

Multiplicity of Identities in the New Millennium



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MS Thesis

In

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It is certified that Ms. Arooma Kanwal with Reg. No. FA16-REL-013 has carried out all the work related to this thesis under my supervision at the Department of Humanities, COMSATS University Islamabad, Lahore and the work fulfills the requirement for award of MS degree.

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“HE knows what is in every heart”. (Holy Quran, 67:13).

To my dearly beloved parents

Dr. Muhammad Usman Sindhu

&

Prof. Sajida Nasreen

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ABSTRACT

In our contemporary era of subversion of identities, the issue of millennial identities has assumed unprecedented significance and scope. This research intends to discuss the complexities and nuances of the millennial identities at the dawn of 21st century. One of the basic contentions is to find patterns by explicating Simon de Beauvoir and Judith Butler's perspectives of identities in Toni Morrison's latest novel *God Help the Child*. At the turn of 20th century, Simon de Beauvoir talked about performative nature of gendered identities. She famously said "one is not born, but rather becomes, a woman". Famous American writer Scott Fitzgerald also defined human embodiment as a series of performative gestures. What these writers were defining about nature and mercurial essence of human personality or identity is equally true and valid about the millennial identities or the 21st century gendered, queer and closeted identities. Butler's statement "one does one's body" adds weight to the argument that in the new millennium all identities are up for grab as they have become more fluid, malleable and plastic. There are plenty of examples, like Oprah Winfrey, Rachel Dolezal, Tiger Woods, Obama, Micheal Jackson and the list goes on. All of them embody the spirit of the new millennial in their own unique fashion. However, the main objective is to bring in the politically, socially and sexually persecuted oppressed minorities or the subaltern identities, who do not necessarily occupy positions of acclaim and prestige and are struggling to create some space for themselves without giving in to existing societal norms and scripts. For example, in Pakistani context, the new millennial women are those who appropriate aspects of identities which are non-conventional and perhaps multi or transcultural. Their act of passing as the new millennials resides in their ability to demolish gendered prejudice and stereotypes by establishing avenues of cross-racial understanding. This research

on the new millennial identities aims to demonstrate this by way of comparative study with Toni Morrison's latest novel *God Help the Child*. It is important because Morrison's take on the new millennial in the *God Help the Child* talks about these kinds of subversive identities to highlight how the queerness of identities and malleability of the black body, in fact, all the bodies in *God Help the Child* has contemporary relevance to our society.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Toni Morrison has splendidly gathered the despondency of African American individuals, in expressing and denouncing the socio-political experiences that they have suffered throughout history. Her tales are genuine excavations of human identities, unveiling the fundamental parts of the human soul in its darkest episodes of agony and dismissal. Her protagonists as millennial kids are challenging a long list of common assumptions of racial stereotypes. In the novel *God Help the Child*, Morrison explores the notion of new millennial as it values diversity in embracing the concepts of ethnicity and race as extremely fluid and shape shifting. Morrison affirms her concept of new black millennial from the perspective of young black woman Lula Ann Bridewell aka Bride. Morrison reflects millennial rising with the help of Bride, who embodies the entrepreneurial spirit for economic success and social mobility.

Toni Morrison in *God Help the Child* tells us the story of a black girl who has been nurtured in the racist society by a high-yellow mother. Lula Ann Bridewell seeks love from her mother who stops her from calling her 'mother' or 'mama'. Sweetness is the word that describes motherhood or motherly figure for her. She does not have the right to call her mother. On same account she cannot be her mama's daughter because Sweetness is afraid of the society and the shame in having to acknowledge a black daughter. Bride seeks her mother's love all her childhood; she was ready to do anything to feel her mother's touch. She accused a woman for child abuse and testified against her in order to gain Sweetness' affection or love. At the event in the courtroom when Lula Ann was nervous, her eyes kept gazing at her mother but she was worried about her reputation that Lula Ann may put her in shame, least worried about the stress and pressure her daughter was going through. She recalls that memory

of her childhood and says that *only eight years of age was little Lula Ann when she testifies against Sofia Huxley*. She recalls herself as little Lula Ann at the courtroom because till that time she had not changed herself to be the part of the society but at the moment she lifted her arm at Sofia Huxley. She started the struggle for her identity in the society, an identity to be accepted among people who hated her color and race. This attempt of social acceptance of her, being a separate identity, was going to charge her huge price in future. She suffered a lot and realizes in the forest of California that she has been scorned and rejected by everyone.

Bride makes a paradoxical personality and identity; she turns herself into the 'closet' to be the part of the society. She hides the truth and part of her personality to have the love of her mother and identity from the society. Bride remodels herself from black tar to black milk. She proves to be having a fluid identity when she turns fourteen. She leaves her house and changes her name twice (Morrison p.11). Lula Ann Bridewell becomes Ann Bride and then just Bride. She struggles for her identity and in the job hunt meets Jeri, a designer, who asks her to wear only white. In the first instance, she is at shock to hear but, later on, realizes how many shades of white are available in the market. She indulges herself in love affair with Booker whom she never asked anything but told each and everything but did not reveal the part of her closetedness, whose walls she sprang around herself while testifying against Sofia Huxley.

Booker leaves her by saying that she is not the woman he wants. She is shocked by the comment of Booker that she starts taking drugs and tries to console herself but fails. She has developed her personality in such a way that she has become that "Whoa!" "Oh, baby", who is center of attraction and admiration. She confronts her afresh identity crisis and withdraws herself by regressing back and becoming the

little black girl. Dancing and having sex with strangers but soon she gets tired of all these and sets off for California for identity quest. In her pursuit of identity, all her life she faced anger and hatred by everyone in her life. She feels devolution of her body into 'little Lula Ann'. The loss of her private and under arm hair and her virgin ear lobes vanishes, after admitting her crime of wrongfully convicting Sofia Huxley. She falls asleep and wakes up as 'Bride'. Her body is again transformed into an adult. Generally identity tells us that what a person or a thing is. While looking at the identity from social point, it reflects the entity that a person holds in the society, a societal constructed identity whether positive or negative, active or passive, collective or individual. Identity is "the fact of being who or what a person or thing is" and for the social identity what a person is in particular society. Similarly, identity is "the state or fact of remaining the same one or ones, as under varying aspects or conditions". Hence identity is the name of consistency. Is Morrison subverting this notion of a consistent or stable identity in *God Help the Child*? Or in her characteristics of Bride? If someone is brave in various situations and if someone is unpredictable in one situation, he will remain unpredictable in the other situations.

Peter J. Bruke in his book *Social Identities and Psychological Stress* draws the prerequisites of the identity. According to Bruke, identity encompasses particular standards, input functionality, comparator and output functionality. The identity standard incorporates the self-definition of the individuality of identity which implies it signifies one's perception about who he/she is. The second component is of input function comprising the conception about identity as who the individual is in the distinctive set of situation. It means if identity standard asserts dominance or the potential then the input function observes the dominance and strength particularly set of scenarios or the circumstances. The third one is comparator which works as the

umpire and observes the main difference between the perceived value and the authentic identity standard (Bruke, 1996). It means that it observes the difference or what Bruke has called the 'error' in the perceived meaning or the self-meaning of the identity and the actual identity standard. The final and the most important is the output function which translates the error into meaningful behaviors and actions that act upon the social situation.

“From the idea that the self is not given to us, I think that there is only one practical consequence: we have to create ourselves as a work of art” (Foucault, 1978). Foucault provides us the idea that identity is not something that we have inherited or is God gifted but is something that we craft by ourselves. It means that we have somewhat control over our identity. We can shape our being or identity, we can shape ourselves. It is the society that forces us to shape our identity because the basic aim of our identity is to be recognized and be the part of the society. Morrison's *Bride* subverts the old notion of having a consistent identity, and follows the pursuit of having to recreate her identity. She struggles her identity because she want to be the part of the racist and the sexist society while having dark color and on the other part she wants the success in the society where black are the first to be fired and the last one to be hired. 'Who she is?' is the question for which she struggles and tries to find out her identity.

Strauss & Howe are credited to purpose generational theory on individuals of the United States, but not of the whole world. Generational theory considers millennials as diverse, multifarious, well-off, literate and ethnically divergent. In order to occupy position of acclaim and prestige, millennials are spreading new waves of encouraging social habits including work-focused, team-oriented accomplishment and good conduct. (Howe, 2000).

In accord with Time Magazine, millennial generation referred to as “Me Me Me generation” are entitled as lethargic and narcissists (Stein, 2013). In *God Help the Child*, the presentation of new black protagonist Bride is Morrison’s take on the new millennial as she values diversity in embracing concepts of ethnicity, race and sexuality as extremely fluid and shapeshifting. Morrison’s tales are genuine excavations of human identities, uncovering complex aspects of human soul and its psychic make-up if faced with versatile aspects of personality and sexual orientation. The prevalent assumption about millennials is reductive and limitizing as they are perceived as narcissistic, self-obsessed, lazy and even delusional. A pivotal objective of this paper is to emphasize the risk of reducing millennials to some specific definitions because the term millennial is more complex, multifaceted, and all-embracing appellation. Morrison presents her concept of the new millennial from the perspective of a young black woman with social aspirations, Lula Ann Bridewell, aka Bride. Bride is a new role model who embodies the entrepreneurial spirit for economic success and social mobility. She disregards the conservative rules of sexual conduct and respectability which could distract her from achieving agency, social mobility and greater financial success. Bride as new millennial, challenges the traditional scripts of black women which limit these women’s sexual autonomy and encourages the new generation towards sexual agency and entitlement/empowerment. In many aspects , Bride’s struggle for upward mobility in a racist and misogynist society like the States shares similarities with Pakistani millennial identities like Qandeel Bloch . Qandeel was also, like Bride, unconcerned with the politics of respectability, which plays a pivotal role in constraining and policing the sexual behaviour of blackness. She seeks self-expression and economic independence. Bride’s celebration of her hard work, economic success, independence and self-

expression hidden are central to Morrison's construction of the new millennial identities. This essay intends to review the evolution of the millennial identities at the dawn of 21st century by reminding that the iconoclast feminist of 20th century Simone de Beauvoir anticipated the arrival of such complex and multiple identities by way of comparative study with Morrison's *God Help the Child*. Like de Beauvoir, Morrison shows how society continues to construct the gendered identity of women at the dawn of the twenty-first-century. Morrison's concept of millennial identities encapsulates all kinds of queer identities, from bisexuals, gays, straights, to other forms of closeted or hidden identities. All these forms of multiple identities embody the spirit of the new millennial in their own unique fashion.

1.1 Aims and Objectives

Followings are the aims and objectives of the study:

1. To discuss the complexities and nuances of the millennial identities at the dawn of 21st century.
2. To find patterns by explicating Simone de Beauvoir and Judith Bulter's perspectives of identities in Toni Morrison's recent novel *God Help the Child*.
3. To demonstrate beauty industry and its complexities in Toni Morrison's *God Help the Child*.
4. To bring in the politically, socially and sexually persecuted oppressed minorities or the subaltern identities, who do not necessarily occupy positions of acclaim and prestige and are struggling to create some space for themselves without giving in to existing societal norms and scripts.

1.2 Research Questions

Followings are the research questions of the study:

1. How does Morrison reflect Millennial Rising in the *God Help the Child*?

2. How does Simone de Beauvoir's perspective of identities relate to 21st century gendered, queer and closeted identities?
3. How the queerness of identities and malleability of the black body, in fact all the bodies in *God Help the Child* has contemporary relevance to our society?

1.3 Delimitations of the study

Followings are the delimitations of the study:

1. The researcher would restrict its analysis to only those parts of the novel which directly relate to the objectives and research questions of the study.
2. The researcher has contained this study to only one novel as it is the latest novel of Toni Morrison.

1.4 Structure of the study

The whole thesis is divided into six chapters, including conclusion, as under:

The first chapter titled as "Introduction" gives the background of the study and explains the terms which are part of the title of my research, for instance multiplicity of identities and millennial generation. It is a brief chapter that points out the research questions, significance, objectives and delimitations of the dissertation.

Chapter 2 is the "Review of Literature". This chapter reviews the existing body of knowledge regarding multiplicity of identities and Morrison's *God Help the Child*. As in the field of identities, literature is enormous and varied it would not be possible to review all of it, therefore besides Beauvoir and Butler's theories of subversive identities only studies related to millennials are discussed and reviewed in relation to this research.

Chapter 3 discusses the “Research Methodology” and theoretical underpinnings of the research study. This chapter highlights the research methods and research techniques for the analysis of qualitative data.

Chapter 4 and 5 is of analysis and discussion. Chapter 4 analyzes the multiplicity of Bride’s identity *Bride’s Body that Matters* with respect to theories of Simone de Beauvoir and Judith Butler. Chapter 5 analyzes Morrison’s notion of millennial ascendancy in twenty-first-century with the perspective of new black millennial Bride.

Chapter 6 is the final chapter of the dissertation that comprehensively concludes this research study. The conclusion sums up the whole discussions and raises many questions for future researchers, understandably, since this is one of the few research projects of its kind about millennial identities in literature studies with reference to Morrison’s latest novel *God Help the Child*.

1.5 Significance of the study

The identity of a person enclosed by a culture is a subject of matter encircling the humanities. The present study will extend existing knowledge about identities and their act of passing as the new millennial which resides in their ability to demolish gendered prejudice and stereotypes by establishing avenues of cross-racial understanding. It will help the reader to understand the impact of human embodiment on one’s identity as it involves the way you live and represent your identity in society. This study will demonstrate that all identities in the new millennium embody the spirit of the new millennial in their own unique fashion. In addition, this study reconnects the concept of identity explicated by Simone de Beauvoir at the turn of 20th century to Morrison’s take on the 21st century’s problem of colourism as a struggle to pass as a new millennial. It warns across the everlasting existence of colourism inside African-

American groups and the dangerous impacts of our media. This work will provide understanding of racial passing presenting challenges to the meaning of race and conventional construction of racial identities in the new millennium. This research study is dually important because Morrison's attempt on the new millennial in *God Help the Child* talks about all subversive identities and its relevance to Pakistani society, as the new millennial women who appropriate aspects of identities which are non-conventional and perhaps multi or transcultural.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 A general understanding of identity

Identity is the name we give to the ways from which we are positioned by, and we position ourselves. In his famous essay *Cultural Identity and Diaspora*, Hall (1990) gives two different notions to define cultural identity. Firstly he defines the notion of cultural identity using the expression of common shared knowledge by the members of a culture. This is collective self; hiding inside the others is one's true self "which people with a shared history and ancestry hold in common" (p. 223). Secondly he defines cultural identity while focusing on the differences which establishes "what we really are,' or rather since history has intervened-'what we have become'" (P. 225). Critics have divide identity at two levels, cultural identity and individual identity. Cultural identity is the collection of common values shared by the individuals of that culture. Individual identity is limited to a single person and it is reached after deducting all the common shared values from his/her own values (Fearon, 1999). Satchidanandan (2010) also suggests the development of two types of identities that women "develop a dual consciousness—the self as culturally defined and self as different from cultural prescription" (P. 7). He points out that, women have dual identities, firstly an identity given by a culture that defines a woman and portrays her stereotypical image and secondly the actual identity of a woman how she looks herself different from that identity assigned by the culture. Hall (1990) presents a diasporic concept of identity that identities are "constantly producing and reproducing themselves anew, through transformation and difference" (p. 402). Different cultures have different identities that are grounded in the shared system of values and

knowledge of that culture. When individuals come into contact with different cultures they adopt the value system of that culture or differentiate themselves from it, in both the cases identity is in the process of change.

Identity is not only a personal invent but there are certain institutions and discourses which contribute in its construction. Different discourses come from the different constituents (gender, religion, ethnicity, race and nationality) of self to construct an identity. Isenberg (1992), states that unlike self, identity does not emerge from the distinguishable, unique and personal nature of each individual but it emerges from the contribution of different discourses (p. 454). People pretend identities according to the given situations. And these identities are temporal and collapse with the situation to which these are conditioned. So the identities are changing continuously according to different occasions. One of the reasons of multiple identities that there are different dimensions of identity from which a subject constructs his/her identity. Those different dimensions or locations of identity include gender roles, racial and class differences, and the differences in religion, ethnicity and sexuality. Individuals identify themselves with different social and ethnic groups; these groups are not “inflexible categories to which individuals can be reduced (Personal Narratives Group, 1989, p. 19). Personal Narrative Group stresses on the word context according to them context literally means to “weave together, to twine, to connect” (p. 19). By considering more and more context the more we realize that social constructs like gender, religion and race are essential but we cannot limit the identity of an individual to these constructs. Everything in this world is changing every moment and nothing is constant and our feelings are attached to these external factors and our feelings also change and pass with the change in time (Rousseau, 2011, p. 1046). Identities are not fixed or bounded entities because these contain

substance that is expressed in “distinctive attributes” Kondo, 1990, P. 11). Distinctive attributes are actually the constituents of identity which includes different social, ethical, gender, racial, national and ethnic constructs.

Society plays a vital role in the construction of identity, individuals shape his/her self, according to the norms presented by the society so that he/she gets accepted without any question. A subject takes different models offered by the society and shapes them according to his/her own type (Coslett, 2000, p. 61). Among the other social and cultural values, gender identity is also an important constitutive element of women characterisation. Individual bends identity by ignoring the societal norms, making a new identity and neglecting those “accepted models of identity”. Tajfel and Turner's social identity hypothesis clarifies that part of an individual's notion of self originates from the gatherings to which that individual belongs. A person does not just have an idiosyncratic selfhood, but rather different selves and identities related with their associated gatherings. An individual may act contrastingly in differing social settings as per the gatherings they belong to, which may include their family, their homeland country, and the area they live in, among numerous possibilities. At some point, a person sees himself/herself as a part of a gathering, which acts as an in-group for him/her. Numerous other groups which identify themselves separately can be called as out-groups. We get an "us" vs. "them" attitude with regards to our in-groups and their individual out-groups (1982).

Identity is basically used as a part of two connected senses, which may be termed “social” and “personal.” In respect of prior sense, an “identity” alludes basically to a social category, an arrangement of people set apart by a label recognized by different characteristics and attributes. In the later sense of personal identity, an identity is some recognizing attributes that an individual takes an

exceptional pride in or perceives as socially significant yet almost unchangeable. Thus, identity in its contemporary embodiment holds a double sense. It refers to social classifications and to the genesis of an individual's confidence or pride. There is no essential linkage between these things. In colloquial language one can use the term of “identity” to broach the subject of personal qualities or traits that are normally inexpressible in terms of social categorization. However, in present instance, the term “identity” reflects and brings out the notion that social classifications are closely connected with the core of a person's self-respect.

As explicated above, double sense of identity may be assigned as “social” and “personal” identity. Formerly, an identity is just a facet of social category, a group of individuals labeled by a name that is used by people more often, as when referring someone as “American,” “English,” “Muslim,” “queer,” “father,” “worker,” “soldier,” or “citizen” as identities.

Personal identity is a combination of qualities, faiths, aspirations, or propositions of actions that an individual presumes and which distinguishes him/her in socially apposite ways, for instance; the individual takes a unique pride in; the individual takes no extraordinary pride in; the individual feels he/she could not change anything even if he/she wanted to. Frequently, personal identity can be regarded as the characteristics of a man that shapes the reason for his or her nobility or dignity. In this sense, “identity” has turned into a partial and implicit substitute for “respect,” “honour,” and “self-esteem.”

Erikson defines “identity crisis” as a condition of uncertainty of one’s feelings about oneself, predominantly with contemplation to character, aims, and origins, transpiring exceptionally in adolescence leading to amplification under disruptive, fast-changing ambience. Above statement implicitly defines “identity” as individual’s

sentiments about himself/herself, character, objectives and genesis. Identity is not simply an indistinguishable thing from one's feelings about oneself, character, objectives and origins, excluding one's own definition of self, character, aims and so on (Erikson, 1968).

The expression "multiplicity of identity" implies the notion that humans are equipped for communicating an apparently endless measure of identity characteristics. Humans can develop multiple traits considering the requisite of particular circumstances. They can be monotonous, rebellious, reluctant and sensitive, gregarious, resilient the same day as personalities/identities are constantly growing, very few personality traits remain entirely stagnant. Fitzgerald's description of human embodiment as "an unbroken series of successful gestures" (Fitzgerald, 6) applies to individual work of art. If personality is gesticulation, then maneuver of gesture to idea parallels "personality" transfigured into "personage". Jonathan Culler has explored that things we live among and relate to, are not merely ordinary physical objects and events; but they are objects with meaning. As physical gestures are acts of courtesy and hostility (Culler, 1993).

Posthuman Blackness and the Black Female Imagination, extends existing knowledge of historically positioned conceptions of blackness with insightful estimation of black future. In this revolutionary study, Kristen Lillvis discusses thoughts of black subjectivity in contemporary black women writings including fictions and nonfictions of Toni Morrison, Octavia Butler, Julie Dash, and Janelle Monáe. All these writers set their narratives in past using female characters to illustrate how the inheritance in the foreseeable future can influence black eminence and opposition. Lillvis provides the expression "posthuman blackness" to explain eminent subjectivities developed by black individuals through their synchronised

existence within present, past, and perhaps future temporalities. *Posthuman* theory illustrates fluid nature of black identities and flexibility of cultures in Gayl Jones' *Corregidora* and Morrison's *Beloved*.

Identity is considered as the contemplations that people have regarding who they think they are. It can be consulted through a relational concurrence with one's own self, and additionally by associating it with introducing other people in regular day to day existence. Identity is then, as it were, affected by cultural cooperation, yet the individuality of identity is likewise comprised of people's feeling about self and reflection of their identity as an individual. (Guerrero, Andersen & Afifi, 2014; Goffman, 1959). People change their identities according to the situations and they pass the identities according to the situations. These identities are temporal and collapse with the situation to which theses are conditioned. So the identities are changing continuously according to different occasions.

2.2 From Beauvoir to Butler

“One is not born, rather becomes a woman” differentiates sex from gender as it suggests that gender is a social construct or just a facet of identity acquired. Gender incorporates cultural meaning or interpretation of sex but it lacks closure properties of its complexities. In her most popular work, *The Second Sex*, Simone de Beauvoir portrays a type of existential history of a woman's life: how society impacts and changes the way she perceives her body and her capabilities. Here de Beauvoir raises the central issue of female representation, how the potentialities of female body are curtailed under the societal pressures and how woman starts perceiving herself as incapable and weak instead of finding a source of empowerment within. A woman's body is the site of this ambivalence, either she can adopt herself and her career according to the expectations of society or the cultural imperatives or she can listen to

her own inner voice. It comes down to a matter of choice; to how she sees herself as a free subject instead of as a question of society's look. De Beauvoir's exploration of gender as a cultural construct or socially imposed identity can easily relate to identity constructions of 21st century in terms of being millennial. As the new black millennial, Bride exemplifies the ability and strong nerve to achieve economic success without compromising her own sense of identity and a deep conviction in her capabilities or potentialities. During her early career, she finds herself at the bottom of the employment hierarchy because of her skin colour, but she is tenacious and refuses to give up. As she carves out a successful career in business, she encounters white hierarchies, patriarchal sensibility, conventional morality and other structures of power, which seek to constrain her, on her upwardly mobile way.

In her most popular work, *The Second Sex*, Simone de Beauvoir portrays a type of existential history of a women's life: an account of her mindset towards body and genuine capabilities. Consistent changes and circumstances of society cause impacts on the state of her mind. Here Simone de Beauvoir raises the central issue of female representation: Are the accumulated shortcomings of the female body which exist fairly in every single social request, or would they say they are just determined to be hindrances by our overall community? She answered this request by examining relevant investigations of the diverse periods of female life. For these circumstances, the female body can be shown as both positive and negative, but women as both free and abused. A women body is the site of this unclearness, for she can use it as a vehicle for her chance and feel abused by it. There is no fundamental reality of the circumstance: it relies on how much she sees herself as a free subject instead of as a question of society's look.

Butler's formula "one does one's body" counters the narrative that all bodies are gendered from the earliest starting point of their social presence, which implies that there is no "natural body" that pre-exists its social engraving. She implies that bodies are cosmetic, malleable or plastic. We can mold them the way we desire. This sums up my conclusion that gender isn't something one is, it is something one does, a demonstration, or all the more unequivocally, an arrangement of acts, a verb instead of a noun, a "doing" as opposed to a "being". Butler has disintegrated distinction between sex and gender keeping in mind the final goal to contend that there is no sex that isn't generally as of now gender. All bodies are gendered from the earliest starting point of their social presence (and there is no presence that is not social), which implies that there is no "natural body" that pre-exists its social engraving. This appears to point towards the conclusion that gender is not something one is, it is something one does, a performance, or all the more unequivocally, an arrangement of acts, a verb instead of a noun, a "doing" as opposed to a "being".

In *Gender Trouble*, Butler is concerned about analyzing how gender classes are produced by discursive administrations instead of philosophical classifications. For Butler, the classification of men, women, hetero, and homosexual are not fundamental or natural attributes but rather they are the "impacts of a particular formulation of power". Butler's concern revolves around the discursive construction of body and experience of the body. Butler acknowledges neither sex nor gender as a material "reality". Gender construction is achieved through the persistent repetition and 'performance' of specific discourses. Butler expresses that "gender demonstrates performativity - that is, representing the identity it is claiming to be. Butler's formula "one does one's body" counters the narrative that all bodies are gendered from their earliest social presence, which implies that there is no "natural body" that pre-exists

its social engraving. She implies that bodies are cosmetic, malleable or plastic. We can mold it the way we desire. In this sense, gender is consistently a doing, however not a doing of pre-existed deeds done by a subject. Gender identity exist beyond the expressions of gender, it is performatively composed by exact those “expressions” which can be considered as outcomes” (Butler 1990, p.24). Extending Butler’s argument Byrne explores materialization of bodies by using the notion of ‘sexed because of the performative recurrence of norms’ (2000). Butler argues that when individuals are born, they undergo the process of gendering and become subjects, considering the biological interpellation which shifts the label of an infant from an ‘it’ to he/she, referring them into the language domain through this interpellation of gender. Naming the individuals goes through various centuries and reinforcement of naturalized effect, setting boundaries and inculcation of gender norms of the society (Butler 1993, p.8). This procedure shapes the way the individuals go in society as well as their own psychological procedures, the goals and motivations. In this procedure, norms of heteronormativity are likewise settled. Men, women in fact all of them are made who accomplish whole hearted acceptance by getting attracted for the opposite gender. These norms are established because of the production of the subjects who define clearly to the subjects which are not - homosexuals. Butler’s argument makes homosexuality type as the constitutive outside to heterosexuality and it is significantly important in defining the boundaries of what lies within the positions of these norms. On the contrary, one cannot be an individual without being identified as a boy or a girl; one cannot be an individual without getting an equally different embodied racial identification. Indeed one can be a white/ black/ Asian/ mixed-race girl or boy. Byrne writes that, process of gendering is racialised and so is sexualities but racing is gendered in this society. In an interview of African-American actor Samuel L.

Jackson illustrates this point when the journalist Simon Hattenstone was talking about how unlike black characters, white characters in films are not delimited by their whiteness because they just “happen to be white” but the incredible response of Samuel L. Jackson as Hattenstone writes that “Jackson laughs so loud that, when I'm playing back the tape on headphones a colleague jumps. That's what you think. You just dismiss the fact they're white”. Thus invisibility of whiteness is just a facet of white fantasies of white people. Visibility or invisibility of whiteness or any other subject in society is moderated by power. The consequences of either one depend on one's position within normative establishment. In many different ways, the old and new notion of visibility and invisibility is discussed about. Dyer and others wrote about whiteness and its racial invisibility, they consider that invisibility ‘can potentially ensure the endurance of a position of privilege and power’. Whiteness remains unmarked in every domain, stays unchallenged. It refers to the unmarking of white people a racial group, white people are visible but whiteness is unmarked at least to white people and within normative discourses. Byrne discusses how race has become a modern taboo for white people. She interviewed people about the sensitive subject of race and noticed that her tape recorder caused a sudden drop in volume while listening to the tapes of interviewees. She frustratingly needed to play it back again, leading to conception of dropping volume in which Byrne contributes by suggesting that dropping of volume occurs when someone addresses a sensitive issue or topic. To avoid being clichéd on the topic of racism, mostly white people tend not to be perceived as racist in the new millennium.

2.3 Millennial Identities

Strauss and Howe are credited for the term “Millennial”. They are of the view that “millennial generation will entirely recast the image of youth from downbeat and

alienated to upbeat and engaged” (Millennial Rising, 2000). Mal Fletcher believes that millennials expect to create an improving future, using the collaborative, synergistic power of digital technology. According to Twenge (2006), Millennial identity depends on unique and different individuality. The prevalent assumption about millennials is reductive and limitizing as they are perceived as narcissistic, self-obsessed, lazy and even delusional. Millennials are considered as the biggest generational group, apparently characterized as the group of individuals born between the times of 1980 and 1999 as researched by Pew Research Center (Fry, 2015). A pivotal objective of this research is to emphasize the risk of reducing millennials to some specific definitions because the term millennial is more complex, multifaceted, and all-embracing appellation.

Yerbury (2010), analyzed identities of pupil and seniors, who feel that they can have a specific identity as they feel they should. They perceive identity in them as well as in other people as something steady and genuine, as opposed to something that is changing. Horan (2010), labeled generations through past millenniums. Baby Boomer generation goes from 1946 – 1964, Generation X starts from 1965 till 1980 and last but not least millennials from 1981 – 2000.

Theory of a constant evolution of identity purposed that identity should be authentic and unique. People see goodness and expect good from others along with their sincerity and love. Many individuals put their emphasis on their social identities (Gidden, 2013). Solomon tends to respect authority and hierarchies because they believed that people find difficulty in learning new things and are resistant to change. Authority rules all around the world and people maintain their identity according to the authority given by their respective organizations (Solomon, 2013). It is believed that generations grow up with some insecurity, uncertainty which demands attention.

Small and big adversities like sudden unemployment and rising debt in the family leads to mistrust in national leaders. (Caruso, 2014)

Personal experience of an individual is one's own gender identity. It can create a correlation with said sex during childbirth, or it can vary from it. Every social order has an arrangement of gender categories that can fill in as the premise of the formation of a man's social identity in connection to different individuals from society. In most societies, gender attributes are basically divided between genders assigned to males and females, a gender binary to which most people adhere and which includes expectations of masculinity and femininity in all aspects of sex and gender: biological sex, gender identity, and gender expression. In all societies, some individuals do not identify with some (or all) aspects are assigned to their biological sex; some of those individuals are transgender, gender queer or non-binary.

It is believed that identity is fluid, continually changing, and rarely static even in the individuals who wish to settle their identities. We take an interest in making our own particular identity, however we are changed by things that transpire—occasions out of our control—and that additionally continues forming our identities. It is considered that identity is continuously changing amongst destiny and will, condition and activity. We are neither totally in charge nor completely out of control of our identity.

This research contributes in understanding of the impact of human embodiment on one's identity as it involves the way you live and represent your identity in society. This study demonstrates that all identities in the new millennium embody the spirit of the new millennial in their own unique fashion. In addition, it reconnects the concept of identity explicated by Simone de Beauvoir at the turn of 20th century to Morrison's take on the 21st century's problem of colourism as a

struggle to pass as a new millennial. It warns across the everlasting existence of colourism inside African-American groups and the dangerous impacts of our media. This work will provide understanding of racial passing presenting challenges to the meaning of race and conventional construction of racial identities in the new millennium. This research study is dually important because Morrison's attempt on the new millennial in *God Help the Child* talks about all subversive identities and its relevance to Pakistani society, as the new millennial women who appropriate aspects of identities which are non-conventional and perhaps multi or transcultural.

In the novel *God Help the Child*, Morrison takes on a new point for readers to figure out that Lula Ann Bride was born at the dawn of 21st century. Bride undoubtedly embodies the quintessential of a black millennial woman who owns her blackness reclaiming her beauty. Article in paper *The Guardian*, states Morrison's quote "I'm writing for black people." With the help of *God Help the Child*, she is not just saying something to black people, but to black women who have coped to interest from the commodification and fetishization of owning blackness.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter discusses Research Methodology focusing on theoretical framework of this research. Morrison's *God Help the Child* is taken as the primary source of data for the study. This research is qualitative research that suits best for the analysis and interpretation of text oriented researches.

3.1 Theoretical Framework

In this part, the theories related to feminism and millennial identities with reference to the theories of gendered categories, to use them as a basis for an analysis of the novel *God Help the Child*. In order to do so, this discussion seeks to find patterns by explicating Simon de Beauvoir and Judith butler's perspectives of identities in Toni Morrison's latest novel *God Help the child*. Researcher shifts the perspective of the new black identities in and Morrison's representation of new black as millennial like Bride by applying it to our own milieu, ethos or context. The theoretical framework of this research revolves around feminist theories of subjectivity, identity and sexuality, as propounded by De Beauvoir and Judith Butler. Like de Beauvoir, Morrison shows how society continues to construct the gendered identity of women at the dawn of the twenty-first-century. Discussion on Morrison's characterisation of Bride, who presents herself as a millennial, to demonstrate how black subjectivities are constructed (especially women labelled as bisexual or queer), and how fluid and plastic such autoerotic sexual, androgynous, anorexic, and other gender and sexual orientations are. The new millennial women are those who appropriate aspects of identities which are non-conventional and perhaps multi or transcultural. Their appropriation of different identities is seen as transgressive. Their

act of performing new identities or millennials resides in their ability to demolish gendered prejudice and stereotypes by establishing avenues of cross-racial understanding.

3.2 Research methods

It has been found in the course of literature review that one of the main contentions of writing *God Help the Child*, is Morrison's take on the new millennial new black character, Bride. Brewer (2000) defines methodology as "if 'methods' are technical rules that define proper procedures, 'methodology' is the broad theoretical and philosophical framework into which these procedural rules fit" (p. 2). The pivotal focus of this research is to analyse characterization of Bride by using theories of Simone de Beauvoir and Judith Butler. To analyse millennial identities, researcher aims to demonstrate this by way of comparative study with Toni Morrison's latest novel *God Help the Child*. It is important because Morrison's take on the new millennial in *God Help the Child* talks about these kinds of subversive identities who embrace all kinds of identities.

Chapter 4, titled as Bride's body that matters, discusses Beauvoir's and Butler's notion of gendered body and its evolution in twenty-first-century. A woman's body is the site of this ambivalence, either she can adopt herself and her career according to the expectations of society or the cultural imperatives or she can listen to her own inner voice. It comes down to a matter of choice; to how she sees herself as a free subject instead of as a question of society's look. De Beauvoir's exploration of gender as a cultural construct or socially imposed identity can easily relate to identity constructions of 21st century in terms of being millennial. As the new black millennial, Bride's analysis exemplifies her ability and strong nerve to achieve

economic success without compromising her own sense of identity and a deep conviction in her capabilities or potentialities.

In *Gender Trouble* (Routledge, 2007) Judith Butler successfully organized the debate of materialism from Beauvoir to Luce Irigaray. She famously said ‘one does one’s body, Bride’s character analysis projects which implies that there is no "natural body" that pre-exists its social engraving. She implies that bodies are cosmetic, malleable or plastic. We can mold them the way we desire. This sums up the conclusion that gender is not something one is, it is something one does.

Chapter 5, entitled as Millennial Rising, as the title reveals its pivotal focus on study of millennial generation especially with the perspective a new black girl named Bride, as unique and fascinating as her name. In *God Help the Child*, the presentation of new black protagonist Bride is Morrison’s take on the new millennial as she values diversity in embracing concepts of ethnicity, race and sexuality as extremely fluid and shapeshifting. Howe and Strauss believe that millennial generation will entirely recast the image of youth from downbeat and alienated to upbeat and engaged” (Millennial Rising, 2000). This chapter is a negation of all those prevalent assumption about millennials which are reductive and limitizing as they are perceived as narcissistic, self-obsessed, lazy and even delusional. Analysis of Bride as the new black millennial by applying it to our own milieu is to emphasize on their risk millennials being clichéd. This backed the hypothesis by demonstrating that the trope of millennial, which stands for multiplicity of identities, emerges as a universal or transcendental signifier (which is confined to a certain culture, location or populace) that anyone can identify herself/himself with. This research explicates the impact of human embodiment on one’s identity as it involves the way you live and represent your identity in society.

CHAPTER 4

BRIDE'S BODY THAT MATTERS

... the habit of ignoring race is understood to be a graceful, even generous, liberal gesture. To notice is to recognize an already discredited difference. To enforce its invisibility through silence is to allow the black body a shadowless participation in the dominant cultural body.

Toni Morrison

4.1 Butler's bodies

In *Gender Trouble*, Butler is concerned about analyzing how gender classes are produced by discursive administrations instead of philosophical classifications. For Butler, the classification of men, women, hetero, and homosexual are not fundamental or natural attributes but rather they are the “impacts of a particular formulation of power”. Butler's concern revolves around the discursive construction of body and experience of the body. Butler acknowledges neither sex nor gender as a material “reality”. Gender construction is achieved through the persistent repetition and ‘performance’ of specific discourses. Butler expresses that “gender demonstrates performativity - that is, representing the identity it is claiming to be. Butler's formula “one does one's body” explains the subversive nature of human embodiment and counters the narrative that all bodies are gendered from their earliest social presence, which implies that there is no "natural body" that pre-exists its social engraving. She implies that bodies are cosmetic, malleable or plastic. We can mold it the way we desire. In this sense, gender is consistently a doing, however not a doing of pre-existed deeds done by a subject. Gender identity exists beyond the expressions of gender, it is performatively composed by exact those “expressions” which are considered to be its outcomes” (Butler 1990, p.24).

In *God Help the Child*, Morrison talks about subversive identities, especially Bride who remodels herself after a critical makeover recommended by an outsider — Jeri, “a ‘total person’ designer” (p. 33) — in order to land the position and rapidly ascends in the company. Jeri advises her that “You should always wear white, Bride. Only white and all white all the time.” (p. 33) and Black is the new black; fashionable only when packaged a definite way. Jeri objectifies bride’s body, profusely explores in edible terms, and revolutionizes her into a defensible commodity (pp. 36– 39). “You’re more Hershey’s syrup than licorice” once considered “too Black,” her skin makes people think of “whipped cream” and “chocolate soufflé,” or “Oreos”, or “Sable and ice” or “Bonbons. Hand-dipped”, (p. 33). Jeri’s extreme accessorizing procedure seems to predict that by all accounts there is solely one route for her Blackness to be adequate, reminding the crowd to think of desserts or of a “panther in snow” with “wolverine eyes” (p. 34). She totally accepts her makeover wholeheartedly, without scrutinizing her support in and complicity with her self-remodeling. In the expression of Malin Pereira, “The impact of famous American culture's visual development of beauty is that it grants presence and absence”(p.124). In this respect, it isn't Booker's savage proclamation or Sophia's assault that crushes her inner self, yet its lasting impacts of an existence presented to racialized and gendered beauty discourses covering up beneath futile post-racialism. In spite of recuperating from Sophia's assault, Bride keeps vanishing, which makes her express her devastated inner self, and the lasting impacts of her awful childhood, and the continuous effect of gendered beauty standards. She notices a slight change in her body, after her pubic hair' eradication, she finds "virgin ear lobes" (p. 51), hairless armpits (p. 52), “lighter weight” (p. 81), “completely flat” chest (p. 92) “like a botched mastectomy” (p. 95), and “a delayed menstrual period”, “contracting body”

(p. 93). As Bride basically discovers that, “the body changes began not simply after he left, but because he left” (p. 94), “Him, she thought. His curse”(p. 95). Every single transformation is associated with Booker, affirming the effect of a male-driven perception of beauty. In any case, Bride's obsession with Booker's presentation was influenced by that expression Booker used when he left Bride... “You not the women I want”, there lies a substantially bigger fundamental nullification of her womanhood. Bride's relapse to a confident Lula Ann distinctively outlines the notion that Kimberly Juanita Brown portrays as “the afterimage of slavery” (p. 18). To Brown, the powerlessness of black body brings together all discourses collectively which extends the measure of their malleability” (p. 191). On account of Bride, the reader can really picture this body “already in pieces,” the rejected bits of Lula Ann, the momentous covering of her body due to utilization, and her consequent shattering once again into pieces when Booker rejects her by saying “you not the woman I want”. She is shocked by the comment of Booker that she starts taking drugs and tries to console herself but fails. She has developed her personality in such a way that she has become that “Whoa!” “Oh, baby”, who is center of attraction and admiration. She confronts her afresh identity crisis and withdraws herself by regressing back and becoming the little black girl. Dancing and having sex with strangers but soon she gets tired of all these and sets off for California for identity quest. In her pursuit of identity she recognizes that people never cease to scorn and reject in every field of her life. She feels devolution of her body into ‘little Lula Ann’. The loss of her private and under arm hair and her virgin ear lobes vanishes, after admitting her crime of wrongfully convicting Sofia Huxley. She falls asleep and wakes up as ‘Bride’. Her body is again transformed into an adult. Generally identity tells us that what a person or a thing is. While looking at the identity from social point, it reflects the entity that a person holds

in the society, a societal constructed identity whether positive or negative, active or passive, collective or individual. Identity is “the fact of being who or what a person or thing is” and for the social identity what a person is in particular society. Similarly identity is “the state or fact of remaining the same one or ones, as under varying aspects or conditions” . Hence identity is the name of consistency, is Morrison subverting this notion of a consistent or stable identity in *God Help the Child*? Or in her characteristics of bride?. If someone is brave in various situations and if someone is unpredicted in one situation, he will remain unpredictable in the other situations.

In *God Help the Child*, the distinctive eradication since it is compared to the obliteration of racism like a nostalgic event, even though the scars were ambiguous remainders of past curses as still present in the new millennium. Tormented Bride's body serves a distinctive illustration with respect to the tenacious oppression against Black ladies. She faces steady assault, not simply in the ways her body relapses to that of a young lady after Booker passes by or is assaulted by Sophia, yet additionally by the arrangement of wounds she perseveres a short time later: a car accident prompting a broken leg (p. 88), mouth filled with blood (p. 105), a slap (p. 152), and a burn (p. 165). Furthermore, all of them are just the physiological scars. Yet her more profound scarring, similar to her baffling sickness, is undetectable, associated with mysterious unsaid facts.

Extending Butler's argument Byrne explores materialization of bodies by using the notion of ‘sexed because of the performative recurrence of norms’ (2000). Butler argues that when individuals are born, they undergo the process of gendering and become subjects, considering the biological interpellation which shifts the label of an infant from an ‘it’ to he/she, referring them into the language domain through this interpellation of gender. Naming the individuals goes through various centuries and

reinforcement of naturalized effect, setting boundaries and inculcation of gender norms of the society (Butler 1993, p.8). This procedure shapes the way the individuals go in society as well as their own psychological procedures, the goals and motivations. In this procedure, norms of heteronormativity are likewise settled. Men, women in fact all of them are made who accomplish whole hearted acceptance by getting attracted for the opposite gender. These norms are established because of the production of the subjects who define clearly to the subjects which are not - homosexuals. Butler's argument makes homosexuality type as the constitutive outside to heterosexuality and it is significantly important in defining the boundaries of what lies within the positions of these norms. On the contrary, one cannot be an individual without being identified as a boy or a girl; one cannot be an individual without getting an equally different embodied racial identification. Indeed one can be a white/ black/ Asian/ mixed-race girl or boy. Byrne writes that, process of gendering is racialised and so is sexualities but racing is gendered in this society. Authorities regulate the perception of race in any society; these subjects of the visual and visibility perception in different ways vary due to the positioning of subjects in dominant discourses of societies. Representation of perceptions becomes a modality of power for instance, the famous notion in the emerging field of "white studies" is perceived otherwise, because whiteness emerges by maintaining the power through its invisibility. Richard Dyer's early statement serves a popular function as a starting point: "White power secures its dominance by seeming not to be anything in particular" (Dyer 1988, p44). This statement is quite ironical in its nature as securing visible power dominance by maintaining its invisibility of subject. Yet the argument from a perception of dominance is that White people want whiteness to be looked and perceived as invisible. In an interview of African-American actor Samuel L. Jackson illustrates this

point when the journalist Simon Hattenstone was talking about how unlike black characters, white characters in films are not delimited by their whiteness because they just “happen to be white” but the incredible response of Samuel L. Jackson as Hattenstone writes that “Jackson laughs so loud that, when I’m playing back the tape on headphones a colleague jumps. That’s what you think. You just dismiss the fact they’re white”. Thus invisibility of whiteness is just a facet of white fantasies of white people. Visibility or invisibility of whiteness or any other subject in society is moderated by power. The consequences of either one depend on one’s position within normative establishment. In many different ways, the old and new notion of visibility and invisibility is discussed about. Dyer and others wrote about whiteness and its racial invisibility, they consider that invisibility ‘can potentially ensure the endurance of a position of privilege and power’. Whiteness remains unmarked in every domain, stays unchallenged. It refers to the unmarking of white people a racial group, white people are visible but whiteness is unmarked at least to white people and within normative discourses.

Toni Morrison, in her recent novel *God Help the Child*, contributes in subversion of these notions of white visibility and invisibility when she addresses the issue of child abuse in novel. Toni Morrison in *God Help the Child* tells us the story of a black girl who has been nurtured in the racist society by a high-yellow mother. Lula Ann Bridewell seeks love from her mother but she even stops her from calling her ‘mother’ or ‘mama’. Sweetness is the word that describes motherhood or motherly figure for her. She won’t have the right to call her mother. On same account she cannot be her mama’s daughter because Sweetness is afraid of the society and the shame having to acknowledge a black daughter. Bride seeks her mother’s love all her childhood; she was ready to do anything to feel her mother’s touch. She accused a

woman for child abuse and testified against her in order to gain sweetness' affection or love. At the event in the courtroom when Lula Ann was nervous, her eyes kept gazing sweetness, but her mother was worried about her reputation that Lula Ann may put her in shame, least worried about the stress and pressure her daughter was going through. She recalls that memory of her childhood and says that *only eight years of age was little Lula Ann when she testifies against Sofia Huxley*. She recalls herself as little Lula Ann at the courtroom because till that time she had not changed herself to be the part of the society but at the moment she lifted her arm at Sofia Huxley she started the struggle for her identity in the society, an identity to be accepted among who hated her color and race. This attempt of social acceptance of her, being a separate identity, was going to charge him huge price in future. She suffered a lot and realizes in the forest of California that she has been scorned and rejected by everyone. Bride makes a paradoxical personality and identity; she turns herself into the 'closet' to be the part of the society. She hides the truth and part of her personality to have the love of her mother and identity from the society. Bride remodels herself from black tar to black milk. She proves to be having a fluid identity when she turns fourteen. She leaves her house and changes her name first from Lula Ann Bridewell to Ann Bride and then just Bride. She struggles for her identity and in the job hunt meets Jeri, a designer, who asks her to wear only white. In the first instance, she is at shock to hear but later on realizes how many shades of white are available in the market. She indulges herself in love affair with Booker whom she never asked anything but told each and everything but did not reveal the part of her closetedness, whose walls she sprang around herself while testifying against Sofia Huxley.

Byrne discusses how race has become a modern taboo for white people. She interviewed people about the sensitive subject of race and noticed that her tape

recorder caused a sudden drop in volume while listening to the tapes of interviewees. She frustratingly needed to play it back again, leading to conception of dropping volume in which Byrne contributes by suggesting that dropping of volume occurs when someone addresses a sensitive issue or topic. To avoid being clichéd on the topic of racism, mostly white people tend not to be perceived as racist in the new millennium.

4.2 Racialized bodies

Like de Beauvoir, Morrison redefines the twenty-first-century's predicament of colourism as a struggle to pass. She further defines colourism in the context of milky to ebony color line, presenting the idea of being black, Sudanese black as beautiful. Lupita Nyong'o is famous black actress of twenty-first-century. Similar to *Bride* she is an ebony woman, was humiliated as a kid due to her tar black skin. Lupita is a black millennial who have coped to interest from the commodification and fetishization of being black as *Bride* did, by achieving agency, social mobility and greater financial success. It's worthwhile to observe that Morrison has definitely chosen a millennial vocalization to convey important information, that there's no evasion from past. For example, *Bride's* mother, Sweetness' great-great-grandmother, who passed for white turned, her back on her family. Sweetness herself seems like she is several generations separated from *Bride*, her voice in the novel floats in enigma of incogitable past. Morrison's rendition of Sweetness as a passing white captures the challenging pain of colourism and the psychological remains of the trauma of enslavement. *God Help the Child* reminds us about the continuous process of struggle and helps us to map out the consequences of not facing pain.

In Morrison's recent novel *God Help the Child*, her portrayal of the world in which the protagonist of the novel is a Black female character who suffers from a

phenomenon W. E. B. Du Bois characterized as double consciousness. He explained it as a segregation of the desire to accomplish their American Dream, but the least possibility of achieving it fully as African American women. As Du Bois explains in his seminal work *The Souls of Black Folk*, double-consciousness corresponds to “this sense of always looking at one’s self through the eyes of others” (p. 8). After a millennium later Du Bois profoundly explored gaze power and the internalization of racism. Morrison portrayed Bride’s mother as Sweetness who perceives her daughter using the vision of the racist society where they lived, she mentioned a peculiar word while mentioning her daughter, as a “pickaninny” (p. 5). The first chapter proves that the ailment of colourism is still affecting the new millennium. It narrates Sweetness’s attitude when she treats little Lula Ann, “I *had to* be strict, very strict. Lula Ann *needed to* learn how to behave, how to keep her head down and not to make trouble” (p. 7). Sweetness never realized that she was transferring her inner shame into her daughter because she educated her daughter in a very harsh and loathing environment. It goes almost unnoticeable, the way she was nurturing her daughter; but she perceived it all as Lula Ann’s tool for survival. For Sweetness, pacing Lula Ann's body is basically essential to keep her exploitation in the white stereotypical society. In the second section in which Sweetness is the narrator, she focuses again how she carried onto the prerequisite that: "I had to protect her" (p. 41, 43). She portrays a world "where you could be sent to a juvenile lockup for talking back or fighting in school, a world where you'd be the last one hired and the first one fired "(p. 40). Subsequent to seeing the scourge of white young boys on a little Black young lady, she legitimizes her extreme rude love as a way to teach her girl about what they call “skin privileges” (p. 43). Indeed, that girl alters her name to Bride and turns into an accomplished entrepreneur, Sweetness is as yet unequipped for reflecting the trauma

she incurred on her daughter in her childhood. She has contrition (p. 177), yet the praises she receives from herself for her little girl's prosperity: "Some of my schooling must have rubbed off" (p. 178). Loaded with logical inconsistencies, she accepts, a little bit, that the things have certainly changed in the new millennium when "blue blacks are all over TV, in fashion magazines, commercials, even starring in movies" (p. 177) but then despite everything she warns and notify about what might happen and "how the world is" and what it holds for a Black mother in this condition (p. 178). Caught between an enticing post-racialism and her internalized colourism, Sweetness stays in a condition of apprehended improvement. In spite of the fact that Sweetness' girl Bride is conceived in the 1990s, the entrapment of slavery is still undeniably present in this century. It is a commodification of the female body that influences it willingly to make it seem as we were living in a post-feminist's era, not requiring political activity in hope of gaining equality. As Goldman recommends, behind the appealing façade of freedom of decision, the advertising business recasts the black female body as a powerful object. In *God Help the Child*, behind the representation of an independent, self-made, prosperous female black character, there is a paradoxical subjection of racialized body enslaved to the requests of the market. Bride's first job interview prompts her position as advertising executive entrepreneur at Sylvia, Inc. Bride first got rejected in light of her appearance. She remodels herself after a critical makeover recommended by an outsider — Jeri, "a 'total person' designer" (p. 33) — in order to land the position and rapidly ascends in the company. Jeri advises her that "You should always wear white, Bride. Only white and all white all the time." (p. 33) and Black is the new black; fashionable only when packaged a definite way. Jeri objectifies bride's body, profusely explores in edible terms, and revolutionizes her into a defensible commodity (pp. 36– 39). "You're more Hershey's syrup than

licorice” once considered “too Black,” her skin makes people think of “whipped cream” and “chocolate soufflé,” or “Oreos”, or “Sable and ice” or “Bonbons. Hand-dipped.” (p. 33). Jeri’s extreme accessorizing procedure seems to predict that by all accounts there is solely one route for her Blackness to be adequate, reminding the crowd to think of desserts or of a “panther in snow” with “wolverine eyes” (p. 34). This self-molding infers those ways in which advertising inspires the fabrication of malleable female bodies. Expressions of Marita Sturken and Lisa Cartwright: “The world of advertisements uses language under the influence of self-administration, restraint, and conformity and Michel Foucault’s term about malleable and docile bodies —benefits on the bodies which are socially prepared, controlled, and managed by social standards (p. 216). Bride’s body seems caught in a perpetual advertisement that powers discretion and packaging to portray her Blackness valuable and profitable. Jeri remodels Bride which allows her to ascent “above” race developed around white supremacy when truly packed in whiteness. She decides to only dress in white so as to appear differently in relation to the shade of her skin by following her designer friend Jeri's recommendation. White outfits strengthen her visual commodification. What Bride; an executive entrepreneur perceives as “payback” or “glory” over past tormenting (p. 57) transforms her into what Jeri calls “the hottest commodity in the civilized world” (p. 36), still being called as commodity. Bride's body however is celebrated, appreciated for its bestial and palatable characteristics. Bride’s refashioning serves function of new type of marking, not as a tattoo of her master on the body of the slave to check it as dairy cattle, yet a demonstration of objectification engraved on the body as a commodity for utilization. Unlike Touré's idealized post-Black society, where forty million methods to own Blackness, Bride's over-ambitious body have two alternatives: unpacked Blackness prompting misuse or bundled

Blackness prompting fetishization. In both cases is there a Black subject post-or past-Blackness. Seen through this perspective, her remodeling as "Bride" proposes more than just changing and shortening of her "countryside name." It insinuates the need to wear bridal white to exemplify whiteness, regardless of whether just in garments, to enter the world of advertising.

CHAPTER 5

MILLENNIAL RISING

Black Panther has turned out to be the most significant blockbusters in the Marvel Cinematic Universe to date. Wesley Snipes revealed that they almost made *Black Panther* in 1992 however they had zero templates because of axiomatic white notions. Something that would be fascinate white people, black people, Asian people, that feature certain martial arts exposing the realm of Africa in ways that the majority was atypical with and exceptionally in contradiction of the stereotypes being projected regarding the continent. Race mattered in “Black Panther” in 1992 and it mattered deeply, but millennials have uplifted the society and bestowed social mobility to all, making it a post-racial era. The legendary film accentuated black fantasy, creation and emancipation, rendering into an emblem of denied past and an existing future. Black Panther grossed \$1 .3 billion worldwide with first black superhero lead of the new millennium. It destabilizes the notion of traditional superhero by portraying black eminence in millennial voice. Millennials emerged as a new generation by crossing all the global, traditional, cultural, social, racial and ethnic boundaries. Millennials who were Caucasian, Asian, coloured, black and queer, all made Black Panther earned more than Titanic- the master piece of Hollywood. As Greeks claim that “All is fluxed”, millennials fluxed these discourses in the society. All generations and nations regardless of their bloodline, ethnic and birth places, they are positioned in a position-less world which is not discursively identified but is present today.

The annihilation from the entrapment of old puritanical concepts, made up ethnic, cultural discourses and discourses of belongingness and rootedness carves out the trajectory of the new millennials. Morrison, in her recent novel *God Help the*

Child, explores the process of progression of millennials. The success stories of all black professionals, like Rachel Dolezal, Oprah Winfrey, Serena Williams, Barak Obama, Tiger woods and many others have given validity to millennials. Although, these all successful celebrities cannot be categorized as millennials but on the account of their efforts to obliterate racism, sexism, colourism and ethnicity... they managed to win overwhelming approval from the millennial generation. More than three-fourths of millennials approved of Obama's job performance in a mid-December Pew Center survey, surpassing even the previous high mark the group gave him huge support just after his first inauguration in 2009. On January 2009, the theme of inauguration was 'A new birth of freedom'. Obama's daily demonstration, as nation's first African American president, that race should not be a barrier to achievement has reinforced millennials' desire to include everyone in the group and to celebrate their own diversity. Like Alain Locke and his notion of the new negro, Morrison's millennial appraise diversity by embracing contemporary conception of blackness and seeing race as extremely fluid; offering new ways of thinking about gender, race, racial mobility, construction of identity and human embodiment. Morrison personified her view of millennial from the perspective of a young black woman, Lula Ann Bridewell, aka Bride. She embodies the entrepreneurial spirit of the millennial. She is millennial role model like Lupita Nyong'o, Cara Delevingne, Margot Robbie, Malala Yousafzai. Morrison's presentation of Bride allows her to redefine millennial identity, especially female sexuality, iconicity, economic success and social mobility.

5.1 Understanding a misunderstood generation

Often perceived assumptions like, Millennials are the most diversified, all-embracing, all-encompassing, tranquil, engaged, tutored, and idealistic generation ever. Or the most narcissistic, lethargic, entitled, coddled, skeptical, and inaccessible.

Or a great bunch of kids, who play amusingly with others, admire their parents, regard their elders and aspire to save the world. Since the turn of the new millennium, while they started a slow walk toward maturity, they have become a massive, glossy product of media hyperventilation, with their tattoos, contribution trophies, online dating rituals, selfies, selfies and selfies. Back in 2013, Stein expounded renowned titles used for millennial generation as lethargic and narcissists (Stein, p.1). In *God Help the Child*, the presentation of new black protagonist Bride is Morrison's take on the new millennial as she values diversity in embracing concepts of ethnicity, race and sexuality as extremely fluid and shapeshifting. Morrison's tales are genuine excavations of human identities, uncovering complex aspects of human soul and its psychic make-up if faced with versatile aspects of personality and sexual orientation. The prevalent assumption about millennials is reductive and limitizing as they are perceived as narcissistic, self-obsessed, lazy and even delusional. A pivotal objective of this study is to emphasize the risk of reducing millennials to some specific definitions because the term millennial is more complex, multifaceted, and all-embracing appellation. Morrison presents her concept of the new millennial from the perspective of a young black woman with social aspirations, Lula Ann Bridewell, aka Bride. Bride is a new role model who embodies the entrepreneurial spirit for economic success and social mobility. She disregards the conservative rules of sexual conduct and respectability which could distract her from achieving agency, social mobility and greater financial success. Bride as new millennial, challenges the traditional scripts of black women which limit these women's sexual autonomy and encourages the new generation towards sexual agency and entitlement/empowerment. . In many aspects , Bride's struggle for upward mobility in a racist and misogynist society like the States shares similarities with Pakistani millennial identities like

Qandeel Bloch . Qandeel was also, like Bride, unconcerned with the politics of respectability, which plays a pivotal role in constraining and policing the sexual behaviour of blackness, she seek self-expression and economic independence. Bride's celebration of her hard work, economic success, independence and self-expression hidden are central to Morrison's construction of the new millennial identities. This essay intends to review the evolution of the millennial identities at the dawn of 21st century by reminding that the iconoclast feminist of 20th century Simone de Beauvoir anticipated the arrival of such complex and multiple identities by way of comparative study with Morrison's *God Help the Child*. Like de Beauvoir, Morrison shows how society continues to construct the gendered identity of women at the dawn of the twenty-first-century. Morrison's concept of millennial identities encapsulates all kinds of queer identities, from bisexuals, gays, straights, to other forms of closeted or hidden identities. All these forms of multiple identities embody the spirit of the new millennial in their own unique fashion.

5.2 Ridiculously Optimistic Future of Business

The millennials express their subject position concerning their material achievement. It reaffirms upward mobility and success; assurance of the American Dream. It stands evident to the American democracy that one could achieve material success provided they work hard enough for it. As reported in a survey led by Forbes, some survey respondents said their professional career pursuit involves climbing the corporate ladder to be a CEO or president. By contrast, almost half of them said their goal involves establishing their own business. In contemporary societies, however, the locus of identity has shifted from these resources to the personalized level, emphasizing the role of achievement, authority, freedom, participation, and individuation in establishing one's identity. The organization becomes the primary

domain where individual-level necessities get expression. In today's scenario, hyper-individuation truly does or does not affect millennials greatly depend on their concepts of individualization. Hyper-individuation, a term formulated in the book, "*Nations of One*" by Lena Ericksen and Marc Shimazu, is particularly interesting, as it is probably the most fleshed out theories thus far. To expand this notion of individualization, the millennial is about courage, agency, personal glamour, insatiable carnal privilege, and an unquenchable enthusiastic thirst for success and above all, individual pride in their achievement (Toure, 79). In another survey documented on behalf of Dan Duffek of PFB Law, Professional Association, of millennials specifically, half of them wanted to initiate a business in the next six months assuming they had the assets to do so. Bride embodies the millennial work ethics as she is successful and pretty with an unflinching faith in her personal enterprise. She derives personal satisfaction from her personal accomplishments and endowments: "I have what I've worked for and I'm proud of myself, I really am" (53). In her desire to achieve racial/social mobility, she appears empowered from a more positive sense of self-reliance and self-respect. Like Alain Locke's New Negro, Morrison's millennial wishes to be known for her accomplishments as she carved out a prosperous career as an entrepreneur. She challenged the systematic oppression of Black people to cease the limited opportunity in employment hierarchies. In the novel *God Help the Child*, Morrison focuses our attention on Bride whom she casts as the new millennial. Bride is successful and pretty with an unflinching faith in personal enterprise. She believes in the work ethic, derives satisfaction from her physical endowments, and finds a source of racial pride within her own being. She carves out a successful career as an entrepreneur by challenging the systemic oppression of black women offered limited opportunities in employment hierarchies. Bride achieves her

agency and individuality by capitalising upon and wielding her blackness to her advantage. In her desire to achieve racial/social mobility, she successfully runs her cosmetics brand “YOU, GIRL: Cosmetics for Your Personal Millennium.” By casing Bride as a successful millennial, Morrison shows how women can emulate Bride and achieve success by proudly owning their physical endowments and by reclaiming bodies. Bride exemplifies the potential to rise, with a powerful and effective will to achieve economic success, even at the cost of romantic commitment or fulfillment. During her early career, she finds herself at the bottom of the employment hierarchy because of her skin colour. As she carves out a successful career in business, she encounters white hierarchies and structure of power on her upwardly mobile way. Qandeel in the same stance becomes the object of alliance, envy, prejudice and a source of professional rivalry for other Pakistani artists. Bride like Qandeel gives expression to her sexual fantasies and autoerotic impulses without being remorseful; both sabotaged their romantic fantasies to reclaim themselves as a successful figure.

God Help the Child recounts ways, an accomplished entrepreneur named Bride collapses when her boyfriend, Booker leaves her, signifies the frailty of the post-racial fallacy. Bride acquired the strength to reinvent and retitle herself, once at the age of sixteen from Lula Ann Bridewell to Ann Bride and then at the age of eighteen to simply Bride, with a view to get the job (p. 11). She changed her look to transform herself from a rejected little girl into a prosperous advertising manager who has a cosmetic makeup product line of named by her as YOU Girl. She remodeled herself from black tar to black milk to overcome the blackness of black in the society.

However, the psychological and consequently physiological transitions that emerge themselves after her splitting up with Booker, propose that her transformation was far more like a facade than just a freeing tactic. Booker's departure brings her

absent past back before Lula Ann's evolution into an accomplished Bride, a time period while she repeatedly confronted rejection on account of the ways her black epidermis was stigmatized, especially by her light-skinned parents. Bride's body disseminates consequently and so the walls between her past and present, this loop in the narrative between various instances support the way past prejudices continue to carve social and familial interactions. Whilst Touré praises post-black models including Obama is "rooted in but not restricted by Blackness," *God Help the Child* introduces readers including female figures whose lifestyle and outlook of one's self are specifically crafted by inner racism. As, the first chapter is named after the narrator, Sweetness gives us the means to access the complete view of Sweetness, her mother. Equally uprooted still imposed by her perception of Blackness, Sweetness internalizes racism moreover, eventually discriminates against her baby girl, Lula Ann/Bride. Sweetness explicitly condemns the segregation her parents endured even when in chapel, where they needed to use the holy bible "reserved for Negroes" p.4) even the real-estate discrimination which became problematic for her to look for flat/apartment house for Lula Ann and herself (p.6), but she fails to refer to her peculiar biases against her baby girl .

As millennials their impulses can find release in the heretofore forbidden and tabooed acts of construction of subjectivity. New black is Morrison's take on the new millennial in *God Help the Child*. In casting Bride as the new black and millennial, Morrison critiques the advocates of new black politics who downplay the importance of structural racial discrimination in the attainment of basic rights like education, medical care, and housing etc. The new black who celebrate their material success and enjoy their status quo fail to observe that individual material success does not always mean social equality and social justice (Yancy p. 179).

5.3 Rapid career advancement

According to the reports examined by Head foundation, Millennials from different regional capacities of the world resemble each other in outlook, attitude and targets. Like Morrison and her concept of the new black, Howe's concept of millennial generation values diversity by encompassing contemporary concepts of seeing race as fluid entity; offering novice ways of taking gender, race, sexual orientation, racial mobility and identity construction. Morrison affirms her concept of new black from the perspective of young black millennial woman, Lula Ann Bridewell aka Bride. Morrison reflects millennial rising with the help of Bride's character, who embodies the entrepreneurial spirit for economic success and social mobility. Morrison's representation of Bride involves her to redefine millennial identities especially black female millennial iconicity, sexuality and economic mobility.

Post racialism is over optimistic, utopian in its belief that treats people of all colour as equals and ensures that anyone can achieve American dream. Like millennials, the new black determines his/her strength in terms of his/her material achievements. It reiterates upward mobility and economic success, as a promise of American Dream. It validates testament to American democracy that anyone can accomplish material success if they work adequately for it. Millennials choose business profession like Bride to achieve personal enterprise in society. She finds work as an approach to personal progression and self-fulfillment as millennials are intrigued by "work hard, play hard" business tradition. As a millennial, Bride shoulders the burden of representing gendered legacy of black female identity like Baldwin expressed it as 'the burden of representation' which encompasses the load and oppression of blackness for all individually and collectively racial bodies

(Dyson). Bride befits the description of being a millennial, born and nurtured in the nineties; she evolves at the turn of new black era demarcated by pioneering black successes, especially in the wake of post-black era, a period delineated by escalation of new black celebrity culture (Fleetwood 58). Evolution in new black aesthetics of 1970s from black is beautiful into 'black is the new black' anticipates the new black just as millennials. The very protean and flexible nature of the new black and the millennials is an illustration of the black anticipatory aesthetics culminating in the expansion of multiculturalism. Bride comes of age at the concurrence of the evolution of the 1990s, shaping her identity as a millennial, making her a part of American fabric. Reclamation and appropriation of fluid and millennial nature of blackness is anticipated in Bride's character. Like millennials, the new black does not consider herself/himself impeded in seeking realisation of his/her ability to achieve American Dream.

Bride is an accomplished entrepreneur with an unshakeable faith in her personal enterprise. As black aesthetic slogan reads "I'm black and beautiful!" Bride embodies the black millennial spirit as she attains fulfilment from her personal achievements: "I have what I've worked for and am good at it. I am proud of myself, I really am" (53). Like Millennials, Bride believes in the work ethics, deriving satisfaction from her physical attributes and discovers a source of racial pride within her own personality. Like Alain Locke's new Negro, Bride feels empowered from a positive sense of "self-respect and self-reliance" (Locke *The New Negro* 10). In order to achieve professional acceleration she carves out a successful career as an entrepreneur by challenging the systemic oppression of black people offered limited opportunities in employment hierarchies. Like Millennials she wishes to be known for her accomplishments. Bride achieves her agency and individuality and her vibrant

personality eliminates anxiousness of becoming a victim of discrimination era. In her desire to achieve racial/social mobility, she successfully passes as the new black by capitalising upon and wielding her blackness to her advantage, as we shall see. The question of racial mobility is at the very core of the notion of passing for the new black. It highlights the passer's struggles for freedom from the limitations of racial categories and forms of social oppression, and success.

5.4 Millennial is the new Black

For Millennials, the suitable job must complement their individuality. They tend to be dubious concerning their potential to accomplish the same life style enjoyed by their parents. Millennials are responsive to workplace prestige along with the societal cues around it — in fact; they probably get influenced by the career possibilities of their friends and families. Whilst they submit main concern on accomplishing an economical and successful career, they desire to seek jobs where they can have personal match between them and ethos. Fear of being discriminated on the basis of sex, gender, ethnicity and orientation fails to cease their optimism about diversity in business. As a millennial, Bride exemplifies the potential and determination to achieve economic affluence by putting her romantic commitments and fulfillments at stake. Prior in her career, she considers herself at the bottom of social employment stratum because of her tar-black complexion but her tenaciousness eliminates redundant thoughts of giving up. As she carves out a prosperous career in business at Sylvia, Inc., she confronts power structures and white hierarchies on her way up in acquiring wealth and status in society. Like millennials, Bride becomes an object of affinity, desire, prejudice and provenance of professional rivalry for her friend/ white assistant, Brooklyn.

Bride remodels herself from black tar to black milk. She proves to be having a fluid identity when she turns fourteen. She leaves her house and changes her name first from Lula Ann Bridewell to Ann Bride and then just Bride. She struggles for her identity and in the job hunt meets Jeri, a designer, who asks her to wear only white. In the first instance, she is at shock to hear but later on realizes how many shades of white are available in the market. Reincarnation of Bride becomes the part of a gallery of famous iconic black celebrities. There is the generation of previous black female celebrities from Josephine Baker to Dianna Ross and Grace Jones, to mention a few, who, like Bride, had limited access to education and material resources. All of them struggled for fame and success, bestowing society with ideals of Post-black era. *Toni Morrison and the New Black* investigates Bride's rise as the new black in the light of post-black discourses to demonstrate the resemblance she bears to her celebrity precursors, like Grace Jones, and how she, like them, contends with the "colour fetish" or "color-ism," which Morrison describes as "reminiscent of slavery itself" (*The Origin of Others* ch.3).

The rise of the millennials has gained unprecedented momentum throughout the years, In face of the social inequality and lack of interest of the law implementation organizations, black, queer, fluid millennials have figured out how to dismiss the old idea of slavery. The opening part, itself entitled "Sweetness"; nothing is sweet about Sweetness' parenting and it reminds readers of the life in Sweet Home, the plantation in *Beloved*. Inspired by something which must have persuaded enslaved Margaret Garner to execute her own kid in the mid-1850s, as sweetness, she never needed Bride to experience all the disdain alone, she brought up Bride in ways that she should realize that she is inferior and docile that white Americans. Sweetness accuses Bride for having tar black skin, as though it was illogical by definition as

opposed to seen and depicted that route as a way to keep up racial hierarchies. Sweetness' internalized racialism and discrimination she endures and reproduces this system inside her family. She might not have the risk of being whipped or caught by one of his old masters, however she in any case needs to confront every day mortifications and invidious practices from which she is striving to "protect" (pp. 41, 43) Lula Ann. The striking resemblance between Morrison's novels (*God Help the child* and *beloved*) set millenniums apart just further fortify the feeling that the objectified Black bodies tortured and tormented during slavery and yet being unable to escape racial violence and objectification in the new millennium. To Lula Ann's light-skinned parents her body is untouchable, as though marked by sins for being "tar Black" (p. 144). For Sweetness and her husband Louis, colorism empowered them "to hold on to a little dignity" in a world that discriminated them otherwise (p. 4). Obviously, the best way to be Black and stay untouchable in order to survive for them is to have light skin, as though enabling them to be get white privileges. In their eyes, Lula Ann's birth disturbs their only access to the white privilege their light skin had managed them until at that point. Louis can't see Lula Ann as his own daughter. He just observes an anomaly, a frightful object, much like slave proprietors portray Black bodies in *Beloved*. Taking a glance at her, he shouts, "What the hell is this?" (p. 5). For him, she is "an enemy," which drives Sweetness to proclaim that Bride's birth "broke our marriage to pieces" (p. 5). Lula Ann's dark body is inadmissible for her parents, who censure each other for her darkness. More worried about their "dignity" in this present reality where the shade of your skin plainly appears to make difference (even by affiliation), her parents dismiss their part as overseers: her father relinquishes Lula Ann and Sweetness spends her life emotionally and physically maintaining distance from her. Section two, entitled "Bride" changes the tone to

hopefully depict a post-racial society. For a fleeting instance, it seems appropriate to put the past behind. Bride, for readers is really Lula Ann, Sweetness' little girl. An inspiring young lady, rejected due to her black skin, far from that neglected little Lula Ann, this lady appears to have everything, giving apprehension that in any part of life anyone can accomplish the American Dream. By then, Bride is a twenty-three year old regional manager in a small cosmetic company Sylvia. Inc., California. She is an independent Black lady living in her own luxurious apartment and owning an opulent car, who encapsulates the standards of a post-racial, and possibly a post-misogynistic society. She even subverts the old image of the Black woman as characterized by Patricia Hill Collins—as a high-accomplishing yet excessively decisive white collar Black woman executive who cannot get married definitely because of her castrating inclinations. Suffering from what Collins proposes is the isolation imposed on Black females, Bride keeps up control over her work-life balance. In her own words she is “hot” and “successful” and she is proud of her accomplishments (p. 11). Bride's character represents both the interest and the logical inconsistencies of post-feminist era. Bride feels accomplished only when she finds a way to objectify her blackness into her benefit. What appears like her freedom may be the more glamorous yet associated aspect of the commodification of her body. Without a doubt, after her change, Bride appears to abandon her past and embody the spirit of the new millennium where Black women can be aspiringly successful. Both her accomplishments and her dream to not let nostalgia become potent in future. In Robert Goldman's words: “the class of 'post-feminism' developed in 1980s to categorize a new era of women who underestimate the triumphs secured by their seniors, assuming their entitlement to impartial treatment both at home and in the work place, while persistently avoiding the tag of feminism” (p. 130).

It's worthwhile to observe that Morrison has definitely chosen a millennial vocalization to convey important information, that there's no evasion from past. For example, Bride's mother, Sweetness' great-great-grandmother, who passed for white turned, her back on her family. Sweetness herself seems like she is several generations separated from Bride, her voice in the novel floats in enigma of incogitable past. Morrison's rendition of Sweetness as a passing white captures the challenging pain of colourism and the psychological remains of the trauma of enslavement. *God Help the Child* reminds us about the continuous process of struggle and helps us to map out the consequences of not facing pain. This work intends to review the convolutions of the millennial identities at the dawn of 21st century. One of the basic contentions of this research is to provide in depth insight by the way of comparative study of Simone de Beauvoir and Judith Butler's perspective with Toni Morrison's *God Help the Child*. "One is not born, rather becomes a woman" differentiates sex from gender as it suggests that gender is a facet of identity acquired. Gender incorporates cultural meaning or interpretation of sex but it lacks closure properties of simple identity. Simone's exploration of gender as cultural construction imposed on identity can easily relate to identity constructions of 21st century in terms of being millennial. The terrible story of Bride explicates concepts of gendered identity in the ambience of designing a self while living in a misogynistic, marginalized, stereotypical racial community. *God Help the Child*, deals with contemporary issues of racial passing and the crossing of color line in the context of new millennial black aesthetics.

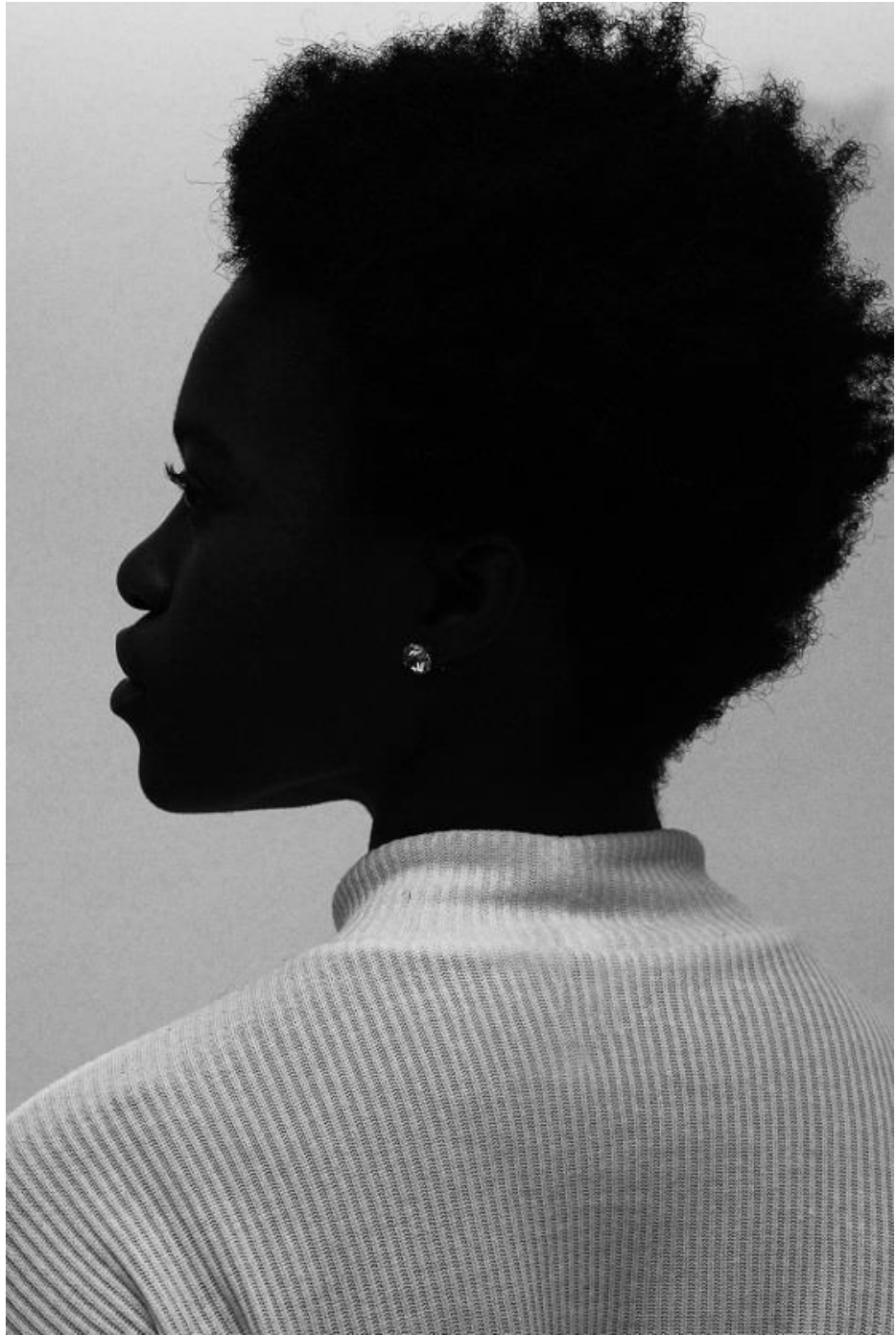


Figure 5.1: Opposition: A photograph captured by Yannis Davy Guibinga (2016)

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

This chapter concludes this research study, explaining aims and objectives along with research questions been discussed in order to analyze Morrison's latest novel *God Help the Child*.

6.1 Aims and Objectives

Followings are the aims and objectives of the study:

- To discuss the complexities and nuances of the millennial identities at the dawn of 21st century.
- To find patterns by explicating Simone de Beauvoir and Judith Bulter's perspectives of identities in Toni Morrison's recent novel *God Help the Child*.
- To demonstrate beauty industry and its complexities in Toni Morrison's *God Help the Child*.
- To bring in the politically, socially and sexually persecuted oppressed minorities or the subaltern identities, who do not necessarily occupy positions of acclaim and prestige and are struggling to create some space for themselves without giving in to existing societal norms and scripts.

6.2 Research Questions

Followings are the research questions of the study:

- How does Morrison reflect Millennial Rising in the *God Help the Child*?
- How does Simone de Beauvoir's perspective of identities relate to 21st century gendered, queer and closeted identities?
- How the queerness of identities and malleability of the black body, in fact all the bodies in *God Help the Child* has contemporary relevance to our society?

This research study talks about different aspects of multiple identities explicating with help of Bride's character. Morrison's latest novel *God Help the Child* has been used as a primary text. Research was conducted qualitatively, focusing on the theories of feminist arch; i.e. Beauvoir and Butler's notion of performativity of gender identities. Morrison in *God Help the Child* talks about prevalent racism in the new millennium. She explores black women's oppression and struggle with the perspective of a black girl who has been nurtured in the racist society by a high-yellow mother. Lula Ann Bridewell sought love from her mother but she even stopped her from calling her 'mother' or 'mama'. Bride was born nineties, making her a millennial. Bride became a successful entrepreneur but back in her childhood, she did not have the right to call her mother. On same account she could not be her mama's daughter because Sweetness was afraid of the society and the shame of having to acknowledge a black daughter.

Bride seeks her mother's love all her childhood; she was ready to do anything to feel her mother's touch. She accused a woman for child abuse and testified against her in order to gain sweetness' affection or love. At the event in the courtroom when Lula Ann was nervous, her eyes kept gazing sweetness, but her mother was worried about her reputation that Lula Ann may put her in shame, least worried about the stress and pressure her daughter was going through. She recalls that memory of her childhood and says that *only eight years of age was little Lula Ann when she testifies against Sofia Huxley*. She recalls herself as little Lula Ann at the courtroom because till that time she had not changed herself to be the part of the society but at the moment she lifted her arm at Sofia Huxley she started the struggle for her identity in the society, an identity to be accepted among who hated her color and race. This

attempt of social acceptance of her, being a separate identity, was going to charge him huge price in future. She suffered a lot and realizes in the forest of California that she has been scorned and rejected by everyone. She hides the truth and part of her personality to have the love of her mother and identity from the society. Bride remodels herself from black tar to black milk. She proves to be having a fluid identity when she turns fourteen. She leaves her house and changes her name first from Lula Ann Bridewell to Ann Bride and then just Bride. She struggles for her identity throughout her life.

Millennials are considered as smart, goal oriented and tech-savvy. One of the basic contentions of this research is to negate previously prevalent assumptions about millennial generation, which involves definition of millennials as lethargic and delusional. As a millennial, Bride exemplifies the potential and determination to achieve economic affluence by putting her romantic commitments and fulfillments at stake. Prior in her career, she considers herself at the bottom of social employment stratum because of her tar-black complexion but her tenaciousness eliminates redundant thoughts of giving up. As she carves out a prosperous career in business at Sylvia, Inc., she confronts power structures and white hierarchies on her way up in acquiring wealth and status in society. Like millennials, Bride becomes an object of affinity, desire, prejudice and provenance of professional rivalry for her friend/ white assistant.

This research can be regarded as a negation of all those prevalent assumption about millennials which are reductive and limitizing as they are perceived as narcissistic, self-obsessed, lazy and even delusional. Analysis of Bride as the new black millennial by applying it to our own milieu is to emphasize on their risk millennials being clichéd. This backed the hypothesis by demonstrating that the trope

of millennial, which stands for multiplicity of identities, emerges as a universal or transcendental signifier (which is confined to a certain culture, location or populace) that anyone can identify herself/himself with. The research contributes in understanding of the impact of human embodiment on one's identity as it involves the way you live and represent your identity in society. This study demonstrates that all identities in the new millennium embody the spirit of the new millennial in their own unique fashion. In addition, it reconnects the concept of identity explicated by Simone de Beauvoir at the turn of 20th century to Morrison's take on the 21st century's problem of colourism as a struggle to pass as a new millennial. It warns across the everlasting existence of colourism inside African-American groups and the dangerous impacts of our media. Any other fiction of Morrison can also be studied together with *God Help the Child*, following the same research methodology and objectives. This work provides understanding of racial passing presenting challenges to the meaning of race and conventional construction of racial identities in the new millennium. This research study is dually important because Morrison's attempt on the new millennial in *God Help the Child* talks about all subversive identities and its relevance to Pakistani society, as the new millennial women who appropriate aspects of identities which are non-conventional and perhaps multi or transcultural. For future researchers, this study provides a comparative knowledge about attributes of millennial generation. Morrison's novel talks about new black, new black aesthetics, childhood trauma and child abuse, mothering and other-mothering concept, passing of new black and post racialism. *God Help the Child*, is an enactment of multiple identities in the new millennium, creating a link to racism and aftermath of emancipation. Concept of gender identity given by Beauvoir in the dawn of 20th century connects portrayal of Bride's identity to Morrison's concept of identities at the turn of 21st century. This

research study can be used further while studying millennial identities. After-millennials can also be studied with reference to Bride's character, in relation to her business interests.

Every human practice more than one identity, involving impacts of different human personality on his/her individual identity. This research study explores various aspects of an individual's identity as it involves how someone lives and represents him/herself in the society. This study demonstrates that all identities in the new millennium personify the spirit of the millennial. In addition, this study expounds subversive notion of identity, which Simone de Beauvoir and later on Butler at the turn of 20th century to Morrison's take in the 21st century problem of colourism as a struggle to pass as a new millennial. It warns across the everlasting existence of colourism inside African-American groups and the dangerous impacts of our media. The identity of a person enclosed by a culture is a subject of matter encircling the humanities. The present study will extend existing knowledge about identities and their act of passing as the new millennial which resides in their ability to demolish gendered prejudice and stereotypes by establishing avenues of cross-racial understanding. This work will provide understanding of racial passing presenting challenges to the meaning of race and conventional construction of racial identities in the new millennium. This research study is dually important for future researchers because Morrison's attempt on the new millennial in *God Help the Child* talks about all subversive identities. Its relevance to Pakistani society, can answer further research questions as the new millennial women in Pakistan feel empowered and have more opportunities to occupy acclaim. Pakistani millennial women all over the world, represent the actual image a successful millennial who strive for work and prestige all their lives. Further researches can be conducted on Malala Yousafzai who holds same attributes as a millennial or Bride of *God Help the Child*.

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