrash" for their rudeness, yet their authority comes from a hierarchically arranged system that justifies such slights based on race.

Here, Fanon's point of view on the degrading character of the white gaze really echoes. Even though Mrs. Henderson is a respected member of her community, she becomes helpless against the behavior of a few young children only because of her looks. Her peaceful

acceptance is motivated by a need to give safety top priority in a setting characterized by racial inequalities, not by passivity. This event sets Maya on a terrible awareness of her invisibility and the systemic injustices her family suffers. “Why, it’s a Negro” exposes a system meant to steal dignity and identity, not only words.

Fanon emphasizes how the white gaze actively promotes control, trapping Black people in a dualism unresolved. Maya’s respect for her grandmother’s resilience clashes with the terrible reality of their restrictions under social persecution. These influences taken together widen the gulf separating one’s cultural identity from the expectations set by a dominating racial order. The actions of the Powhitetrash girls are not innocent. Rather, they are a sign of profoundly ingrained prejudice that keeps the gulf within personal identity open.

Fanon’s investigation of dual consciousness offers a major insight of how systematic racism shapes African Americans’ identities. Black people, he contends, struggle with inner conflict all the time as they try to fit their real selves with the identity society demands. Black people lose agency because the white gaze upholds a false contradiction between whiteness and Blackness. It defines whiteness as the pinnacle of worthiness. Black people are dynamically dehumanized by this. They are placed in a framework that denies them individuality, upholds slavery, and defines them as the opposite of civilization. Fanon sees this system of control as a feature of colonial tyranny, firmly ingrained in power institutions, where voluntary subservience is forced through the decline in self-worth. Though the story of diversity is one, America’s social structures have historically reflected colonial ideas that exclude African Americans by underplaying their autonomy.

Presenting a vivid picture of the African American experience under ingrained racial inequalities in the 20th century, Maya Angelou's memoir effectively reflects Fanon's study. She shows how the legacy of slavery shapes life long past its official abolition. Though slavery was abolished, African Americans still suffered systematic exclusion and displacement. By illuminating the instability African American young people of this age felt, Angelou shows how a broken sense of identity reflected the displacement their communities endured. The white gaze shaped this instability, which made youngsters struggle with a need for belonging in a culture that denied them respect.

Angelou emphasizes the flux of African American children during the 1940s, so exploring this issue even more. African American children often experienced a lack of security during the 20th century due to their loss of belonging. During the 1940s, African Americans migrated to the Northern city for better life opportunities. Due to migration, connections and relationships with family often faded away. Many African American parents got involved in extra marital affairs, some even lived in separation. Hence, it affects the life of children belonging to those parents. These childrens' lives became unstable. They cannot stay in a certain place. Angelou described the unstable situation those children faced. Since their parents lived in separation, they were often sent back to them separately. The constant movement sometimes made them feel abandoned. Through describing the event where millions of Black children were sent to the South and North frequently, Angelou brought the experience of lacking security in African American childrens' lives. Safety had never been ensured for those children. There was an absence of supervision to look after their safety. Their lives remained at risk as nobody was there to determine whether they were sent to the right hand. For Angelou, home represents safety and a close relationship to identity, not only a place to live. Still, frequent separations and moves to metropolitan areas sometimes

destroyed families and left youngsters exposed. Often accompanied by casual dismissiveness through phrases like “To whom it may concern,” (Angelou 14) familial breakdowns which caught this stark reality were reflected in Angelou’s narrative. These upheavals deprived African American children of the kind of setting required to anchor their sense of self.

Constant dislocation for Marguerite sparked a strong need for self-awareness and stability. Struggling in an apparently apathetic environment, she started a personal trip of inquiry that finally brought inner comfort. This change captures the resiliency of African American youngsters and shows their ability to challenge the dominant trying to split their identities. They created uniqueness in a society meant to stifle it by means of self-understanding and tenacity. Angelou’s retelling of these events emphasizes Fanon’s observations, indicating how external criticism strives to divide Black identities while simultaneously stressing the strength found in recovering selfhood among oppression.

Fanon’s idea of double consciousness offers a useful viewpoint for examining how institutional racism implements Black identity erasure and objectification. He describes the internal conflict underlined by Black people whose sense of self is reflected through the prism of a dominant racial power system. Like Du Bois’s conception of the veil, it captures a dual life distinguished by both invisibility and hypervisibility. The curtain presents a false perspective that confines African Americans to narrow preconceptions that eclipse their uniqueness, therefore degrading them.

Black children identified impersonally, that is, in line with “To whom it may concern” (Angelou 14), have their loss of individuality captured in Angelou’s portrayal. Eliminated from their personal relevance, Bailey, Marguerite, and others become faceless entities viewed

as interchangeable. Their names, left out of these exchanges, represent society's rejection to regard them as unique people. More than estrangement, this approach traps people under the distortion of the veil, therefore reinforcing their objectification and separating them from the dominant society and so denying affirmation of their humanity (Roscan 33-35).

Here, Fanon's interpretation of systematic dehumanization is visible. He contends that colonial powers impose alienation by utilizing dominance, therefore negating the uniqueness of the enslaved people. Children seen as nameless goods reflect the same dynamics of control. Rooted in master-slave interactions, a social hierarchy exists whereby domination suppresses African American identity. Traditionally, renaming slaves destroyed their original identities, therefore cutting off their relationship to themselves. This denigrated them and represented their objectification, hence lacking uniqueness. The denial of African Americans' names now marks a continuance of erasure that sustains racial group separation.

Names have great symbolic meaning and center identity and selfhood. Fanon's observations help to explain how ignoring or substituting names fits more general actions of exclusion. Denying someone their name is to deny them respect, in line with more general patterns of racial discrimination. This act perpetuates cycles of alienation, isolating African Americans inside the confines of the curtain where the perspective of the oppressor counts only. The comments of Angelou show how these methods go beyond mere contempt to systematic rejection of personhood.

Marguerite's contact with Mrs. Cullinan provides a similar experience to her. Her experience directly relates with Fanon's idea of double consciousness since it shows the great influence of society's disdain on uniqueness. Mrs. Cullinan clearly disrespects Marguerite's

individuality by calling her “Mary.” Renaming someone damages emotionally, Choudhary notes, which makes African Americans feel inferior. Marguerite portrays in her account of the “hellish anguish of being called” out of his name” the extreme humiliation this act causes (Angelou 106). This event emphasizes the continuation of degrading methods long after slavery was abolished decades ago (184–185).

African Americans like Marguerite sometimes found themselves in servitude, where their uniqueness was disregarded even in the 20th century. Mrs. Cullinan’s decision to go by Marguerite’s correct name betrays an erasure of her individuality, therefore reducing her to a “Negro girl” whose worth rests just in her work. Mrs. Cullinan denies Marguerite recognition as a person and maintains social inequalities by calling her “Mary,” (Choudhary 184–185). This casual disrespect reflects Fanon’s concept of double consciousness, in which colonized people are compelled to see themselves through the prism of dominant cultural ideas that denigrate them as less than.

Fanon’s method clarifies Marguerite’s inner conflict in this context even more. Marguerite loses her individuality and is reduced to a mere item in the house by the imposed identity of “Mary”. Her suffering results from the discrepancy between the humiliating role others assign her and her own self. Renaming forces her to face society’s denial of her personhood, therefore generating a psychological load. Marguerite keeps her self-awareness as an individual, but the denial of her value by the dominant society exposes the psychological effects of systematic oppression. Mrs. Cullinan’s apathy not only marginalizes Marguerite but also mirrors the more general cultural trends of dehumanization Fanon’s study notes.

Fanon's idea of double consciousness offers a great weapon for examining how institutional systems devalue Black people. This deterioration results from more general society mechanisms rather than from one-sided events. Southern American society, within *Caged Bird*, reflects this ingrained racism, in which White people look nearly foreign to the Black protagonist. The veil proposed by Du Bois helps to clarify this division. Rania et al. claim that the veil stands for three key elements defining the separation between African Americans and White society. Blackness itself becomes first an instantaneous emblem of difference, amplified by physical traits. Second, White Americans' view of African Americans links them to Africa and denies their American connection. Americans label Africans as constant outsiders. At last, this point of view solidifies their position as "others," therefore excluding both respect and inclusion (Rania et al. 09-10).

This systematic dehumanization influences daily encounters and lowers African Americans to objects of contempt. White people avoid any physical contact since they frequently consider them as inferior or unattractive. Given African Americans must interact with this dual viewpoint, Fanon's idea is especially pertinent here. Though White society's gaze presents a false image of inferiority, which drives them to see themselves through both sides, they are quite conscious of their humanity.

Maya's encounter with Dr. Lincoln brilliantly illustrates this. Mrs. Henderson, Maya's grandmother, had once helped him financially, but the White dentist openly refused to treat Maya's toothache based on her race. Hesitantly, Mrs. Henderson approaches him hoping he would show compassion and admit his obligation. His answer, nevertheless, is both unassuming and devoid of guilt. Declaring, "Annie, my policy is I'd rather stick my hand in a

dog's mouth than in a nigger's," (Angelou 158) emphasizes the cruel exclusion White people engage in, rationalizing such behavior as upholding their social conventions.

This exchange clearly reflects Fanon's concept of double awareness. Maya and Mrs. Henderson are always trapped between the horrible treatment they get and their view of themselves as decent people. Maya is forced to recognize the clear discrepancy between her self-worth and the way White culture reduces her humanity by Dr. Lincoln's obvious prejudice. Such events draw attention to the psychological stress African Americans have in trying to deal with this forced double vision. Du Bois's veil and Fanon's ideas expose that this limit is not only symbolic. It is a reality African Americans have to live with constantly while trying to claim their dignity and humanity.

Apart from dehumanizing African people, the White gaze disseminates negative information, therefore encouraging self-rejection among African Americans. One startling illustration of this is the beauty advertising of the 20th century, which encouraged women to pursue an unattainable ideal anchored in White standards of beauty. Deeply impacted African American women, this quest inspired them to aim for a "perfect" look connected with Eurocentric traits. The autobiography of Angelou clarifies how these enforced ideas caused internalized emotions of inadequacy. She emphasizes how the media helps to reinforce this story by elevating White beauty in every platform, including movies and newspapers. With her golden locks and sunny attitude, Shirley Temple embodied these values and grew to be a figure revered by many. Her features influence the goals of women from different backgrounds.

Driven by these ideas, Maya battles with her sense of identity. Her symbolic veil captures the several injustices she encounters including systematic disempowerment, racial hatred, and

masculine bias, among other ones. Her perspective of herself is distorted by this curtain, which causes her to feel her dark skin hides the “ideal” characteristics she so craves. Captivated by Shirley Temple’s picture, Maya distances herself from her natural beauty. Rather than appreciating her value, she imagines herself changed to have blue eyes, blonde hair, and lighter skin. Her retreat into this illusion serves as a shield against self-rejection, an emotion resulting from internalized racism (Henke 22–23, 31).

The veil metaphor also underlines how the psyche absorbs outside signals on beauty. Rania et al. provide an observation by stating “Black skin echoes ugliness is anchored even in the Black mind” (22-25). This way of view locks children inside a colonial framework where it becomes quite difficult to grow to have a real sense of self. Constant advocacy of these norms guarantees their identities stay limited within the confines of White supremacy (09-10). Both Angelou and Rania et al. show how early in life these harmful beliefs take hold and alter self-perception. Like many others, Maya’s personal struggle is one of striving to liberate herself from the restricting grip of the veil and recover self-worth in a society that rejects her beauty.

4.2 : Coexistence of self

Fanon argues that breaking out from the colonial definition of Black identity calls for a deep-seated psychological emancipation rather than only physical rejection. He said that a first step toward this is definitely releasing the thoughts. According to him, colonized people have to regain their sense of self-worth and uniqueness, which the weight of colonization compromises. This process marks an inner struggle undoing the mental conditioning driving reliance on the colonial paradigm. Liberating the mind helps people to face and destroy the deeply rooted sense of inferiority ingrained by colonial powers. Those who have been

colonized thereby have the ability to define their own identity free from outside narratives. Fanon emphasizes that real freedom calls for healing the profound mental scars brought about by oppression as well as for challenging outside structures. From its center, this deep inner change undermines colonial power and opens the path for total freedom.

Maya's road in *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* reflects Fanon's concepts of mental emancipation and rediscovery of identity. Her change clearly shows the evolution he recounts. She stays away from separating her identity into two competing forms: one molded by society prejudice and the other anchored in her essence. Many colonized people suffer from such inner conflict, which fuels a fight stifling their progress but Maya objects to this split. Though the younger version of herself battled emotions of inadequacy and once adored unreachable standards connected to whiteness, she finally rejects to stay limited by them. By means of her psychological awakening, she surpasses the limited perspective aiming at defining her life. Her road to self-acceptance marks a dramatic change from the inner turmoil supporting systems of control.

When Maya starts parenting, her development ends in a symbolic rebirth. This phase corresponds with Fanon's idea of recovering personal subjectivity since it marks both a bodily and an emotional change. Having a child forces great inner development and strengthens a connection and renewal process. Maya not only gives life into the world but also finds her own self via this experience. For the kind of internal revolution Fanon sees, this act serves as a potent emblem. Henke claimed, "in a very real sense, the birth of a child for the adolescent mother who has been victimized symbolizes the rebirth of the child self who can now be embraced and nurtured" (31). For Maya, this occasion embodies the whole emancipation

Fanon urges and confirms her capacity to transcend victimizing and totally reclaim her true self.

While White people often utilize racial prejudice as a tool to subjugate African Americans, Akhter contends that racism can also inspire African Americans to break over institutional obstacles (26-27). This point of view fits Frantz Fanon's idea of mental emancipation as essential for conquering tyranny. Fanon emphasizes that real freedom is about recovering one's sense of self and autonomy and rejecting the emotions of inferiority put onto the oppressed. This is realizing and throwing away the skewed self-image created by repressive systems so that people could see themselves honestly. The process demands an inner revolution that helps one to transcend the limitations imposed by prejudice to transcend simple defiance. From this perspective, people like Maya show how experiences of degradation could become sources of empowerment, therefore allowing them to challenge structural injustices.

Fanon's method of releasing the mind provides a strong structure to grasp Maya's inner development and will to question social restrictions. Fanon emphasizes that escaping the grip of colonial systems depends on mental liberation. This approach entails dissecting the emotions of false identities and inadequacy driven by the colonial system. Freeing the mind helps people to recover their sense of value and control that enables them to reject the distorted stories created by their masters. Through this inner metamorphosis, people might transcend systematic marginalization and achieve real emancipation. Maya's development reflects this idea since she turns personal losses into a tool for empowerment. Every challenge she has offers an opportunity for her to redefine herself and break through the racist walls.

According to Akhter, the day Maya graduates represents a significant turning point in her inner reclaiming of freedom. Marguerite, at the beginning of her narrative, is still innocent about the manner in which she is gently controlled. Her self-assurance grows not naturally but rather via times of painful awareness and courageous confronting of them. Usually connected with celebration and success, graduation turns into a moment of sharp awareness (26-27). Her reaction to Mr. Edward Donleavy's graduation words, a turning point in her awakening, clearly shows this change. Maya uses this insight as a source of strength while such comments clearly reduce the dreams of Black young people instead of allowing hopelessness to rule. Notwithstanding their skills and efforts, their futures seem predetermined and limited to subservient roles under the control of White companies. Maya's reflection, "because the world didn't think we had minds and they let us know that there was no "nobler in the mind" for Negroes" (Angelou 152) , captures a systemic perspective of rejecting Black intellectual capacity.

Still, this insight acts as a catalyst for rebellion. Henry Reed subtly but powerfully captures the kids' shared feeling as they are unable to express their rage and fury outside. His sincere rendition of the "Negro national anthem" sends among his peers a message of solidarity and resiliency. He sang:

"Lift ev'ry voice and sing

Till Earth and Heaven ring

Ring with the harmonies of Liberty..." (Angelou 152)

This deed breaks the story of powerlessness and turns into a turning point in Maya's mental awakening. Maya uses her experience to turn her humiliation into a source of inner power.

Akhter states that Donleavy's words and the uniting force of Henry Reed's anthem inspire Maya to challenge social injustices from inside. Her later success on getting a scholarship shows her strong will. This victory not only marks her personal victory but also evidence of her ability to achieve and motivate those in her neighborhood. It is also proof of her action that she could triumph over White people and find success. She can be the pride of her nation if she wants to (26-27). Therefore, highlighting Fanon's view that recovering inner freedom prepares the underprivileged to overcome both internalized and systematic oppression. Maya shows this by turning her disappointment into motivation, therefore helping her to transcend social standards.

Maya's quest as a streetcar conductor exposes even more her rejection to follow rigid rules. Though White men usually occupy this position, Maya targets this one as a symbol of her rebellion. Maya's will is relentless even if her mother advised her against trying to go beyond the apparently insurmountable obstacles. Her tenacious nature helps her to overcome major kinds of discrimination based on her gender and skin color. Maya is able to make the impossible possible. Akhter says, "Maya has the potential to cope with the hard and bitter storms laid down by the White" (26-27). This potentiality transforms a raped black girl into a strong independent woman as in Maya is the reflection of Marguerite (Akhter 26-27). Maya moves from a young child hampered by society expectations to an empowered and confident person by use of this strength. Her metamorphosis is exactly in line with Fanon's conviction that recovering the entire potential of the mind is the basis for opposing systematic control and rebuilding one's own self.

The way Angelou shows Maya's metamorphosis in *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* captures Fanon's ideas on mental emancipation. She demolishes the story imposed by a

biased society by releasing the constrictive identity assigned to her as Marguerite and rising totally as Maya. This self-awareness captures Fanon's belief that, "I embrace the world. I am the world. Between the world and me a relation of coexistence was established" (97). Maya comes to see strength and fulfillment in her real identity instead of depending on fitting to the standards of a dominant society. In accordance with Fanon, "this discovery was a rediscovery" (99). For Fanon, rediscovering who one really is is essential in overcoming the strongly rooted consequences of injustice. By means of this exercise of mental freedom, people can transcend repressive constraints and lead truly. Maya's narrative is a motivating illustration of the transforming ability of recovering one's inner freedom.

Fanon sees language as far more than just a means of communication; it has great power as a weapon to challenge colonial rule. He contends that language challenges colonial myths and shapes identities, not only serves to link individuals. Traditionally, colonists used language to impose their ideas and minimize local customs. Still, Fanon claims that the oppressed can recover their language, which will help them to find their identity and confirm their existence. By means of its utilization, the colonized can destroy the propaganda of the ruling forces, express their hardships, and free the psychological hold of colonial control. As a means of expression, writing becomes a necessary act of defiance and introspection that helps the downtrodden to reject an imposed sense of inferiority and redefine who they are.

Maya Angelou's relationship with writing, which was essential for her self-discovery and mental release, speaks to this perspective especially. Living with racial trauma and systematic injustice, Angelou turned to literature to protect her identity and help to create a different kind of her. Her books helped her to close the distance between her conscious and subconscious ideas thereby enabling her to process difficult events and turn them into sources

of empowerment. Writing for Angelou was a profoundly introspective activity as much as a means of sharing stories to others. Through her work, she pieced together the shattered parts of her life, enabling a better link to her present self (Laytham 09). This reflects Fanon's belief that language helps the colonized to see themselves with fresh clarity and opens the path for self-awareness and change.

Furthermore, Roscan thinks that language is very important as a therapeutic tool for healing emotional scars; Fanon and other intellectuals agree on this. By means of words, one can express their ideas and feelings working like a healing mechanism where he can face and release his inner conflict. This meant especially great significance for Angelou. She spent years in silence, unable to express her suffering following great trauma in her youth. Her healing journey started as she put her experiences in front of her pen. Through sharing the experiences that profoundly affected her, Angelou transformed her silent resignation into forceful and empowering language (33-35). This exercise not only helped her to find peace with her past but also became a means of personal rejuvenation to release her emotional tension and change her voice. Angelou reclaimed her story as a symbol of strength instead of letting her history control her, thereby aptly capturing Fanon's conviction that language can free and heal.

Chapter 5 : *The Bluest Eye*

The Bluest Eye is fashioned in a manner of anti-bildungsroman genre where characters do not develop over time. Rather, Morrison depicts the degradation of characters over time. She chooses the Black life experiences as her framework to showcase the degradation of characters. She wants to let the readers know that mainstream society can be so harsh that it damages the mental condition of a marginalized person who ends up falling apart. The

marginalized cannot raise himself as a human being. He remains in the world as a survival entity rather than a living being. In America, the condition of African Americans is more like this. The systemic construction of racism builds a mainstream society where Black people are not only the victims but also exploited. Hence, Black people, especially children, often become the victims of their community. In *The Bluest Eye*, the entire Breedlove family suffers from internalized inferiority under the exploitation of mainstream society. The ultimate result of this exploitation is the self-splitting, which strips them off their reasons to live. Self-splitting places them in a situation where they have nothing to hold on to but to embrace a delusional world. This is the reason why they do not have a strong bond among themselves. They completely fail as individuals and as a family. Therefore, this chapter will explore the characters' journey from exploitation to self-splitting to understand the trap behind the failure of black identity formation.

5.1 : The Role of Media and Education

Fanon's awareness of cultural assimilation exposes the strategies that, especially via media, help African Americans to feel less than others. Colonists, he says, impose assimilation by methodically destroying native practices and substituting their own values. By doing this, they force the marginalized to adopt a colonial identity, therefore motivating them to copy the colonists in search of recognition. Fanon makes it clear, though, that this endeavor is useless since the colonial system is meant to uphold control over Black people. This psychological training causes the colonized to see their culture as inferior and to idolize that of their rulers. As a result, African Americans internalize the identical prejudices that oppress them and often find themselves caught in uncertainty and denial of their actual identities.

Media, especially as it is shown in *The Bluest Eye*, becomes a crucial tool in this forced absorption. Morrison's examination of how media supports conceptions of racial supremacy echoes Fanon's thesis on cultural repression rather strongly. For many, including Black communities, the development of movies brought a fresh kind of entertainment and a way where society norms were both shown and taken in mind. For underprivileged groups, these theaters could have provided a haven from daily hardships. Underneath that surface, though, movies spread stories that denigrated physical attributes associated with Blackness while elevating White features. This representation sets White beauty as the standard and so encourages Black people to devalue themselves in favor of impossible standards.

With her comment, "Beauty was not simply something to behold; it was something one could do," Morrison deftly shows this decline of self-worth (167). She offers beauty as an active expression connected with confidence and a good attitude, yet the media shapes this concept. Beauty, as redefined by entertainment, moves into a privilege only for White people. These depictions sow self-hatred inside Black individuals in the book by transforming looks into a value system connected to societal worth. Many Black individuals believe they are fundamentally defective and incapable of fulfilling the unattainable beauty standards set by the media. This inner conflict emphasizes the negative influence of White values as expressed in popular stories.

Morrison's criticism of the media supports Fanon's realization of colonial persecution. White dominance is maintained by institutions such as mass media, organized religion, and education, therefore maintaining racial hierarchies that devalue Black people. Among these, media comes out as especially powerful because of its broad audience and capacity to change

opinions among different social groups. Including segregationist ideas into entertainment helps to uphold society standards that discriminate against African Americans. Fanon stresses how the downtrodden are shaped to fit the values of their leaders, all the while denied access to the privileges they are meant to honor. Living this truth, the protagonists in *The Bluest Eye* are weighed with unrealistic beauty standards and a kind of cultural absorption that robs them of pride in their identity.

Fanon's investigation of cultural integration offers a basic foundation for comprehending how colonial ideas skew self-perception and identity. As Fanon claims, colonists want to enter the thoughts of the colonized as well as to control resources and territory. Enforcing cultural ideals that improve the colonizer's identity while undercutting the native one causes this psychological invasion. Assimilation thus becomes a planned strategy whereby underprivileged communities are pushed to renounce their past in favor of the colonizer's standards, which are falsely linked with progress and worthiness. This is not a passive process. Rather, it is intentional and ubiquitous, depending on media, religion, and education to spread stories that support the perspective of the colonizer. However, by pushing the colonized to find validation through assimilation, it traps them in a cycle of self-rejection and deprives them of actual self-expression.

As portrayed in *The Bluest Eye*, the media is quite important in supporting these negative norms. Morrison presents media as a strong tool that shapes unrealistically perfect white standards as the ultimate meaning of beauty. Tanveen claimed this beauty "American myth of beauty" is related to self-virtue (578). According to him, characters like Pauline Breedlove start to appraise themselves through this lens using standards they cannot meet. He also thinks that setting cultural standards of beauty within a racial context can impact "one's

perspective of life” since “they measure themselves through the eyes of Whites” (570, 578). Pauline absorbs these norms since she thinks her racial identity combined with her seeming lack of physical beauty makes her unworthy and invisible. The assumption that white is intrinsically superior is maintained by the media’s elevation of white aesthetic features to an ideal level. Black people, especially women, get conflicted as they feel obliged to hide their natural traits in search of outside approval. Driven by systematic reinforcement of these values, Pauline’s obsession on appearance strips her of self-acceptance and sends her into hopelessness.

This phenomena relates directly to Fanon’s idea of dependability. According to him, colonial institutions teach the colonized to seek legitimacy and identity by means of the favor of their rulers, therefore fostering a psychological dependence among them. This reliance helps people to see themselves through the prism of dominating groups, hence establishing a hierarchy supporting colonial power systems. McCulloch explains “dependency complex” more precisely. He thinks that the division of two worlds - White and non-White worlds - creates limitations in values. While White is associated with beauty, Black is associated with disgust. As a result, the dependency complex has settled into the heart of Black people. They naturally take themselves as inferior and so being white becomes their secret redemption (64-65). In the media, this reliance shows up as Black people trying to fit in with the white norms praised on TVs. Pauline’s fixation on perfect American beauty emphasizes this internalized reliance since her self-worth gets limited by unreachable standards meant to support white supremacy.

Critics add elements like lactification to stretch Fanon’s conceptions of reliance. Fanon provides a metaphor for how colonized people search for food from colonial ideas even if it

does not specifically use this word. Like a newborn is dependent on milk for sustenance, the colonized eat on the identity models of their oppressors, even if these models finally impede their personal development. Such food, Fanon says, is hollow, failing to foster an actual identity while restricting the colonized to the perspective of the oppressor. For someone like Pauline, this symbolic food defines their life in terms of unhappiness and self-loathing. Captured by media-propagated ideas, she stays chained to an unrealized concept of beauty that rejects her capacity to value or embrace her actual self.

In the case of a Black woman, the prescribed identity is the white beauty. The idealization of the white beauty makes her wish to have a white body. The brighter she is, the more acceptance she will get from society. By whitening her body and face, she can revalue her status. However, it is a self-deceptive thought. She will still remain inferior in the eyes of Whites no matter how brighter she becomes. Deepening this state of reliance depends much on the media. It accentuates colonial ideas by including itself in daily events, even in personal settings. Such as, films can be blamed for putting this kind of thought into a Black woman's mind. Films project such delusional content that can compel a human mind to do the things he or she desires. For Pauline, movies provide a seductive illusion where whiteness stands for success, love, and compassion. White women's portrayal as idealistic and beautiful contrasts sharply with Black women's lives and appearances' obscurity. Her developing obsession with movies shows her captivity in this reliance. One of the scenes was described by Pauline. She said, "They all dressed up in big clean houses with the bathtub right in the same room with the toilet" (Morrison 95). The images of devoted white spouses, spotless homes, and attentive husbands in these movies draw attention to the differences in her life and motivate her to flee her reality and pursue a skewed fantasy focused on whiteness.

This quest for whiteness permeates her behavior as Pauline tries physically to live up to white standards. Using cosmetics and hairstyles inspired by white actresses in magazines and movies, she seeks to attain the respect and dignity that have escaped her. Fanon names this “denegrification,” the process of eradicating aspects of Black identity to fit colonizer-enforced standards. He likens the phenomenon to swallowing a fake serum, stating it provides metamorphosis but intensifies self-rejection (Fanon 91). In the same vein, 20th-century marketing strategies took advantage of this same reliance by pushing hair-straightening techniques and skin-lightening lotions as fixes for Black women's perceived shortcomings. Ishimoto emphasizes how these sold products operate like a “denegrification serum,” so sustaining the illusion of Black freedom from Blackness and so confirming the idea that Black identity equals inadequacy (61–63). Such commercial approaches only serve to ensnare people like Pauline in a fruitless search to satisfy the unreachable standards imposed by society, hence strengthening their alienation from authenticity.

The media and markets help to maintain the dependency complex by sustaining unrealistically high expectations. This validates Fanon’s assessment that the colonized people stay caught in an unrelenting cycle of self-rejection. This implies that we should lessen the importance of giving women like Pauline their true identity in favor of a hollow promise. Neither the commercial products nor the act of looking for affirmation provides real empowerment or freedom from “Niggerhood.” Rather, they solidify the crisis of identity, pushing people into a continuous fight to follow colonial ideas while being deprived of release from imposed narratives of inferiority.

Especially for youngsters, Fanon's idea of the dependence complex offers insightful analysis of how media shapes identity development. According to him, dependency results from colonized people embracing their own inferior identity while absorbing hierarchies imposed by their masters. Although it starts in childhood, this training is deliberately introduced early as colonial systems try to change the brains of the ruled. These institutions create insufficiency by elevating White superiority and marginalizing Blackness, hence framing the colonizer's values as the only source of self-esteem and validation.

Media, especially in relation to youngsters, becomes a strong tool for enforcing these processes. Children are exposed to racialized ideas of worth and beauty from an early age via the things in their environment. Dolls with pale complexion, golden hair, and blue eyes are presented as models of beauty, therefore stressing the idea that these characteristics mark value and attractiveness. Marketing campaigns sometimes complement this by magnifying such messages, therefore guaranteeing that White norms predominate both in cultural narratives and childhood fantasy. Black youngsters are encouraged, often unconsciously, to doubt the worth of their natural physical traits by means of these apparently benign objects.

The Bluest Eye by Toni Morrison shows this manipulation with exacting clarity. Storyteller Claudia first objects to these White-centric ideas of beauty. She rejects the philosophy the blue-eyed doll stands for, hence she mocks and ruins it when she gets it for Christmas instead of accepting it quietly. Morrison captures Claudia's irritation with the arbitrary standards of beauty the doll represents by describing her want to rip it apart (14). Not every child, though, questions these standards. Pecola, for example, absorbs the media-driven glory of White features very strongly. Pecola's internalized appreciation of White beauty is shown by her obsession with Shirley Temple and her practice of sipping milk from a Shirley Temple cup.

Claudia notes in seeing this behavior how Pecola “took every opportunity to drink milk out of it just to handle and see sweet Shirley’s face” (16). These events draw attention to the cooperation between media and marketing by use of well chosen images to inculcate and support colonial values.

Pecola’s yearning for a beauty standard molded by the colonizer best illustrates Fanon’s idea of the dependent complex. Media stories shape young people like her into feeling that their attractiveness and individuality have to fit what has been idealized. Pecola’s fixation on Shirley Temple captures this reliance since the young child perceives white as the unreachable ideal she has to aim for. According to Ismail et al., this form of influence “others Black children by contrasting their natural features with idealized White ones,” so aggravating feelings of inferiority and isolation (04). These strategies not only organize a beauty hierarchy but also inflict psychological scars that could last beyond early years. Media embeds the dependence complex early by focusing on young audiences with dolls, toys, and other culturally laden goods, therefore ensuring a pattern of self-doubt and a constant search of unreachable ideals that lead to continuous unhappiness.

Fanon’s theory of the dependent complex offers insightful analysis of how colonial systems shape the way colonized people view themselves from early life by means of media and education, therefore exerting ideological control. Fanon argues that reliance is a system purposefully constructed by colonial rulers to keep control, not only a mental state. The colonized are made to see their own as less than and to value the features of their conquerors. In academic environments, where young and susceptible brains are taught to absorb these hierarchical beliefs about identity and culture, this strategy shows especially effectiveness.

When education fails to represent Black existence, it turns from a place for emancipation into a battlefield for indoctrination. Along with the media, academic institutions support whiteness as the exclusive definition of success and beauty, therefore marginalizing Blackness. Curricula developed from Eurocentric points of view offer a distorted history and cultural framework, therefore fostering dependence. Morrison examines this dynamic in *The Bluest Eye* via Dick and Jane primers. These extensively used textbooks promote the connection between whiteness, wealth, and happiness by presenting an ideal and segregated picture of White families, therefore reflecting their race. For children like Pecola Breedlove, these depictions sharply separate their daily situation from the academic world, hence increasing their sense of inadequacy.

One striking illustration of this phenomena is the disappointment Pecola goes through. While White families in educational materials are shown as loving and perfect, Pecola's reality within a Black household is quite different. Ismail et al. contend that these primers provide a "happily-ever-after family" (04) as the ideal norm, therefore leaving Black children to feel their homes and identities deviate from society expectations. This distance not only leaves Black experiences out but also fuels a need to fit White standards. Rather than questioning these stories, educational systems mindlessly embrace such resources, so ingrain Fanon's idea of dependency into the structure of learning. Black children are urged to establish worth in their own identities instead of fitting to an impossible criteria.

Black identity's absence from the 1940s American educational scene reveals still another aspect of Fanon's dependency complex. Apart from excluding Black narratives, the system intentionally reinforces the belief that these contributions are useless. School becomes yet

another place where dependency is fostered, driving Pecola and children like her to resort to White standards for affirmation while reducing their own cultural reality. Media and education cooperate to implant the dependency complex early in life, therefore ensuring it passes forward across generations, by showing Eurocentric beliefs as not only dominant but also fundamentally correct.

Fanon's theory of the dependence complex presents a critical viewpoint on how societal dynamics and media together foster color prejudice, therefore enhancing the psychological consequences on Black people. Fanon claims that colonial people typically find themselves depending mostly on the dominant White society for affirmation, therefore connecting their self-worth to outside acceptance. Driven by media and society behavior, cultural narratives that constantly boost Eurocentric ideals while marginalizing or denigrating Blackness develop in this reliance. Constant exposure to such ideals over time shapes Black people to perceive themselves through the warped prism of these imposed norms, therefore trapping them in a search for impossible standards.

One effective instrument in supporting this reliance is the media. It presents Blackness as unpleasant while creating pictures and stories that honor whiteness as associated with righteousness, acceptance, and beauty. These representations permeate daily contacts and help to shape both overt and subtle society prejudices. For example, contemptuous behavior like avoiding eye contact or rejecting acknowledgement reflects strongly rooted prejudices. Fanon contends that these actions, taken everyday, shape Black people to accept their lower place in the racial hierarchy, therefore fostering self-doubt and prolonging a cycle of rejection and need for outside validation.

Morrison deftly shows this idea in *The Bluest Eye* by Pecola's visit to Mr. Yakobowski's business. The shopkeeper's decision to turn away his gaze and focus on "the vacuum rather than looking at her," reflects the racial contempt Fanon notes. This scene shows how deeply sought White acceptance is met with shame and rejection. Pecola first-hand witnesses this rejection as Mr. Yakobowski rejects her even the basic decency of acknowledgement (48), trying to buy chocolates. His denial of her presence goes beyond ignorance; it's a willful dehumanizing of her based on society's general contempt of Blackness.

Particularly for a child, these times of neglect carry great psychological weight. Pecola starts to trust the story society presents, therefore strengthening the dependence complex tying her value to conformance with White standards. Such denials, according to Tanveen, foster self-hatred since the youngster battles the conflict between their value and the rejection they repeatedly face (572). For those like Pecola, repeated exposure to these events encourages them to aspire to features indicative of whiteness, hence deepening their reliance on systems dedicated to their marginalization. Fanon's thesis emphasizes therefore how media and society actions support a cycle of invisibility, rejection, and a yearning for inclusion that still suffers agonizing unfulfillment.

5.2 : Self-Splitting

Fanon's concept of the dependent complex provides a compelling lens through which one may see Pecola's broken sense of self in *The Bluest Eye*. Fanon argues that colonized people are taught to see themselves through the prism of their oppressors, which drives continuous conflict as they struggle to reconcile their identity with unmet colonial criteria. This mix produces a split self whereby an obsession with affirmation mixes with internalized inferiority. For Pecola, this reliance shows up as her craving for blue eyes - a representation

of her need for acceptability inside a White supremacist perspective. Not merely a physical feature, blue eyes to her represent signs of value, belonging, and a way out from the social scorn aimed at her Blackness.

Lacan's concept of the symbolic order emphasizes how society influences Pecola's view of herself, therefore complementing Fanon's dependence paradigm. While completely erasing Blackness as a real or worthwhile identity, these concepts serve as strong identifiers promoting whiteness as the height of beauty and value. Pecola guides her concept of self by showing her absorption of the colonial gaze with this twisted prism. Her fixation with blue eyes reveals her helpless attempt to close the distance separating her horrible reality from the unattainable ideal promoted by her surroundings. Unfortunately, this difference just fuels her self-doubt and contributes to her identity to disintegrate.

Yang's critique of beauty standards is quite similar to Fanon's assertion that colonial people live in always self-rejecting conditions. Pecola absorbs the wide rejection of her Black identity; as Yang argues, she is unable to combine her sense of self with the unreachable norm of whiteness set before her (317). Her dependence on outside criteria inhibits Pecola from developing a constant and true self-image. Though it comes at considerable cost to her mental health, Pecola's desire for blue eyes highlights her need for colonial affirmation to determine her value, much as Fanon's theory of dependence reveals.

Pecola's mental collapse at last offers a shocking illustration of the harm caused by internalized dependency. Unable to live up to the ideals of White-dominated thinking, she withdraws into a fantasy where she perceives herself attractive and loved, detached from the criticism she must deal with in reality. Fanon's story highlights how depending too much on others robs individuals of their liberty and locks them into an unrelenting battle to reach the

unreachable. Pecola's urge for blue eyes turns into a melancholic metaphor for this never-ending, destructive cycle of acceptance-seeking. Her last psychological collapse highlights even more the consequences of internalized dependency since she runs into insanity in search of comfort even if this state removes her from the surroundings and herself.

Especially in view of the humiliation and rejection Fanon suffers, his dependency complex offers a vital viewpoint for understanding Cholly's fractured identity in *The Bluest eye*.

Fanon claims that the gaze of the colonial oppressor breaks the identity of those affected.

This leads to a dependence on outside validation, yet such acknowledgement is denied to the underprivileged so denying them any chance to validate their own feeling of value. Under the weight of interlocking racist and patriarchal systems, Cholly, whose fragile identity is molded by his turbulent upbringing and lack of parental direction, finds this reliance increasingly damaging.

Cholly's run through with the White soldiers vividly captures the dynamics of the dependent complex. Stripped of his manhood in the face of their rule, Cholly falls victim to the systematic lack of selfhood. According to Fanon, the colonized are always under the eye of their oppressor, which defines their existence and rejects their humanity. The terrible remarks made by the soldiers, "go on wid it. An'make it good, nigger, make it good" (Morrison 116), reduces Cholly to an object of contempt, therefore removing his dignity and intensifying his emotions of inadequacy. As used here, the power of words becomes a weapon, reinforcing Black masculinity's inadequacy inside a system that devalues it.

Cholly's inner conflict gets more intense from public humiliation. From which escape gets more difficult, Fanon's insight shows how such events bind the colonized in a toxic cycle of dependency and rejection. Unable to control the guilt, Cholly absorbs it and turns it outward using violence. His horrific event colors his relationships, especially his father's where his broken identity fuels destructive cycles. Struggling with his inner chaos, Cholly neglects the responsibility and power his family requires, therefore aggravating the dysfunction in his house.

Cholly's need for outside affirmation also shapes his conception of manhood, which progressively separates him from performing his family duties. Bousoin's assertion that the "eye is the organ of shame par excellence" (01) clarifies how shame consumes Cholly and fuels his wrath and trauma-inducing behavior toward others. His attack on Pecola becomes a disturbing expression of his unresolved tensions. Far from a straightforward moral lapse, this horrifying deed marks the end of years of emotional repression, self-loathing, and the negative consequences of systemic inequity.

Fanon's argument shows how Cholly's broken identity compromises everyone around him as well as himself. His emotional coldness and explosive outbursts capture the long-term psychological consequences of dependency. Cholly leaves a path of suffering when he fails to balance his inner conflict, therefore depriving him of the capacity to raise or defend his family. The Breedlove family suffers this destruction, which represents the larger influence of systematic oppression and feeds a cycle of emotional fragmentation and dependence.

Chapter 6 : Contrast (Reality Vs Illusion)

Fanon's theory of cultural assimilation offers a fundamental foundation for comprehending how social institutions like family and education enforce dominant norms, hence changing attitudes of identity and reality. Fanon claims that, frequently at the risk of their own legacy and identity, cultural assimilation drives colonized people into embracing the principles and ideals of the dominant culture. The first social structure youngsters come across, the family is rather important in forming their perspective. Morrison challenges this in *The Bluest Eye* by illustrating how the mainstream stories pushed by society and education filter such knowledge. These stories can ignore or discredit more varied reality while elevating strict, White-centric ideals like the Dick and Jane family model.

Particularly schools help to gently enforce the values of the dominant group by means of which these cultural ideas are ingrained in young brains. Classroom use of Dick and Jane primers reflects how such stories are created - "Here is the house. It is green and white. It has a red door. Here is the family. Mother, Father, Dick and Jane live in the green-and-white house. They are very happy...." (Morrison 01). Presenting the Dick and Jane family as icons of stability and happiness helps children to absorb Eurocentric ideas as standards for normalcy by means of educational materials. Morrison highlights this discrepancy by showing the Dick and Jane narrative in her book in several ways, therefore highlighting the difference between this fictitious ideal and the real-life experiences of Black children particularly. For people whose lives differ from this paradigm, such depictions generate feelings of inadequacy, repeating Fanon's remarks on how assimilation breaks one's sense of self.

According to Fanon, cultural assimilation profoundly changes one's self-perception and goes beyond the superficial behavior. School curricula build on this by offering apparently

universal values that children frequently blindly embrace, which helps them to evaluate the legitimacy of their family life against these unreachable norms. Morrison emphasizes in her book the emotional cost of this ideal that is pushed by family dynamics. The MacTeer family presents a different paradigm, balanced by love and tenacity despite outside pressure, while the Fisher family represents unattainable perfection (Klotman 123). Morrison exposes not only the underlying prejudices in cultural narratives but also their major psychological consequences on underprivileged homes by use of these analogies.

When Fanon's thesis is placed alongside Morrison's criticism, one can see how establishments like family and education encourage cultural integration while causing long-lasting emotional and psychological damage. Unable to balance their real experiences with the idealized standards imposed upon them by society, the Breedloves battle with a shattered sense of self. Fanon's observations highlight how profoundly such forced values are absorbed and leave lifelong scars when families come to see they cannot live an impossible perfection. This link greatly clarifies the processes by which these cycles of alienation are sustained and their great influence on identity.

Fanon's idea of cultural assimilation emphasizes the home as a necessary haven from society demands and devaluation. The family shields and fosters resilience in a difficult environment that demands conformity, therefore retaining identification. Rooted in common experiences and unwavering love, this relationship gives one power to fight forces aiming at exploitation or dehumanizing. For instance, the action of Mr. and Mrs. MacTeer to shield their kids from Mr. Henry best illustrates this responsibility. Their parents provide safety among a biased society and help their children to be naturally valuable.

The relationship between Ekwefi and Ezinma in *Things Fall Apart* presents an even more nuanced picture of family loyalty. Ekwefi's bravery in challenging the priestess Agbala to guard her daughter demonstrates the ability of love to overcome danger and uncertainty (Emmanuel 67). Families not only shield people but also enable them to fight the erosion of identity brought about by cultural control. According to Fanon, families are very important in resisting assimilation and in creating an environment where emotional and cultural authenticity blossom. People find the will to embrace their uniqueness free from social limitations inside these ties.

In *The Bluest Eye*, too, the relationship between Claudia, Frieda, and Pecola supports this twin function of protection and empowerment. Though their capacity is restricted, Claudia and Frieda help Pecola, molded by the family values they absorb. The training and affection they get help them to become more conscious of internalized racism. At the end of the novel, Claudia's observations question a society that treats Pecola as scapegoat. She notes how attempts to replicate a false concept of civilization cause the Black community to damage its own. Hence, it creates a poisonous environment for its children.

Fanon's study of cultural assimilation emphasizes the family's central part as a force of resistance. Families provide members the tools to criticize and challenge institutions meant to marginalize them, therefore transcending simple protection from outside injustice. For Claudia and Frieda, their family background helps them to question society expectations and see injustice closely. Their acts demonstrate how steeped in cultural and emotional authenticity family ties are not just protective but also transforming. Families save identity and enable people to fiercely oppose systematic attempts to eliminate agency and uniqueness by strengthening these strong bonds.

Fanon's theory of cultural assimilation emphasizes how important the family is to upholding identity and opposing social injustice. Reflecting Claudia's experience in *The Bluest Eye*, Emmanuel says "the nuclear family should be a place of succor" (65). On the other hand, in *the Caged Bird* the family is shown as a "place of alienation and fear," where the lack of parental care compromises its protective capacity. Children naturally want emotional stability from their parents. When it is denied, they could look for it elsewhere. From Fanon's point of view, lack of a loving family atmosphere breaks identity and exposes people to outside threats. Maya finds this vulnerability in her emotional distance from her parents. Without parental love, she becomes vulnerable to harm as demonstrated by her attack by Mr. Freeman, her mother's boyfriend. She shares a house with her mother, but the lack of security emphasizes the dysfunction in her family.

The relationship between Maya and Bailey provides a counterbalance even if the Johnson house has certain problems. Fanon's thesis fits this sibling bond, which is a tiny but significant kind of resistance to cultural erasure and alienation. Maya has emotional support from Bailey, who also motivates her to break her silence following trauma. He turns into her haven when she is sick, guiding her toward recovery. Their relationship is still strong even as they live far apart. Knowing the comfort and self-discovery reading provide for Maya, Bailey offers her books before leaving home. Maya finds her voice and helps her process her challenges in literature, which turns into her haven. Reflecting clearly and adding, "life is going to give you just what you put in it," Maya then gracefully and maturely welcomes Bailey's leaving (Emmanuel 67–69). Born of their common difficulties, this resiliency shows the value of their partnership.

Their grandmother, Mrs. Henderson, sometimes known as Momma, is another constant in their lives. Momma covers the hole left by missing parents by serving as a mentor and moral compass giver. Maya and Bailey are ready to meet challenges in life because of her solid values and loving care. Momma's attempts to teach morals and discipline to the children reflect Fanon's conviction that the family might fight cultural absorption. Even if their biological family is split, the direction Momma's presence provides helps kids to build their identities among hardship. For Maya, this procedure reflects the idea of the trapped bird which sings even inside its cage. Her hardships help one to develop resilience and self-awareness (Emmanuel 67–69).

Maya's experience ultimately underscores Fanon's conviction that family ties may resist both internal and outside pressures compromising identity. Relationships like that with Bailey and Momma give means for strength and self-realization even when the nuclear family falls short in offering the promised stability. Maya's narrative shows how love, empathy, and shared hardships inside a familial context can foster uniqueness and inspire opposition against institutions trying to minimize it.

Pecola stays caught in grief while Maya strives to overcome her obstacles and define her individuality. Her upbringing in the chaotic Breedlove family mostly explains this. With chaos and great dysfunction, Klotman notes this family as an illustration of the third variation of the familial premise (123). Though their structure seems to be that of a nuclear family, the Breedloves lack the emotional ties required for unity that separates their members. The depressing portrayal of their storefront home reflects the obvious estrangement in this family. Without warmth, it seems hollow and dead; with unspoiled, motionless furniture, it becomes silent and depressing. Rather than providing a haven, the house becomes to represent

psychological and emotional death. It sharply opposes the “Dick and Jane” ideal family, hence the Breedlove house is its dark opposite.

Pecola suffers greatly in lack of family affection and support. She believes that getting blue eyes will bring her the love and recognition she is looking for from her family and society, so she absorbs the false ideals set by the Dick and Jane story while yearning desperately for affection. Fanon’s thesis shows how repressive cultural norms devalue people’s identities and isolate them. The unreachable “Dick and Jane” ideal intensifies Pecola’s self-hatred and leaves her helpless against the structural and emotional violence all around her.

The fall of the Breedlove family supports Fanon’s contention that family shapes identity. People like Pecola become especially susceptible to harmful cultural stereotypes that devalue their self-worth without the security and nurture a family should offer. Pecola’s broken family dynamics directly lead to her need to fit into society expectations that reject her. Unlike Maya, who finds support in sibling and intergenerational ties helping her on her road of self-discovery, Pecola lacks any such protection even with the flaws in her family. Her family’s turmoil traps her in estrangement and hopelessness without the means to declare her identity or fight social demands.

From Fanon’s point of view, functioning families preserve emotional cohesiveness and nurture resistance against outside pressures, therefore helping to resist absorption. Families failing, like with the Breedloves, people run the danger of being victims of the negative consequences of alienation. Pecola’s sad narrative is a sobering illustration of this failure, juxtaposing Maya’s capacity to recover her identity via family ties with Maya’s experiences

highlight the strength inherent in family ties, while Pecola's story sadly shows how totally one's sense of self may be undermined without them.

To put it in brief, Fanon's approach of decolonizing the mind emphasizes how important awareness inside family systems is to oppose social injustice and recovering identity.

Real-life family dynamics and the created Dick and Jane ideal contrast to each other to question the American school system for fostering false values. This system alienates kids from their reality by offering a limited, unachievable picture of family life, therefore promoting denial rather than self-awareness. Left with this discrepancy, many turn away from the demands of their lived experiences into the solace of this delusion. Characters like Claudia and Maya, however, show how confronting familial problems may destroy negative ideas and open the path for personal development and self-empowerment.

Investigating family ties shows that the construction of identity depends fundamentally on recognition. Fanon emphasizes that self-awareness calls for rejecting racial ideas enforced by repressive governments. External recognition is also rather important at the same time to support uniqueness and strengthen self-worth. Maya finds strength in close relationships even if family discord affects her. Her grandma Momma gives consistency and discipline. Her brother Bailey gives relentless support. These relationships turn into emotional fortitude that helps Maya to heal from her tragedy and plot her own course. Maya has the means to reinvent herself, thus Fanon's argument that family acceptance empowers people to reject degrading ideas resonates in their link.

Another turning point for Maya comes from Mrs. Flowers, an outside person who provides a transforming kind of validation. Maya feels much recognized and loved when Mrs. Flowers

calls her “Marguerite,” a simple but deliberate action. This awareness sets off a major change in line with Fanon’s conviction that breaking free from imposed inferiority mostly depends on outside confirmation. Maya gains her voice again and starts her own search for self-definition by meeting Mrs. Flowers. Not only does recognition from inside her family as well as from outside leaders become essential for her battle against social injustice but also for her general empowerment.

Conversely, Pecola’s narrative shows the terrible consequences of a lack of respect. Her family rejects her and she is invisible to society. Her life is defined by neglect. Emotionally detached, her mother Pauline calls Pecola unworthy of love and even sees her as unattractive. Pauline’s rejection from birth deprives Pecola of the mother recognition needed for emotional growth. Pecola is totally alone, Salvatore notes, with no one verifying her existence or paying her any attention (159). Pecola creates ties only with inanimate items, such a black cat or a dandelion, before finally constructing a fantasy whereby she interacts with an imagined version of herself. This self-dialogue captures her consequent plunge into solitude and the lack of recognition from others.

Fanon’s view on decolonization helps to clarify Pecola’s sad path. Unable to reject society myths, Pecola absorbs negative ideas that minimize her identity. Her fixation with blue eyes represents a need to satisfy white beauty standards, which she thinks would at last bring her the love she so craves. But rather than seeing her own value, she misidentifies herself via the repressive prism of society. Pecola’s internalized inferiority fuels her disengagement from her actual self and drives her even more into isolation. Pecola’s lack of respect drives her into lunacy unlike Maya, whose family and outside contacts provide a basis for resistance. Her fate emphasizes the extreme results of living without the kind of nurture required to challenge

harmful ideas. Fanon's observations confirm that fighting social injustice calls for self-affirmation and validation from a loving community. Pecola's sorrow juxtaposed with Maya's achievement emphasizes the indispensable need of awareness in opposing erasure and recovering identity.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

In conclusion, the paper figures out the root of the Black identity formation which is recognition. Recognition is the core of forming an identity. It applies to all individuals. For Black people, it is difficult to be recognized while dealing with racism. According to Fanon, colonialism shapes the worldview of its citizens, America is no exception in this case. In the eyes of White Americans, African Americans are savage and uncivilized. They think African Americans do not belong to America. The perception of superiority makes them exploit African Americans, but it is not just physical exploitation. Rather, they exploit them psychologically through cultural assimilation that equates whiteness with beauty and blackness with ugliness. The colonial ideologies provide a great help to propagate the concept. The purpose of spreading ideologies is to internalize inferiority in African Americans so that they cannot raise their voice against the White Americans.

In most cases, White Americans succeed in suppressing the voice of African Americans since they perceive themselves as inferior. The inferiority creates desire, which critics termed as lactification, in them to turn their physical appearance into white. They think it is the only possible way to get accepted by mainstream society and revalue their identity. Also, it will help them to get rid of the "Niggerhood". Yet, Fanon disagrees with it as a way of identity formation. For him, the process of denegrification and lactification provides a distorted image of self. It can never give a proper sense of self. As a result, a Black person will misrecognize

self and fail to build identity. Sometimes the misrecognition becomes the cause of someone's downfall.

Pecola and her family are the prey of racial entrapment. The extreme level of internalization results in fracturing of their selves. They do not know how to fix the fractured self. Thus, each of them chooses the path of delusion to escape reality. The delusion is more real to them. However, Maya from the *Caged Bird* embraces the reality and utilizes it for personal growth. She does not fall for the trap White Americans set for the Black people. She handles every situation with bravery. It is only possible because she is recognized by the right people who remove the distorted image of her. The people in Stamps were the real motivation in her life. Having Momma, Uncle Willie, and Bailey as family members, meeting with Mrs. Flower who genuinely admires her for being who she is, and her classmates like Henry Reed help her to recognize her real self. Becoming a streetcar conductor gives a sense of pride in her for being Black. Therefore, the process of Black identity formation is a collective thing. Not everyone can have that solidarity to develop their identity.

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