

**MALE ABSENCE AND SINGLE PARENTHOOD IN BLACK WRITING: A
STUDY OF RICHARD WRIGHT'S *BLACK BOY*, TONI MORRISON'S
BELOVED, AND LAURETTA NGCOBO'S *CROSS OF GOLD***

BY

**SAMAILA, REBECCA SHANUM (MRS)
(MA/ARTS/08443/2008-2009)**

**A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL POST GRADUATE STUDIES,
AHMADU BELLO UNIVERSITY, ZARIA
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE
AWARD OF
MASTER OF ARTS DEGREE IN LITERATURE**

**DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH AND LITERARY STUDIES,
FACULTY OF ARTS**

FEBRUARY, 2014

Declaration

I hereby declare that the work in this thesis titled, “Male Absence and Single Parenthood in Black Writings: A Study of Richard Wright’s *Black Boy*, Toni Morrison’s *Beloved* and Laretta Ngcobo’s *Cross of Gold*” was performed by me in the Department of English and Literary Studies, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, under the supervision of Prof. T.A.N Abubakar and Dr. Abel Joseph.

The information derived from the literature has been duly acknowledged in the text and a list of references provided. No part of this work has been presented for another degree or diploma at any institution.

Samaila, Rebecca Shanum

Date

Certification

This thesis titled: “Male Absence and Single Parenthood in Black Writings: A Study of Richard Wright’s *Black Boy*, Toni Morrison’s *Beloved* and Laretta Ngcobo’s *Cross of Gold*” meets the regulations governing the award of the Degree of Masters of Arts in Literature, Ahmadu Bello University, and is approved for its contribution to knowledge and literary presentation.

Prof. T.A.N. Abubakar Chairman, Supervisory Committee	(Signature)	(Date)
--	-------------	--------

Dr. A. Joseph Member, Supervisory Committee	(Signature)	(Date)
--	-------------	--------

Dr. A.A. Liman Head of Department	(Signature)	(Date)
--------------------------------------	-------------	--------

Prof. A.A. Joshua Dean, School of Postgraduate Studies	(Signature)	(Date)
---	-------------	--------

Dedication

This work is dedicated to Almighty God for His faithfulness and the life-changing training He gave me in the course of this study. Also, to the memory of my late father whose love for knowledge and godly counsel has brought me this far.

Acknowledgements

It is and has been no one but you LORD!!! I will never forget your benefit through these challenging years; may my love and commitment to YOU never wax cold in Jesus name.

I owe a lot to many people whose contributions and support made this study a success. Although space will not permit me to list every contributor's name, I express my appreciation to my able supervisors; Prof. T.A.N. Abubakar and Dr. A. Joseph for their guidance, commitment and cooperation which enhance the completion of this research in good time. Sirs, may the Lord honour your efforts by equally committing Himself to address all that concerns you in Jesus name. To all academic and non-academic staff of the Department, particularly, Dr. E.S. Akuso who has been a father and constant encouragement to me and Dr. O. Keston, Dr. E. Abah, Prof. A.A. Aliyu, Dr. Mrs. S.O. Omokore, Mal. Maiwada, Mal. Bappah, Mal. Rabi, Prof. E. Idegu, Dr. A. A. Liman, Oga Steve, Mr. O. Ekpeme, Dr. Abaya, Mr. D. Fwanshishak and Mr. Ambi, your individual support, contributions and encouragement towards the success of this work, will ever be remembered.

To my husband, friend, companion, love and eminent encourager, I will live to remember every benefit, uncommon speed and courage that your trust, confidence, support and understanding have brought to me at the challenging moments of this study. Though many God-fearing husbands have done well but you remain the best of them all. Also, to my dear mother, I appreciate the fact that you always stand prayerfully in the gap for me. May the success realized by your committed prayers be richly rewarded in Jesus name. To Obed, my little angel, your coming has crowned the essence of this study. I

pray that God will give your Daddy and I the grace to parent you maximally in Jesus name.

To all my in-laws and especially Doofan and Emmy Nyon, your timely responses to my needs and encouraging text messages have greatly strengthen me. You are indeed, the very replacement of my siblings – Martha and Emmanuel Samaila. May God continue to strengthen you in all things.

To my siblings, I sincerely appreciate the zeal and encouragement which your concerted support has offered me through this journey so far. May the spirit of love, togetherness and help inculcated in the family remain an ever green shelter to all our acquaintances in Jesus name, amen. To the Zaria discipleship team and especially my discipler, Dr. E. Kogi, I will eternally remain grateful for the love, attention, advice and parental care I received from you and your wife; even the acceptance I enjoyed among your children has been a source of strength and comfort to me in the challenging moments of this study. I pray that your efforts be richly rewarded in Jesus name.

I am equally grateful to Mr. and Mrs. Yahaya who like the Kogis have given me reason to appreciate God's faithfulness and ever-present care in my life. For everything you have done which has immensely contributed to the successful completion of this study, I pray that God remembers you in all things and cause your children to always find help wherever they go in Jesus name.

Abstract

This study employs Realism as an analytical tool to assess the various dimensions of male absence and single parenthood in Richard Wright's Black Boy (1945), Toni Morrison's Beloved (1987) and Laurreta Ngcobo's Cross of Gold (1981). This research is thus a comparative study of male absence and single parenthood in Black writing in the United States and South Africa. The study posits that the spread of male absence and single parenthood (female-headed homes) among African Americans and Black South Africans are not unconnected with the socio-historical events experienced in the United States and South Africa respectively. Whereas African American men are generally considered and presented as deliberate deserters due to their inability to handle their sole provider responsibility, male absence and single parenthood among Black South Africans largely results from men's response to familial needs which usually takes them to the mines in urban areas as well as other governmental policies basically designed to blow especially black families into fragments.

Table of Contents

COVER PAGE -----	i
DECLARATION -----	ii
CERTIFICATION -----	iii
DEDICATION -----	iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS -----	v
ABSTRACT -----	vii
TABLE OF CONTENTS -----	viii
1.0 CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION -----	1
1.1 General Background -----	1
1.2 Statement of Problem -----	4
1.3 Aims and Objectives -----	6
1.4 Methodology -----	7
1.5 Scope and Delimitation -----	7
1.6 Justification of Study -----	8
1.7 Male Absence and Single Parenthood in African American Families -----	9
1.8 Male Absence and Single Parenthood in Black South African Families -----	17
1.9 Realism as Theoretical Framework -----	26
1.10 Literature Review -----	40
Works Cited -----	60
2.0 CHAPTER TWO: ABSENCE AND SINGLE PARENTHOOD IN AFRICAN AMERICAN FAMILIES IN RICHARD WRIGHT'S <i>BLACK BOY</i> AND TONI MORRISON'S <i>BELOVED</i> -----	73

2.1	Introduction	73
2.2	Male Absence and Single Parenthood in African American Families	74
2.3	Divergent Views on Male Absence and Single Parenthood in Richard Wright's <i>Black Boy</i> and Toni Morrison's <i>Beloved</i>	95
	Works Cited	100
3.0	CHAPTER THREE: RACIAL DISCRIMINATION AND THE DISRUPTION OF BLACK SOUTH AFRICAN FAMILIES IN LAURETTA NGCOBO'S <i>CROSS OF GOLD</i>	105
3.1	Introduction	105
3.2	Racial Discrimination and the Disruption of Black South African Families	106
	Works Cited	125
4.0	CHAPTER FOUR: BLACK WRITING AND THE UNIVERSALITY OF HUMAN EXPERIENCE	127
	Works Cited	139
5.0	CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION	141
	BIBLIOGRAPHY	145

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 General Introduction

This research examines, from a comparative perspective, the preoccupation, through the novel genre, of three Black writers: Richard Wright, Toni Morrison and Lauretta Ngcobo with male absence and single parenthood in Black families. The study establishes the relationship between male absence and single parenthood from the perspective of single parenthood or female-headed household as a byproduct of male absence. The study also shows how the various deployments of male absence and single parenthood signify an exploration of a typical and universal human experience by the three writers. The study adopts realism as a theoretical tool to assess the life-like dimension to the subject matter in the texts under preview.

The terms Blacks or Black people are used in systems of racial classification for humans of a dark skinned phenotype, relative to other racial groups. However, in both the United States and South Africa, the racial classification also refers to people with all possible kinds of skin pigmentation from the darkest through to the very light skin colours, including albinos, if they are believed by others to have African ancestry and exhibit cultural traits associated with being “African-American” (Westminster, 2011). The people of African and West Indian origin, with dark skin are equally classified under similar umbrella words – Blacks or Black people (Kankan, 2009).

Although there is scarcely any uniform conclusion on the definition, nature and scope of Black writing, this study holds that among other African writing, African-

American and Black South African literature connotes Black writing which reflects Black experience in its entirety. Like other issues featured in Black writings, the exploration of male absence and single parenthood is contingent upon those socio-historical processes which generate Black experience.

Simply put, 'male absence' entails the lack of or absence of a male figure from the home, family and other terrains of socialization. It entails an event where a father is physically present, but emotionally absent, or physically absent, but emotionally supportive (Richter and Morrell, 2006). That is to say, male absence can be physical, emotional or psychological. Therefore, male or paternal absence is shaped by death, divorce, imprisonment, migration or migrant labour, desertion and military service among others. Single parenthood on the other hand, implies the state of being a single, lone or solo parent (mother or father) who is "responsible for the care of one or more children under the age of eighteen (and above) within such a family" (Amato, 2000). Although, the family unit is frequently identified on the basis of shared residential space and the presence of emotional bonds and support relationships among members, the fact that it is greatly influenced by the recurring challenges of male absence and single parenthood illustrates the importance of historical issues in kinship and social relationship.

The institutions of slavery and colonialism not only constitute the major markers of the general history of the African-Americans and Black South Africans, but they significantly create the cushions upon which the disruptions experienced within most Black families are enhanced. Among others, these sociohistorical incidents include: the displacement of kinsmen (through migration and transatlantic slave trade); incarceration

and detention, escapes from slave plantations, poverty and unemployment (as a result of racism or illiteracy), disillusionment (which results in irresponsible acts like drunkenness, recklessness, squalor etc) and subsequent deaths, sometimes natural or as a result of violence.

With the permeation of these factors in the United States and South Africa, the two settings predictably manifest successions of male absence and single parenthood among other familial challenges. Although male absence among African-Americans is perceived from the perspective of deliberate desertion, usually due to men's inability to measure up to their sole provider responsibility, however, absence among Black South African men largely results from their response to the imposed taxes placed on especially rural dwellers and the need to fend for impoverished family members through job search in the mines. More so, further reasons for the proliferation of female-headed households in South Africa include the fact that:

(The denial of paternity) is caused by different things. Maybe you are in love with someone you don't trust, maybe you met her at a bash (street party) or at bad places like that, maybe you become lovers when she already had someone else. When you slept with her then maybe she was pregnant already.... and when you count the date that she slept with you if you are clever, you will see that its not yours especially if you don't trust her. Sometimes the reason (for denial) is because you are scared of your family what are they going to say or do about a child? Maybe you are still in school, so you have to leave school to work in order to support the baby. Sometimes you don't deny your baby because you want to but because of the situation. (Hunter, 2006:104)

Herein are highlights of other possibilities which foster the spread of male absence and their lack of commitment to parenting. The outlined factors are reminiscent of the 19th century industrialization and economic recess introduced by sexual liberation

thereby promoting promiscuity and a drastic decline in marital relationship. But for these developments and the fear of the society's reaction to single fatherhood, the above perspective suggests that such fathers would rather consider participating in their children's upbringing than neglect it. Despite the pressing challenges threatening their positions as family heads the passive and irresponsible attitude exerted by some men also render insignificant the value of their presence in the home.

1.2 Statement of Problem

The spread of female-headed homes is one among several burning issues yet attracting heated debates in the United States and South Africa among other nations. Whereas, social scientists like Gary Becker and William Julius Wilson, seek to explain the persistent change in single-parent families through the twentieth century however, they could not register any reason behind the spread, 'much less on why it spreads faster in some societies than others' (Ellwood and Jencks, 2002). On the other hand, some critics deployed feminist cum gender discourse in establishing their hypothesis on the same subject. Female writers like Morrison and Ngcobo among others, who focused on similar issues, are nonetheless branded feminists in their approach.

Severally, studies on Black experience in the United States and South Africa give credence to familiar themes as: slavery, colonialism, racism, emancipation, Black consciousness, the American dream, alienation, apartheid, Sharpeville and migration to mention but few. For example, the article on Ernest Gaines' *The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman* focuses on the emancipation of slaves and the lives of Blacks in America (Wertheim, 1982). Through the instrumentality of Bessie Heads' works, burning issues as

protest, commitment and liberation in apartheid South Africa are discussed (Ogwude, 1989). Also, another study on African-Americans' family, however evaluates male absence and female presence in the context of how generational continuity is enforced by single mothers (Abah, 2006). In other words, the paper focuses on the influence of (single) mothers on especially their daughters in Black families. More so, a sociological approach simply links most delinquent behavior by the African American male adolescents to the 'inadequacies' of single female parent in Black homesteads (Mallie *et al*, 2003). A further discourse on single parents in Africa particularly considers the causes of single parenthood as such that is true everywhere and resulting from separation or divorce, death, and pregnancy outside wedlock, imprisonment, migration and so on (Agarwal, 2008). To this end, the fact that not much attention is paid to the theme of male absence and single parenthood in the two contexts under study makes this study worth doing.

This study harnesses the causative dimension to male absence and single parenthood within the context of African-American and Black South African homesteads. By so doing, the study equally links the thematic and stylistic elements of African literature on male absence and single parenthood in United States and South Africa. This approach establishes the universality of human experience. The study also discusses the subject matter as a realistic perception of the socio-historical events which generally cripple Black men (in the US and SA) and threaten their position as family heads. By this, the relationship between art and society is further established. In essence, this study is based on the following three propositions:

- The socio-historical events which trigger male absence and single parenthood among the African Americans and Black South Africans have adverse effect(s) on the survival of black homesteads in the selected novels under preview.
- Although male absence is prerequisite to single parenthood there exist areas of convergence and divergence in the issues raised by the three authors on male absence and female-headed households in the settings under preview.
- The realistic deployment of male absence and single parenthood as black experience signifies the universality of human experience in the three novels and social contexts under preview.

1.3 Aim and Objectives

This study undertakes a comparative analysis of male absence and single parenthood in the novels of Wright, Morrison and Ngcobo. The aim of a comparative study is to help people “achieve an accurate and deep understanding of one another and help to find terms and concepts by means of which they could explain themselves to one another and understand one another” (Adogbo and Ojo, 2003:16). Thus, this study attempts to foster the integration of Black people’s emotion and psychology through the exploration of male absence and single parenthood by selected African-American and Black South African writers. The objectives of the study are to illustrate that:

- There is a congruence of the thematic and stylistic elements on male absence and single parenthood in African-American and Black South African literature.
- Realism is an appropriated narrative and aesthetic mode for signifying the extent to which male absence and single parenthood constitute a universal human experience.

- Wright, Morrison and Ngcobo employ the instrumentality of the novel form in revealing how literature illuminates social issues and signifies the pulse of the society.

1.4 Methodology

This study deploys qualitative research which applies to any discipline that directly or indirectly involves human behavior and action. The study gives detailed description and explanation of the phenomenon studied using a library research which analyzes existing texts. Therefore, the novels of Richard Wright, Toni Morrison and Lauretta Ngcobo are examined as primary data. The socio-political and historical experiences of the African-Americans and Black South Africans constitute the ground work upon which the analysis and arguments of the research are based. The study also utilizes secondary materials in form of existing literatures like: books, articles, magazines, journals, and interviews among other unpublished works. The library and internet with related knowledge also constitute relevant materials consulted for this study.

1.5 Scope and Delimitation

Although, there are Black people in countries other than the U.S. and South Africa, this study focuses on African-Americans and Black South Africans. Being that Black men equally form the group of single parents in both societies, this study simply considers Black women with regards to single parenthood. This is because statistics have shown a larger number of affected Black women compared to men. Granting, it would

have been suitable to simply concentrate on single parenthood within the context of marriage, the fact recent research has established a growing number of out-of-wedlock and teenage pregnancies extends the compass of this work to other contexts of parenthood. Realism is adopted as analytical tool to explore the 'life-like' disposition of male absence and single parenthood in Black writing. Whereas, there are diverse angles through which this study can be explored, this research only focuses on the affinity between the thematic and stylistic elements on male absence and single parenthood in African-American and Black South African literature. Although, other African-American and Black South African novels also discuss issues that pertain to male absence and single parenthood, the choice of *Black Boy*, *Beloved* and *Cross of Gold* revolves around their suitability in handling the issue at hand.

1.6 Justification of Study

The justification of this study revolves around its linking of African-American and Black South African themes and styles, despite the variation in their socio-historical experiences, especially of slavery and settlers colonialism, respectively. This establishes the universality of human experience which in turn reduces the world to a global village. Besides discussing the proximity of other themes and styles in both societies, there is little or no comparative study done on the authors in perspective, especially with regards to the discourse on male absence and single parenthood in Black writing. Although, there are other texts that can equally suffice for this work, the selected texts are simply considered significant in that they discuss issues from the perspectives of Black male and female authors with specific experiences capable of fostering an understanding of the

problem at hand. Also, the suitability the texts lie in the researcher's preference of the authors and how vivid they explore the subject matter the texts under preview.

1.7 Male Absence and Single Parenthood in African Americans' Families

Besides rage or lust, African-American men are not only regarded as sociological constructs and media caricatures among other stereotypes, but they are basically depicted as symbols of fatherlessness and seldom emotionally embodied people. They are rarely depicted as deeply embedded within and essential to their families of procreation. On the basis that African-American men are also known for producing children they hardly father, their worth is weighed on the scale of verbs instead of nouns (Coles and Green, 2009). While addressing a packed congregation at one of the city largest Black churches, Barack Obama also invoked his absent father to deliver a sharp message to African-American men, saying, "We need fathers to realize that responsibility doesn't just end at conception. That doesn't just make you a father. What makes you a man is not the ability to have a child. Any fool can have a child. That doesn't make you a father. It's the courage to raise a child that makes you a father" (Bosman, 2008). To this end, the "stereotype is so pervasive that when Black men are seen parenting ... they are virtually offered a Nobel Prize" (Neal, 2005).

Similar to the projection of their flaws in fatherhood, African-American men are known for 'absence' where parenting is concerned. Therefore, male absence as a concept which implies a father's 'nonresidence' with his child, the mother or both, sometimes connotes 'invisibility' (by death or imprisonment) and 'noninvolvement'. Whereas male

absence both exists within and outside marriage to the woman, its end result is usually single parenthood (Define the Scope and Problem of Adolescent Pregnancy, 2010).

Therefore, single parenthood is a term which suggests the state of “one parent (who) has most of the day to day responsibility in the raising of the child or children. Single parenthood may occur for a variety of reasons. A few possible scenarios are by choice, as in divorce, adoption, artificial insemination, surrogate motherhood, while others are the result of an unforeseeable occurrence, such as death, child abuse, child neglect, or abandonment by biological parents.” More so, the essence of this study on women as single parent is enhanced by the statistics which show that “19 percent of Black households were female-headed with children, the highest of all racial groups. And from the perspective of children’s living arrangements over 50 percent of African-American children lived in mother-only household” (Coles and Green, 2009). As earlier highlighted, this evidently shows that it takes the absence of men from the home as well as their paternal responsibility to have an increased number of female single parents. Similarly, the National Urban League (NUL) President, Marc Morial in NUL’s annual State of Black America address says; “Black men are more than six times more likely than White men to be incarcerated and their average jail sentences tend to be 10 months longer than those of White men. At the end of 2001, 16.5 percent of the Black male population had been to prison compared to 7.7 percent of Hispanic and 2.7 percent of White men. Young Black males between the ages of 15 and 34 years are nine times more likely to be killed by firearms and nearly eight times as likely to suffer from AIDS” (Morial, 2011). This statistics involving early death and incarceration rates among Black

males of child-rearing age also suggests that most Black single-parents among the African-Americans are women.

In view of this, recent studies also capture the extent to which the challenge of male absence and single parenthood both attract the attention of scholars as well as constitute a subject of heated debates in the U.S. among other societies. Thus, the transformations of the American society from an agricultural to an industrial economy and, more recently, from an industrial to a service economy entailed adjustments in the timing of marriage, family structure, and the dynamics of family life” (Coles and Green, 2009). This establishes an angle to the debates which focus on the degree of influence that trends of transformation (historical, economic, and demographic) had on the African-American families in recent decades. To begin with, an initial instance of instability, separation and displacement in the African-American families finds expression in the circumstances that surround the advent of the first (English-speaking) Africans in British North America. Therefore:

(Being)...bought to work as (indentured) laborers, they arrived at Jamestown, Virginia, in 1619, aboard a Dutch slave ship (mayflower). Only twenty in number, including at least three women ... had survived the desperate Middle Passage from their home-land to America, a voyage so harsh that it is estimated that one in eight Africans died in transit without ever reaching the slave markets of the new world (Gates and McKay, 1997).

The loss of spouses witnessed by the African survivors in the cause of trans-Atlantic slave trade registers an off-shoot of male absence among the African-Americans. Subsequently, “it was in the New World, particularly in what became the United States that new conditions of life destroyed the significance of their African heritage and caused new habits and attitudes to develop to meet new situation” (Franklin, 1957). As a source

of historical transformation in the African-American society, the changes experienced by African-Americans include the expected and idealized roles of fathers in the family.

In addition, the challenge of male absence and single parenthood also gain currency from the aspect of African-American history wherein “the perceived value of Black women was situated in their capacity to breed, to literally reproduce chattel slavery from their wombs either voluntarily or involuntarily” (Morrison, 1987). To this end, slave masters who desire to own more slaves without having the means of acquiring them, coerced the opposite sex among their Black slaves into the business of procreation. Thus:

Mr. Covey was a poor man; he was just commencing life; he was only able to buy one slave; and, shocking is the fact, he bought her, as he said for a breeder. This woman was named Caroline. ... She was a large, able-bodied woman, about twenty years old. She had already given birth to one child, which proved her to be just what he wanted. ... He hired her to a married man ... to live with him one year; and him he used to fasten up with her every night! The result was ... the miserable woman gave birth to twins... the children are regarded as being quite an addition to his wealth (Douglass, 1997: 339).

The above speaks of the plight as well as helplessness of African-American women during slavery. The situation also implies that whereas male absence can be perceived in the absence of paternal responsibility by such Black men; it is also obvious that slave narratives depicts slave experiences which “fill in the gabs and silences about African-American history and identity” (Morrison, 1987). More so, single parenthood results from such women’s responsibility in bringing up the children single handedly. Thus, this validates the social theorists’ summation that, “slavery resulted in disorganization and instability in Black families” (Ruggles, 1994). Though the modern perspective of this scenario excludes involuntary copulation, it specifically involves the coming together of two unmarried partners but the result is classified under single

parenthood by choice. The high level of divorce in the late 1960s, the increasing numbers of single parent families, the changes in public attitudes about a couple staying together, and single parenthood which in itself has ceased from being stigmatizing simply summarizes related issues which foster the decline in marriage. This is because “in the early 1960s, 80% of the public agreed that “a couple should stay together.” By the 1980s, agreement with that statement dropped to 50%. Few scenarios where parents were obliged to stay together for the sake of the children manifested. Therefore, in 1995 half of the women in their thirties had lived in a cohabiting relationship. The proportion of 40-44 year olds who ever lived in a cohabiting relationship increased by over one-third from 1987 as younger cohorts aged into this category” (Bumpass, 1999).

Indeed, the emergence of new social structures like male absence and single parenthood not only become a common occurrence among the African-Americans, but it has been on the rise for several decades. The history of the first half of the 1900s reveals the likelihood that though many men had trouble fulfilling their idealized roles despite the legal buttress of patriarchy, it was surely difficult for African-American men to fulfill these roles in an environment of slavery, segregation, and, even today, more modern forms of (racial) discrimination (LaRossa, 1997). A recent comparison of the socioeconomic status of Black and White fathers in the U.S. simply illustrates some of the disadvantages Black fathers must surmount to fulfill fathering expectations. Therefore, in “1998, 25.5 percent of Black fathers were un- or underemployed, while 17.4 percent of White fathers fell into that category. Nearly 23 percent of Black fathers’ income was half of the poverty threshold, while 15 percent of White fathers had incomes that low” (Hernandez and Brandon, 2002). Despite the portrayal of how the African-

American employment can be highly concentrated in blue-collar jobs, this also confirms that the economic restructuring has harsher implications for Black communities and families (Nelson, 2004).

Prior to the emancipation period which ushered in an illusion of freedom, the American Civil and Vietnam War era also witnessed a mass participation of Black men in the war front. This implies that many Black fathers are of course absent because they were equally in service. Similarly, women whose husbands were not only up at the front, but got killed in action automatically had single parenthood to grapple with (Lamb, 1996).

Alongside other challenges, the above situation “directly and indirectly” exposes African-American men “to continued lower life expectancy, higher mortality, and, hence, a skewed gender ratio that leaves Black women outnumbering Black men by the age of eighteen.” The declining marriage trend in the U.S. surfaces in the fact that African Americans postpone marriage by two to four years over the last decades; they also estimate that “only 64 percent of Blacks born from 1960 through 1964 will eventually marry.” This is because Unmarried “sex was accelerated by the availability of oral contraceptives in the 1960s. The percentage of metropolitan males between ages 17 and 19 who had ever had sex increased from 66% in 1979 to 76% in 1988 and decreased to 68% in 1995. This is affected by a number of variables so that things like parental education, family status matter, but those effects are largely matters of timing whether teen sex begins at 14, 15, or 16 rather than at later times when developmental readiness may be more appropriate” (Goldstein and Kenney, 2001). This explains why the significance of marriage for sex is fast disappearing (Ku *et al*, 1998). Despite the

complexities of Black men's challenges which result in their absence, Ruas re-echoes Morrison's view which reveals that:

Men identify with their ability to work and take care of the people they are responsible for. People are what they do rather than who they are... that is devastating for the maleness of a man. So the women have the domestic burden of trying to keep things going, on the one hand, and also protecting the male from the knowledge by giving him little places in which he can perform his male rituals, his male rites, whether its drunkenness, arrogance, violence, or running away. It is a kind of fraudulent freedom and destructive perhaps. The man is not free to choose his responsibilities. He is only responsible for what somebody has handed him (Abah, 2006).

Besides highlighting other reasons behind Black men's inability to succeed as family heads, this also reiterates the summation that Black experience in America is unique in that men are disadvantaged and estranged by "their special history which began in subjugation, continued in separation, and persists to this day under various forms of segregation; least foreign because, ironically, having been cut off from their roots, they had few guides but those of the master and his agents" (Rose, 1974). In spite of this, an increased number of single mothers struggle to chart a better course for their families. Thus:

Women like the writer, Harriet Jacobs attempted to reconstruct their shattered lives and families, while creating a space for themselves to enjoy their freedom. To gain control over their labour, black washerwomen and domestic workers in Atlanta organized to raise their wages through strikes and demonstrations. In South Carolina, black women took a leading role in negotiating labour arrangements with their former masters Out of this movement to reclaim themselves and their families, black community... grew (Whitaker, 2010).

The commitment exerted by women who strive to sustain their families clearly confirms their position as family heads. Also, their strength is further expressed in the triumphant story of a single mother- Ms. Corrette Scott King who despite "the

assassination of her husband (Dr. Martin Luther King), successfully raise Martin and her four young children single-handedly. A single mother of 4 with everyday challenges was determined to overcome what men thought was a defeat. Thus, Ms. Coretta Scott King continued Dr. Martin Luther King's legacy by establishing the King Center." The fact that she had the wherewithal to successfully raise her kids and start the center which today spans across 23-acres within months of her husband's assassination serves as a testament to single mothers' courage and strength (Why Single Mothers, 2010).

On the contrary, while it is a major factor in the well-being of both adults and children, the stability of family life is obviously decreasing. Single-parents (mothers) and multiple families during childhood are inescapable facts of the African-American life. Therefore, where a single mother constitutes the single financial provider; who works full time; and even takes more than one job or often does the work of three people on any given day, she is most often than not at greater risk for depression. Thus, "depression ... interferes with (her) their ability to parent, seek education and employment as well as significantly affects the entire families' quality of life." Although this generally results from the absurd situation that usually confront single mothers, the low- income single mothers more often than not report a higher level of depressive symptoms including negative thinking and chronic stressors (Why Single Mothers, 2010).

More so, the higher mortality rate and lower life expectancy of men affect the timeline of parenting. Parental absence was over five times more frequent among Blacks in the late nineteen and early twentieth centuries. Thus, 23 percent of underage five children resided without a father. Also, the African American pattern of residence with a single parent did not usually result from the departure or death of a parent; in most cases,

only one parent is present from a very early age (Ruggles, 1994: 143). Consequently, “about half of all children will spend time in a single parent family. The probability that a child will experience family disruption has increased because of the experience of living in cohabiting families. To this end, the proportion of children living in married families has declined while the proportion living in cohabiting families has increased” (Bumpass, 1999).

Another event which equally affects the family unit involves an increase in the employment of (single) mothers of infants, which is now over 50%. In spite of the “enormous difficulties of arranging childcare for infants, this is driven heavily by market forces and economic need in the sense of the relative preference placed on competing values in our society for vocational over family priorities” (Bumpass, 1999).

On the whole, the adolescent pregnancy rate is 41.7 per 1000 females. Despite that the declining rate is at the historic lows, the United States continues to have one of the highest levels of adolescent childbearing among industrialized nations. Also, some factors that contribute to high teenage pregnancy rate include: first experience with sexual intercourse at earlier age; lack of knowledge about conception; inaccessibility of contraception; lessened stigma associated with adolescent pregnancy in some populations; poverty; early school failure and childhood sexual abuse and so on.

1.8 Male Absence and Single Parenthood in Black South Africans’ Families

Unlike the American society where Black families evolve from those of slaves or ex-slaves with Black ancestry, the South African society houses Black (Africans among other races) natives who remained enslaved over a period of time in their fatherland. The

nature of fathering as well as fatherhood in the society was inextricably linked to 'building a home or homestead' to be headed by men whose resources can permit their marrying polygamously. In due time, the sons of such men equally marry and breakaway from their father's homestead to build their own. Women likewise moved from their father's lineage to their husband's through the payment of 'ilobolo' (bride price) usually with cattle (Hunter, 2006). In *Cross of Gold*, Ngcobo depicts this culture in the fulfillment of traditional rite that cements the union between Mandla and Nozipo.

Akin to this, the value of women and especially children is well appreciated because women and children basically engage in the crucial task of agriculture which significantly demands high labour. However, men simply operate in the domain of animal husbandry. Thus, the common vice located within the marital as well as parental tradition of this era lies in the displacement of any barren bride whose father is forced to either return her bride price or assign another daughter to raise seed for his son in-law. Consequently, the centrality placed on child birth than on the woman in marriage is reflected in the flux that exists in the meaning of the Zulu term for bride price – 'ilobolo', which implies more of child price than bride price. It also entails an exchange of the reproductive capacity of a woman for the sale of a woman (Jeffreys, 1951; Guy, 1987).

The historical point of transition in the Black South Africans' family is thus:

...Central to a historically rooted understanding of both fathering and fatherhood among Isi Zulu speakers is the recognition of its embroilment with the project of 'building a home'. In some pre – colonial and early colonial era, the building of a successful home require men to control a large amount of agricultural labour. Men who fathered the most children tended to become the most respected household heads. Although, the social values attached to fathering remained strong over the twentieth century, a number of social dynamics helped to reduce the importance of fertility (as well as

destabilize the home): the gradual replacement of rural agriculture with migrant men's wages as a source of livelihood, the rising dominance of Christian models of smaller nuclear families; and the movement of men and women in to smaller urban houses. (Hunter, 2006: 99-100)

This depicts emergent factors which foster the displacement of the value of fatherhood which aims at building a large home as well as attracting respect to the heads of such homes in pre-colonial South African society. The sudden shift from rural agriculture to migrant labour not only marks an off-shoot of male absence in the home, but also signifies aspect of influence which settlers' colonialism had on especially the Black South African families. While men were detached from their families and children, for very long periods and sometimes forever, women automatically become family heads as they single handedly parent their children among other domestic chores.

Subsequently, the extent of disruption in Black South African's homes escalates as a result of the nature of colonial influence which involves land seizure, introduction of taxes and the insatiate quest for labour in the diamond and gold mines, to mention but few. For this course, a considerable number of Black men are rapidly pulled into the colonial labour market (Hunter, 2006). These developments both differentiate the context of absence among Black South African and African American men as well as result in the gradual decline of the social and emotional value of Black men and fatherhood or fathering. More so, the decline in rural production, new requirements of bride price (in monetary terms instead of cattle) and children school fees also substitutes the value of women and children as assets with liabilities. Thus, men either abandon them completely or for long periods before they return and disappear again. Also, this situation goes thus:

...in rural areas the absence of males, who predominated, the migratory labour system, meant either the postponement or

complete avoidance of marriage among (South) Africans. Secondly, in cases where marriages were contracted, economic necessity meant that the husband/father left his wife and children behind to participate in the migratory labour system, a situation that led to such family patterns as female-headed household, out-of-wedlock births, and unstable household composition, especially among young Africans in rural areas (Amoaten and Heaten, 2007: 4).

In line with the second reason for male absence, it is evident that “all over Zululand men were leaving their wives and children to seek alternative means of livelihood. ... Children were born, often to fathers far away at work, many of whom died there. People learned to accept death as the constant companion to life. Adults die and left their young children. Orphans swelled other families overnight. There was wide spread poverty. ... Only elderly people and women and children lived at Ekuthuleni. Young men who still had strength in their bones were out in the towns and cities ... eking out a living for themselves and those they left behind. ... Those beautiful girls at home ... learn the art of waiting from their mothers. Men are seldom around and women learn to wait – wait in love. The proof of manhood was in forsaking all the loved ones for the unknown city, face the cruel lonely life, and come back to keep long standing promises”. In another instance, participation in the liberation struggle rather than the need to eke out a living is depicted as the grounds for the separation between Mandla and Nozipo (Ngcobo, 1981: 12, 165, 163, 161). Notwithstanding, the separation and migration of the male characters automatically result in single parenthood (motherhood) for the time being. Similarly, further findings also amplify this point as:

In South Africa in 1998, over a fifth of all households were run by single parents. As is true everywhere, single parenthood results from separation or divorce, death, and pregnancy outside of wedlock. In addition to widespread problems with AIDS, South Africa continues to experience increasingly high

rate of teenage pregnancy. This means that single mothers are bearing the brunt of serious poverty early and life without the benefit of support systems. The more traditional South African communities still believe that mothers should be responsible for rearing the children and giving care within the home. And they have the added burden of caring for family and children affected by HIV/AIDS (Agarwal, 2008).

Besides confirming that the rise in the number of (female) single parents as well as the challenges that come with it which is not restricted to the Western world alone, the above perspective also shows that with the meager wages African workers receive and persistent unemployment that incapacitates them in the face an increase in *lobolo* (bride price) and children school fees, the question of marriage obviously becomes a near impossible task for a large number of the Black South African men. No wonder, Mandla in *Cross of Gold* condemns the traditional demand of bride price payment while convincing Nozipo to accept his marriage offer without formal exchange to that effect (Amoateng and Heaten, 2007).

With the encroaching poverty and life devoid of the benefits of support systems Black South African women are further burdened by the need to cater for families and children affected by terminal diseases. In view of the political oppression and racial discrimination confronting Black people in South Africa, Ngcobo's (1981) *Cross of Gold* rightly features female characters whose plight confirms how women obviously "feel the pangs of oppression more than the men". Therefore, "apart from the general oppressive condition under which (they) live, for instance, they, in addition, have to cook, look after children, maintain the house and take the responsibility for the entire family when the men are arrested, this burden is even heavier in the Bantustans where the aridity and the emptiness of the homeland policy are borne by (the women)" (Abubakar, 1999: 105).

Given that the challenge of single parenthood is usually borne by women, men who failed in their social responsibilities are considered thus:

By contextualizing men's action within the political and economic realities of early twenty first century South Africa, I dispute the stereotype that young African men are irresponsible, abandoning father... even where a man accepts paternity (of his bastard child) he is unlikely to be able to afford to pay in ihlawulo (damages) and almost certainly not ilobolo (bride wealth). Still more unlikely is that a young, unemployed, man will be able to fulfill a provider role and support his child. Abandonment usually seen as an inherently male, particularly African, phenomenon- has to be seen in this context. Certainly, men draw upon gendered discourses to blame 'promiscuous' women for unexpected pregnancies, and yet, there is more than a twinge of culpability when deserting men are labeled as unmanly. Many discussions that I have had with young men suggest that they would like to support their children, or at least to pay ihlawulo (damages) (in the case of out-of-wedlock pregnancies). The problem is their lack of amandla (power) (Hunter, 2006: 100, 104).

This appears as an attempt at exonerating Black South African men from the notion that indicted them as irresponsible and unmanly fathers for frequently abandoning or absconding from their families. On the other hand, this shows that most men are not deliberately guilty, however, the possibility of deliberateness as well as outright irresponsibility in some cases cannot be denied. To this end, neither the apartheid regime with its racial discrimination nor the environmental situations which particularly confront them can be entirely blamed for their actions.

More so, the restrictions as well as influx-control regulations which come with the settlers' colonialism as well as racial discrimination in South Africa did not completely hinder mass rural-urban drifts among Blacks. The movements, though illegal, also include a mixture of men and women. Whereas, women do not constitute the migrant

labour systems, they relentlessly joined men in over populating the urban area. The fact that not all rural women migrated to the city is expressed thus:

For eleven months of the year these women (that are left at home) were to lead celibate lives and focus on mothering children. Little consideration went into the difficulty of re-establishing intimacy between husband and wife after such a long separation. Suspicions of adulterous activities poisoned many relationships. Often innocent women were physically and sexually abused by jealous husbands.... Many men ended up with two families – an urban woman to satisfy immediate sexual needs; or rural wife to keep the home stable. Given low wages, many were trapped into neglecting their rural families. Consequently, from the 1970s, onwards, many women increasingly braved the threat of arrest under influx – control regulations to join their husbands in urban areas if it meant leaving their children with relatives (Ramphele, 2002: 65).

Herein, it is evident that South African children indeed suffer separation and divorce. Not only are marriages dissolved, but children are usually separated from one or both parents. Consequently, the finding which shows that 52 percent of children under the age of 18 do not live with their biological fathers is complemented by Black men's reduced ability to earn above a meager income. This is not only magnified by the lack of a male role model in the home, it has serious consequences for future South African generations (Agarwal, 2008; Desmond and Desmond, 2005). Absent fathers is a serious problem for South African children and their mothers. In *And They Didn't Die*, Ngcobo's (1990) depiction of Jezile's visit to her husband in Durban significantly echoes this point. Also, the persistent nature of divorce which results from the harsh realities of the South African society greatly inflates the number of single women as well as female-headed homes. Therefore:

...unfortunately, not all fathers want to participate in the lives of their children. In fact, most South African men do not seem especially interested in their children. They seldom attend the

births of their own, they don't always acknowledge that their children are their own and they frequently fail to participate in their children's lives. In the early 1990s, of the 2000 children born in Chris Hani Baragwanah hospital in Johannesburg, half had no male support (Erasmus, 1998: 205).

This confirms that in spite of male absence as result of migration in response to making a living, outright male irresponsibility also constitute a reason behind certain absences and lack of participation in children's lives by some Black South African men. Also, the increased number of divorce and Black male irresponsibility in South Africa obviously add to the number of factors that foster female-headed families. Therefore, population census data which shows that marital rates began to drop (especially) from the 1960s, equally indicates how the number of divorce increases from 27 thousand in 1986 to around 33 thousand in 1987 and 1989. Thus, two-third of these divorces evidently involved children. In 1985, more than 25 thousand South African children lived in homes run by single parents. By September 1990, 73% of South Africa's children's parents were divorced, and over 150 thousand had been involved in divorce over a four-year period. It can only be assumed that the numbers are greater in 2008 ((Richter and Morrell, 2006; Agarwal, 2008). This also explains why most "South African women face a grim life and frequently constitute victims of rape, teenage pregnancies (which becomes)... common. Single mothers, no matter the reason for their situation, face social stigma and extreme poverty" (Agarwal, 2008). On a lighter note, children of divorced parents experience a modest decline in living standards, they remain much better off, on average, than children raised from the beginning by single mothers (Waite and Gallagher, 2000).

Indeed, the decline of traditional values like the payment of bride price and damages for impregnation yet results in the "manifestation of the uncoupling of marriage

and motherhood” (Walker, 1995). The growing number of women who become skeptical about marriage, but have not relinquished their desire to have children also matches men’s pride in proving their fertility without much commitment to paternal responsibility (Preston-Whyte and Zondi, 1992). Drawing from summation of an interview with Philani, this point is confirmed thus:

***MH (Mark Hunter):** Are you more of a man if you have three children with one woman or one child with three women?*

***Philani:** We do not have the same views, I don’t think I can have three children from the same person. I wish to have children from different women. If I have done that then I can call myself a man (Hunter, 2006: 105).*

In spite of pride openly expressed, such decisions further increase the chances that South African children will be exposed to extreme poverty and forces some single parents to abandon their children thereby increasing the number of orphans and children living in the streets. In recent times, the hardships that result from the recurring male absence and single parenthood in South Africa expose most children in need of care and parenting to the risk of exploitation. Child pornography is a major industry in South Africa, and sexual trafficking of children is increasing. Children are prostituted to provide basic food stuff for their starving families. Labour exploitation is common, with children under the age of 15 being forced to work long hours for little to no pay (Agarwal, 2008). The very reason single parents abandon their children is sometimes connected to their assumption that foster parents receive more financial support than do single parents. Thus, a single parent in extreme poverty hopes the child gets better care from foster parents.

It is in line with these challenges that one hopeful program by a non-governmental organization SOS Children, is run. The outfit offers vocational training

courses (including beadwork and dressmaking) to single parents in Mamelodi, Mandela's Village. Women who learn how to sew and decorate their work make clothing and knit jumpers they can sell. The project helps some single parents by giving them grants to start businesses of their own (Agarwal, 2008). Beyond the foregone factors, other events that gave rise to the distortions experienced in most black South African households include; several arrests and imprisonments of so-called defaulters, forceful and deliberate exile for safety, up-risings and civil strives (Shaperwille massacre) and street murder to mention but few.

1. 9 Realism as Theoretical Framework

In view of the demand that every research of this nature requires an assessment base upon which results can be established, the deployment of realism as theoretical framework is thus, adopted for this work. The research also concentrates on the aspect of the theory which gives premium to issues as; characters and everyday life as deployed through the medium of everyday language, among others.

In its broad sense, realism comprises many artistic currents in varied civilizations. In the visual arts, for example, realism is found in ancient Hellenistic Greek sculptures accurately portraying boxers and decrepit old women. The works of such 17th century painters as Caravaggio, the Dutch genre painters, the Spanish painters Jos de Ribera, Diego Velzquez, and Francisco de Zurbar, and the Le Nain brothers in France are realist in approach. Among others, the works of the 18th century English novelists Daniel Defoe, Henry Fielding, and Tobias Smollett are also called realistic (Realism, 2007).

Realism was not consciously adopted as an aesthetic program until the mid-19th century in France. Indeed, it is viewed as a major trend in French novels and paintings between 1850 and 1880. One of the first appearances of the term, realism was in 1826. In this period, the word is used to describe a doctrine based not upon imitating past artistic achievements but upon the truthful and accurate depiction of the models that nature and contemporary life offers the artist. The French proponents of realism were agreed in their rejection of the artificiality of both Classicism and Romanticism, but call for the necessity of contemporaneity in an effective work of art. They attempted to portray the lives, appearances, problems, customs, and mores of the middle and lower classes, of the unexceptional, the ordinary, the humble, and the unadorned. Indeed, they conscientiously set themselves to reproducing all the hitherto-ignored aspects of contemporary life and society - its mental attitudes, physical settings, and material conditions. However:

unlike the movement in France, realism in England does not focus on the dregs of society [or] on the degradations and degenerations of humans in bondage to a social and cosmic determinism. It belongs . . . to a "middling" condition and defines itself against the excesses, both stylistic and narrative, of various kinds of romantic, exotic, or sensational literatures. [At the same time] what is unconventional and most exciting about the [English] tradition of realism is its pleasure in abundance, in energy, and the vivid engagement, through language, with the reality just beyond the reach of language. . . . Realistic novels contain more than they formally need. The anti-literary thrust of realism can be taken either as an assertion of the power of the real over the imagined, and hence of a determined world, or as an assertion of the variety and energy against the enclosing and determining forms of art (Levine, 1981).

Although, realism constitutes a style of writing that cuts across societies, the place of distinctions evident in its delineation with respect to these societies is herein established. This is also facilitated by the socio-cultural, political and historical variations

that distinguish one society from another. Whereas, the introduction of “realism in France after the 1848 revolution comes with one of its main ideas which relates to democracy, in England, realism tend to focus on a social liberation of the middle and lower classes by acting against Victorian materialism and certain abstract institutions of the Royal Academy in London” (History of Realism, 2008).

The evolution of realism is stimulated by several intellectual developments in the first half of the 19th century. Among these were the anti-Romantic movement in Germany, with its emphasis on the common man as an artistic subject; Auguste Comte’s Positivist philosophy, in which sociology’s importance as the scientific study of society was emphasized; the rise of professional journalism, with its accurate and dispassionate recording of current events; and the development of photography, with its capability of mechanically reproducing visual appearances with extreme accuracy (Realism, 2007). Also, other factors that contribute to the strong emergence of realism include; “an interest in scientific method, the systematizing of the study of documentary history and the influence of rational philosophy” (Campbell, 2010).

As a general movement in 19th century theatre (wherein a set of dramatic and theatrical conventions are established with the aim of bringing a greater fidelity to real life, texts and performances), realism in Russia also begins earlier in the same century than elsewhere in Europe and took a more uncompromising form (Brockett and Hildy, 2003). The trend of realistic writings that find expression within the confines of this period’s theatrical works begin with the plays of Ivan Turgenev (who used “domestic detail to reveal inner turmoil”), Aleksandr Ostrovsky (who was Russia’s first professional playwright), Aleksey Pisemsky (whose *A Bitter Fate* (1859) anticipated Naturalism), and

Leo Tolstoy (whose *The Power of Darkness* (1886) is “one of the most effective of naturalistic plays”), a tradition of psychological realism in Russia culminated with the establishment of the Moscow Art Theatre by Constantine Stanislavski and Vladimir Nemirovich-Danchenko (Brockett and Hildy, 2003: 370, 372; Benedetti, 2005: 100 and 1999: 14-17).

The plays of Anton Chekhov which result from existing ones also influenced Maxim Gorky and Mikhail Bulgakov. However, Stanislavski went on to develop his ‘system’, a form of actor training that particularly suits psychological realism. Thus, the 19th century realism is closely connected to the development of modern drama, which, as explained “is usually said to have begun in the early 1870s” with the “middle-period” work of the Norwegian dramatist, Henrik Ibsen (Harrison, 1998: 160). In other words, Ibsen's realistic drama in prose has been “enormously influential.” The term “realism” in American literature:

encompasses the period of time from the Civil War to the turn of the century during which William Dean Howells, Rebecca Harding Davis, Henry James, Mark Twain, and others wrote fiction devoted to accurate representation and an exploration of American lives in various contexts. As the United States grew rapidly after the Civil War, the increasing rates of democracy and literacy, the rapid growth in industrialism and urbanization, an expanding population base due to immigration, and a relative rise in middle-class affluence provided a fertile literary environment for readers interested in understanding these rapid shifts in culture. In drawing attention to this connection, Amy Kaplan has called realism a “strategy for imagining and managing the threats of social change” (Campbell, 2010).

Besides the fact that realism has had profound influence on literature, and music poetry; the American people from this period set out to explore literature that explains what has happened and is still happening in their society (Realism, 2010). Also, the

issues that find expression in such writings can be classified under the umbrella of contemporary or modern situation that paints reality in a palpable context.

Furthermore, realism, as a movement that prizes the faithful deployment of everyday people and situation among other things, also paves way for the emergence of naturalism. This does not entail that naturalism marks a radical break with realism; rather the new style constitutes a logical extension of the old. Thus:

*The term was invented by Émile Zola partly because he was seeking for a striking platform from which to convince the reading public that it was getting something new and modern in his fiction. In fact, he inherited a good deal from his predecessors. Like Balzac and Flaubert, he created detailed settings meticulously researched, but tended to integrate them better into his narrative, avoiding the long set-piece descriptions so characteristic of earlier fiction. ... He tried to create a portrait of France in the 1880s to parallel the portrait Balzac had made of his own times in the **Comédie humaine**. Like Flaubert, he focused on ordinary people with often debased motives. He argued that his special contribution to the art of fiction was the application to the creation of characters and plot of the scientific method. The new "scientific novel" would be created by placing characters with known inherited characteristics into a carefully defined environment and observing the resulting behavior. ... Zola's novels do place special stress on the importance of heredity and environment in determining character. They are anti-Romantic in their rejection of the self-defining hero who transcends his background. History shapes his protagonists rather than being shaped by them. This leads to an overwhelming sense of doom in most of his novels, culminating in a final catastrophe.... He further tends to create his principal characters as representative types rather than striking individuals. ... Humanity in the mass is one of his chief subjects, and his individuals are selected to illustrate aspects of society.... Also, he took frankness about sexual functions much further than the early Realists had dared; and it is this, combined with a pervasive pessimism about humanity, which chiefly characterizes the Naturalist novel (Brains, 2006).*

Although, it is obvious that both realism and naturalism had a remarkable influence on fiction and prized the deployment of everyday people and situation, the fact that there

exists a polarity in their methods of deploying the everyday issues cannot be ignored. Therefore, “Where ... naturalists plumb the actual or superficial to find the scientific laws that control its actions, realists center their attention to a remarkable degree on the immediate, the here and now, the specific action, and the verifiable consequence” (Harmon and Holman, 2010). Despite this, many critics also suggest that there is no clear distinction between realism and its related late nineteenth-century movement, naturalism. Furthermore, the term “realism” is difficult to define, in part because it is used differently in European contexts than in American literature. As the suggestion goes, “whatever was being produced in fiction during the 1870s and 1880s that was new, interesting, and roughly similar in a number of ways can be designated as ‘realism’, and that an equally new, interesting, and roughly similar body of writing produced at the turn of the century can be designated as ‘naturalism’”. In a nutshell, one rough distinction made by critics is that realism espousing a deterministic philosophy and focusing on the lower classes is considered naturalism (Donald, 2010).

In another perspective, naturalism is also pictured as a scientific study of human nature, behaviour and psychology. The theory is influenced by Darwinian Theory, which observes man as a victim of nature. Similarly it is also influenced by determinism and an experimental reasoning that replaces purely imaginary novels with the novels of observation and experimentation. Zola applies scientific experimental method in novel writing and in this respect; he raises mainly two issues; Observation and experimentation (Emile Zola: The Experimental Novel, 2011). Although this research does not focus on naturalism as a theoretical framework the essence of its deployment seeks to further the understanding of realism.

The understanding of realism varies from theorist to theorist. In other words, this entails that there can hardly be an absolute answer or a general agreement on what it means in a larger sense. However, there are certain tendencies that can be pointed out. Thus, realism in general, is perceived as “the belief that there is an absolute truth or ultimate reality of some form.” This is generally agreed upon. However, it is noteworthy that the nature of such ‘absolute truth’ varies tremendously. In addition, some theorists favour a material realism which states that for something to be real, it must have material bases. This idea is given impetus in modern science, so much so that realism was often taken for granted to assume some type of material realism. More so, a number of realists believe that some absolute truth is metaphysical (nonmaterial) in nature. Thus, another complication to the idea of realism relates to the degree to which an absolute truth can be known (Hoffman, 2008).

Beyond its connection to arts, realism also has great influence in literature. The English Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood constitutes a collection of painters, poets and critics who claimed as their doctrine, the principle that arts should seek to imitate, or “represent”, the real world (History of Realism, 2008). Thus, being a mode of writing among other functions that gives the impression of recording or ‘reflecting faithfully the way of life, realism:

refers, sometimes confusingly, both to a literary method based on detailed accuracy of description (i.e. verisimilitude) and to a more general attitude that rejects idealization, escapism, and other extravagant qualities of romance in favour of recognizing soberly the actual problems of life. Modern criticism frequently insists that realism is not a direct or simple reproduction of reality (a ‘slice of life’) but a system of conventions producing a lifelike illusion of some ‘real’ world outside the text, by processes of selection, exclusion, description and manners of addressing the reader. In its methods and attitude, realism may be found as an element in many

kinds of writing prior to the 19th century... ; but as a dominant literary trend it is associated chiefly with the 19th-century novel of middle- or lower -class life, in which problems of ordinary people in unremarkable circumstances are rendered with close attention to the details of physical setting and to the complexities of social life. ... In the work of some novelists, realism passes over into the movement of naturalism, in which sociological investigation and determinist views of human behavior predominate. Realism also established itself as an important tradition in the theatre in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the work of Henrik Ibsen, Bernard Shaw, and others; and it remains a standard convention of film and television drama. Despite the radical attempts of modernism to displace the realist emphasis on external reality (notably in the movements of expressionism and surrealism), realism survived as a major current within 20th century fiction, sometimes under the label of neo-realism (Baldick, 2012: 212-213).

Besides appearing as a versatile definition which discusses a reasonable degree of issues that pertains to realism, this perspective significantly reaffirms the summation which simply sees realism as the “faithful representation of reality” or “verisimilitude” and a literary technique practiced by many schools of writing. This also encompasses the accuracy of speech and setting, through background detail and a concern which could mean the “willingness to face fact” Beyond the fact that it eventually paves way for the off-shoot naturalism, realism going by the above summation focuses on ordinary people or the middle and lower-class life of the society. In essence, the levels of development experienced in the formation of this theory further enhance the variations that exist therein. These include; magical realism (which deals with emotions, fantasies and discovers what is mysterious and meaningful in life), dramatic realism, psychological realism (which deals with an exploration of the inner man or the inner state of man), critical realism, and socialist realism (which is a reactionary theory that is revolutionary incline and demands collective participation in combating societal challenges that usually incapacitate the populace), to mention a few (Campbell, 2010). Despite these variations,

this research only pitches its tent on realism. It is noteworthy that the principles to be drawn from this definition among other understandings of realism will form the basis upon which the analytical chapters will be considered.

In another dimension, the above perspective also reiterates the view which that whereas many theorists assume that if realism exists, it must be able to be known, others simply take a 'critical realism' perspective which maintains that some truth can be known, but only in part. In the first instance, the realist is pictured as one who maintains that, such things as physics can be known; whereas, other absolutes such as morality cannot be known. The second type of critical realist states that one can partially know some things such as physics or gravity, but cannot fully know or understand even this. More so, a third alternative is possible which combines these two types of critical realism. They are seen as capable of maintaining, for example, that one can know some things for sure, such as physics, and other things only partially, such as morality, even though there is an absolute truth in both science and morality (Hoffman, 2008). Another perception of realism highlights how that:

In a letter to the Swedish theatre man August Lindberg, who was in the process of putting on Ghosts in August 1883 (his staging with its premiere in Helsingborg on 22 August 1883 was the first in the Nordic countries and Europe), Ibsen wrote: The language must sound natural and the form of expression must be characteristic of each individual person in the play; one person certainly does not express himself like another. In this respect, a great deal can be put right during the rehearsals; that is when one easily hears what does not strike one as natural and unforced, and what must therefore be changed and changed again until the lines achieve full credibility and realistic form. The effect of the play depends in large measure, on the audience's feeling that they are sitting listening to something that is going on in actual real life (Hanssen, 2005).

Ibsen, from this perspective is simply concerned with the fact that in his contemporary drama, audience as well as readers should be witnesses to, and empathize with the chains of events that could easily have happened to them. In essence, it is expected that the characters in his dramas speak and behave naturally and that the situations should constitute a stamp that reflect the everyday life about them. Also, "...asides and stilted ways of speaking (as in *The Warriors at Helgoland*) were ruled out." Thus, realism as well as the realistic drama aims at providing the illusion of recognizable reality (Hanssen, 2005). Poetry is equally used to give an insight to a perspective of realism thus:

*I don't want to write the kind of poetry that tells the reader how I feel when I see a rainbow. I don't want to write the kind of poetry that tells the reader that I as a feminist think that this guy should have his prick cut off because he was the Yorkshire Ripper. What I want to do is **present it, as it is** (Duffy, 1998: 72).*

This entails a faithful lifting and transfer of the world's situation into writing. Although, the summation can be perceived as an extreme case in articulating the tenets of realism, the fact that it cannot but put contemporary issues into focus is also paramount. The demand for presenting realistic issues as they are opportune a targeted audience and readers to empathize with what they watched and read, and they, in one way or the other can easily indentify where they fit in.

The realistic legacy preserved in Duffy's statement does not only surface in terms of tradition, its potency shows that it can be traced back to the involuntary head of a poetic movement dubbed as "the movement poetry" (Larkin: 1982). Also, the summation on Larkin's poetic manifesto encourages "fidelity to contemporary experience and ordinariness of diction and perception" (Bradley, 1993:3-6).

Although, the above position uses poetry to strike some points on realism, it is important to further consider how influential the effect of realism on fiction from places “as far-flung as Russia and the Americas.” The novel, which is born out of the romance as a more or less fantastic narrative, settles into a realistic mode which is still dominant today. Besides the genres of fiction such as fantasy and horror, one expects the ordinary novel today to be based in our world, with recognizably familiar types of characters endowed with no supernatural powers, doing the sorts of things that ordinary people do every day. It is easy to forget that this expectation is only a century and a half old, and that the great bulk of the world’s fiction before it departed in a wide variety of ways from this standard, which is applied to film and television as well. Even comic strips now usually reflect daily life. Repeated revolts against this standard by various postmodernist and magical realist varieties of fiction have not dislodged the dominance of realism in fiction (Brians, 2006). Therefore:

Realism assumes that reality inheres in the here and now, in the everyday. It therefore emphasizes accurate descriptions of specific setting, dress, and character in ways that would have appeared entirely inappropriate to Neoclassical and earlier authors. Realism, which emphasizes the importance of the ordinary, the ordinary person and the ordinary situation, tends to reject the heroic and the aristocratic and embrace the pedestrian, the comic, and the middle class. Some aspects of fiction, such as description or dialogue, often appear more suited to Realism than do others, such as plot, whose beginning and ending reveals its artificiality (Landow, 2003).

As a word that foregrounds realism, reality is both a relative term and subject to human perception. Herein, the politics of conception is expressed in the fact that whatever one person considers as reality may not mean the same to another. Therefore, the propagators of realism have to contend with the need to select and how to present the

'realities' they settle for. However, one of the first things that come to mind on the mention of this word (realism) is the idea of concrete and palpable issues. By giving specific description of things, realism therefore avoids the possibility of speculations and assumptions. In avoiding artificial presentation which is given impetus by such issues as plot and heroism in fiction, realism also enforces truthful depiction of events in terms of ordinary speech and people who are not only down to earth but concrete to the perception of the populace. Beyond the already explored angles of realism, another political undertone given to the concept goes thus:

Our concept of realism needs to be broad and political, free from the aesthetic restrictions and independent of conventions. Realistic means laying bare the society's causal net-work by showing up the dominant class... writing from the stand point of class which has prepared the broadest solutions for the most pressing problems afflicting human societies... emphasizing the dynamics of society (Ferdinand, 1986).

This does not only emphasize the need to focus on the plight and experiences of the lower class by writers who are committed to realism, it highlights the connection which exists between realism and socialist realism. Also, standing in as mouth pieces as well as championing the course of the ordinary people, committed writers are thus, enjoined to constitute a focal point of realistic literature.

From the perspective of realism which focuses on the truthful depiction of the middle or lower class (who are seen as the main makers of history), Engels' definition sees realism as "... besides truth of details, (it is) the truthful reproduction of typical characters under typical circumstances". This constitutes a concrete approach to the events described and a personage with live and individual's traits reflecting typical aspects of the character and psychology of the class milieu to which they belong (Marx

and Engels, 1976:24). Given the foregoing perspectives, the following are considered characteristics of realism as theoretical framework:

- Renders reality closely and in comprehensive detail. Selective presentation of reality with an emphasis on verisimilitude, even at the expense of a well-made plot
- Character is more important than action and plot; complex ethical choices are often the subject.
- Characters appear in their real complexity of temperament and motive; they are inexplicable (strange, baffling, confusing etc) relation to nature, to each other, to their social class, to their own past.
- Class is important; the novel has traditionally served the interests and aspirations of an insurgent middle class.
- Events will usually be plausible. Realistic novels avoid the sensational, dramatic elements of naturalistic novels and romances.
- Diction is natural vernacular, not heightened or poetic; tone may be comic, satiric, or matter-of-fact.
- Objectivity in presentation becomes increasingly important: overt authorial comments or intrusions diminish as the century progresses.
- “The redemption of the individual lay within the social world,” unlike in sentimental fiction where “the redemption of the social world lay with the individual” (Warren, 2010: 75-76).

The reason for considering these (characteristics) as the most relevant to this research resides in the fact that they articulate the realistic nature of male absence and

single parenthood more convincingly in the selected texts. For instance, the factual depiction of socio historical encounters like the aftermath of slavery, colonialism, apartheid, Sharpeville massacre and its aftermath, the general disillusionment and squalor, to mention but few, further the realistic nature and context of the texts. Also, that the subject matter (male absence and single parenthood) of the research significantly pictures the very state of familial crisis in the studied societies shows that its attempt at exploring realistic and everyday issues is obviously utilized. In negation to the tenets of ‘arts for arts sake’, the selected texts respectively adopt realistic characters that are not only life-like in their actions but capable of handling the vernaculars of their societies. In *Cross of Gold*, for instance, Ngcobo depicts a single mother, Sindisiwe Zikode as a political activist who tries to escape the apartheid South Africa to Botswana with her young sons. Surviving the shooting, Sindisiwe is motivated to become a freedom fighter; her actions, however, lead to her violent death at the hands of government security forces. In terms of a realistic character, Richard Wright in *Black Boy* also appropriates a child’s mentality in an attempt to capture his childhood experience in retrospect. Toni Morrison’s *Beloved* however, features the African Americans slavery experience and its adverse effects on the Black family unit.

In essence, realism entails a theory developed with the sole aim of reaching a targeted audience (or readers) through a realistic depiction of the very issues that confront them. In considering these issues, the socio-historical and contemporary events that signify realism in will be put in focus.

1.10 Literature Review

In most African context, men are still pictured as the family heads they are. Such portrayal finds expression even in texts by prominent Black women like: Buchi Emecheta, Flora Nwapa and Zaynab Alkali among others. However, in consonance with the written works of Blacks in other nations, some African-American and Black South Africans' writing also depict instances of Black men's failure to fulfill their parental responsibilities and maintain their positions as family heads. Adding to other factors, this situation owes credence to the varied colonial experiences as well as social changes which shaped and is still shaping the societies in focus. Thus:

... even though the structure of African households and families has been changing for many years..., some aspects of the African family were transformed while others were forced to adjust and accommodate the new realities of socio-economic and political systems that were brought about by colonial rule, urbanization and the penetration of other forms of Western influence into the African hinterland (Adepoju and Mbugua, 1997).

This suggests the dislodgement of spousal relationship which most often than not results in male absence and the prevalence of female-headed homes is not exempted the various transformations witnessed within most Black families. Despite the 'benefits' of westernization, most African values - the beauty of chastity, motherhood and so on, are drastically influenced at the wake of its penetration. Contrary to the general claim of beauty, joy and pride attached to African motherhood especially by women like Emecheta (1987) in her *Joys of Motherhood* and Ngcobo (2007) in her article, *African Motherhood – Myth and Reality*, the socioeconomic pressure which cripples Black men's capacity for responsible fatherhood generally affects the original value placed on children and sustainable marriages contracted for that purpose. Besides perceiving familial

disruptions as a by-product of social processes, this summation also considers cases of migration and non marital childbearing which are consequent on the high rate of spousal separation as well as divorce. Thus, this obviously contributes to the changing face of the African household. Also, “more than half of all fatherless families are still created by ... death, or incarceration, and nearly half of all out-of-wedlock births are now to cohabiting fathers and mothers” (Ellwood and Jencks, 2002). Thus, the infiltration of sexual ‘perversity’ as a modern behaviour as well as definite dividend of colonialism evidently fosters a decline in the opposite sex marital relationship. Therefore:

Colonialism had a transforming impact on African ideologies of gender and sexuality. Administrators and missionaries introduced and enforced heterosexuality and homosexuality as central axis of sexual definition, and female domesticity within the patriarchal nuclear family as the ideal, healthy template for social organization. Pre-colonial relationships, identities, or practices that did not fit within this framework were often eradicated in the colonial encounter and its aftermaths (Munro, 2007).

This shows the havoc wrecked on black families in a changing Africa. The outlined position is given impetus by the fact that President Robert Mugabe’s support for anti-gay laws as well as his public statements denigrating homosexuals depicts them as both un-Christian and un-African. Also, that Zanzibar’s parliament unanimously passed a new law in April, 2004 instituting harsh prison sentences for same-sex sex acts confirms that homosexuality is pronounced un-African and un-Islamic. Notwithstanding, the spread of this behaviour especially among African-Americans and Black South Africans is not unconnected to the condoning of Gay Right Movement and activities in the US unlike the African countries - Uganda, Namibia, Zambia, Swaziland, Kenya and Zimbabwe that passed anti-gay laws since the 1990s, and the banning of discrimination on grounds of

sexual orientation in the 1996 constitution of South Africa (Munro, 2007). The same way Baldwin's *Another Country* capture instances of homosexuality among African-Americans, so also South African prison literatures by LaGuma and Ngcobo among other writers feature homosexuality among inmates. "The migrant labour system and the growth of cities (likewise) produced unruly new sexual cultures, from Cape Town's cross-dressing 'motifs' to the systems of temporary male marriage that flourished in the mines" (Achmat; Amadiume; Moodie; and Murray in Munro, 2007). The place of slavery as well as western influence on Black people's desire and capacity to maintain familial relationships is captured thus:

Black American history of slavery, characterized by depersonalization, displacement, uprootment and impoverishment did impact very determining patterns on the psyche and identity of black male character as well as the female. For the black male who for centuries has been a victim of white machination and manipulation, holding on to normative and axiomatic gender identity definitions was never one of his heritages. In summary the black male lost largely, his claims to his manhood and 'malehood' during slavery. He could not act the man during slavery, he could not protect himself, or his wife during slavery; he could not provide the needs of his family as expected of the black man across the Atlantic, in Africa. (Abah, 2006: 16-17).

Like their Black South African counterparts, the failure of African-American men in maintaining the value of their manhood as well as capacity to maintain familial bonds is associated with the socio-historical and political events of their society. In other words, their failure as supposed family heads is traced to their subjugation and inability to be the men by rescuing themselves and their families from the weapons of apartheid and slavery. Consequently, their place as family heads and sole providers is grossly threatened in the course of the oppressive regimes. In both United States and South Africa therefore, Black men's work and family roles are shaped by the complex histories

of social oppression, economic subordination, racial conflict, incarceration and exile or migration. Another portrayal of male absence goes that:

Desertion by fathers is often prompted by their inability to bear the burden of being primary providers. The burden of failure becomes intolerable for those who lack the capacity to generate enough income as uneducated and unskilled labourers. Desertion is not always physical, it can be emotional. Many men “die” as parents and husbands by indulging in alcohol, drugs, or becoming unresponsive to their families (Palkowitz, 2002: 158).

This does not only feature the reality of incapacitated Black fathers, it further confirms that while fathers live away from home, work in the cities or are weakened by liquor in the stressful life of those cities, women often combine the roles of motherhood and fatherhood in children upbringing. They themselves have to be strong to take on both roles, loving, protecting and counseling in turns. African women may not be born that way, but they do wax strong, faced with the challenges in the African context (Ngcobo, 2007). As opposed to staying in a two-parent nuclear household, the result of such situation by and large sees a significant number of young children living with their grandparents (Van de Walle, 1999). This issue is advanced thus:

As the male is absent for no external cause, he comes to be more the elusive male; he seems unwilling or unable to sacrifice his freedom, share with his partner and be supportive in a relationship. The female, who has in the meantime become an economically independent career woman, still values supportive and binding relationships. Not finding them, she is forced to take on more authority and power than she wants. She becomes stronger than man, in spite of herself (Apostolidis, 2002).

In contrast to the evaluations which depict male absence and single parenthood as derivative of the socio-historical processes, this viewpoint interprets male absence as a deliberate act staged by men for the purpose of individuation. What becomes of the

persistence of male absence is now seen in the female who eventually becomes strong by necessity. In the various settings they exist, the sociopolitical and historical causes for this behavior also show a specific awareness of the new and shifting gender roles, yet, in their search for a balance in relationships, such women express nostalgia for the stability and harmony of the old clearly defined roles. To exemplify this point, writers like Ngcobo (2007) who preach African motherhood in spite of Black men's attitude to what is expected of a sustainable relationship still encourage marriage and child bearing in order to express the strength of womanhood to the full. Despite this, the spread of single parenthood (motherhood) is still on the increase in most Black households. An attempt on the projection of its varying dimensions goes:

Single parenthood may occur for a variety of reasons. A few possible scenarios are by choice, as in, divorce, adoption, artificial insemination, surrogate motherhood, while others are the result of an unforeseeable occurrence, such as a death, child abuse, child neglect, or abandonment by biological parents. The living and parenting arrangements for single parents are diverse. A number live in households with family, other adults or alone in home, apartments, condos or government assisted housing. When parents separate, one party, usually the primary parent has the children the majority of the time but secondary or 'non-resident' parents continue to share some type of parenting time and responsibility, to some extent, with their child (or children) (Callister and Birks, 2006).

In this, it is obvious that single parenthood can exist at the level of absolute and partial parental responsibility. Whereas, the former suggests a situation where only one of the two parents contributes to the total welfare of the children, the latter considers an extent where a degree of help sometimes comes from the second partner or other people. Nevertheless, both perspectives constitute specific angles through which Wright, Morrison and Ngcobo's delineations figure male absence and single parenthood in their

societies. Single parents are usually fathers or mothers, but they are sometimes single grandparents raising grandchildren. Single parents may represent any of a variety of sexual orientations. They may be biological, adoptive, or foster parents. They may have arrived at their current life circumstances through divorce, separation, or death of a spouse, or may never have married at all. The sufferers may have become single parents during adolescence or in early or middle adulthood (often because of an unplanned pregnancy, through a deliberate decision to become a single parent, or due to divorce, separation, or death) (Single Parents Families, 2010). The fact that men are seldom completely absent from some single parents' households is featured thus:

... the adult women may have lovers who visit them regularly and even live with them for long periods. Though these men give financial and other aid to the women and their children, their role in the household is usually ill defined and transient. Many are married to other women and eventually move away. Their major contribution to the female-linked family is often the protection they provide when living there and the children whom they father (Preston-Whyte, 1992).

Although, men are not absolutely absent from some female-headed households, their position as family heads is rather limited. In another respect, the presence of such men in the female-headed homes sometimes avails a role model value to especially the male children. Therefore, this supposes that “non-biological ‘social’ fathers may be common and influential” (Jarrett, Roy and Burton, 2002). The depiction of characters like Paul D in Morrison’s *Beloved* and Marumo in Ngcobo’s *Cross of Gold* clearly exemplify the place of such occasional lovers in single parents (mothers) homes. The writing on African motherhood, also affirms that a number of single mothers have personal interest which includes an open or a secret love affair. However, such affair is perceived as an act

that sometimes leads to negligence of the family's welfare which sometimes results in family conflicts and bitter accusations against the mother (Ngcobo, 2007: 537).

Whereas the persistence of male absence and single parenthood in South Africa paints pervasive as well as negative images of fathers, especially of Black men (Richter *et al*, 2004), the United States, stereotypes abound of hyper masculine males who are financially irresponsible and uninvolved in their children's lives" (Marsiglio, 1999a: 5). This informs Obama's charge to African-American men at the largest black congregation - "too many fathers are M.I.A (missing in action), too many fathers are AWOL (absent without leave/ permission), missing from too many lives and too many homes," "They have abandoned their responsibilities, acting like boys instead of men. And the foundations of our families are weaker because of it" (Bosman, 2008). Therefore:

these images need to be countered while, simultaneously, responsible fatherhood and men's sensitivity to children's needs in both the public and private realms needs increase. The concept needs to be fostered that increasing men's exposure to children, and encouraging their involvement in the care of children, may facilitate their own growth, bring them happiness, and gratification, and foster a more nurturing orientation in general (Marsiglio, 1995b).

This point confirms male absence as a recurring and an irresponsible act sometimes by Black South African and usually by African-American men. Also, it explores another angle which suggests means of addressing the challenge beforehand. Therefore, a continuous as well as positive portrayal of these men in a healthy relationship with their children among other things is required. The issue of male absence and single parenthood is also presented as such that has since, eaten deep into the fabric of the African-American and Black South African societies.

Although, criticisms on the novels examined in this study have largely ignored a direct consideration of male absence and single parenthood in Black homesteads, other issues raised in such works significantly broaden our appreciation of the writers, their worldviews and motives for considering the challenges of Black homesteads in their literary endeavours. To begin with, Richard Wright is one writer who publicly opposed racial prejudice and is perhaps the most eloquent spokesperson in the United States for his generation of Blacks. His most acclaimed works are the novel, *Native Son* (1940) and the autobiographical memoir *Black Boy* (1945) (Marc, 2008). As a prolific writer, he also has the distinction of being the first African-American author whose work appeared on the national bestseller lists. His prose captures the lyrical Black dialect and paints unforgettable pictures of the deep South and of Chicago of the 1930s. In effect, his *Native Son* was an instant success and sold a quarter of a million copies in its first month of publication, and, together with *Black Boy*, establishes him as a writer of power and intensity (Reuben, 2011). Also, having a considerable body of nonfiction to his credit, Wright's first autobiographical work, *Black Boy*, reveals in bitter personal terms the devastating impact of racial prejudice on young African-American men. *Black Boy* also points out the many psychological and cultural similarities between 20th-century racism and its predecessor, slavery. To this end, his novels and short stories are considered as literary works that help to redefine discussions of race relations in America in the mid-20th century (Marc, 2008).

The personal voice of authority in Wright's nonfiction continues to receive attention in Moore's essay on the voice in "12 Million Black Voices" (1989). Moore, also builds on Reilly's (2011) work to argue the importance of oral language in the work's

structure. He links Wright's text to the 1930s genre of "documentary film" and its intertwining of "kinetic visual images," sound, and narrated text (141). Wright's narrative "voice," Moore says, oscillates between that of minister and orator.

In "Richard Wright and the Art of Nonfiction" (1986), Reilly focuses on Wright's critical writing as a representation of biography, and his personal experience as a rhetorical framework in a text. Focusing on "The Color Curtain" (1956) and "White Man, Listen!" (1957), he contends that Wright's nonfiction of the 1950s represents his resolution of the professional crisis caused by his exile. *The Outsider* shows Wright's "crisis of exile and disillusionment with politics"; "The Color Curtain" and "White Man, Listen!" show Wright's resolution to a "crisis of despair": he creates the identity of an intellectual through whom he could speak, as in "12 Million Black Voices" (175). Appiah (2011) disagrees with Reilly in "Wright in the Gold Coast" (1987). He refutes Reilly's claim that Wright attempt a "self-fashioning" by building a bridge of words between his self and the world"; rather, the failure of that 'bridge of words'... is precisely what the success of that 'prerequisite to create his self' demands" (191). Appiah contends that Wright in *Black Power* (1954) has no attachment to or interest in Africa; as a result, the reader witnesses Wright's mood swings as they vacillate between condescension and paranoia. Appiah authenticates his claims that Wright's "book is the record of a mind closed to the world which he travelled" (194) from the personal experience of one who grew up in the Ghana of 1953 that Wright condemns (Smith, 2011).

Beyond revisiting the 19th-century tradition of slave narrative which chronicles his quest as much as intellectual and physical freedom from an oppressive South to Chicago, Richard Wright's autobiography *-Black Boy* (1945) depicts the place of male

absence and single parenthood in Black homesteads. Building upon Stepto's contention of Wright's quest for literacy and freedom, *Black Boy* is a "testament to the struggle over formation of Black subjectivity in a racist society". He uses ideas of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari to argue that minorities cannot participate in the dominant culture until their hegemonic negation is itself negated. Then, he shows how Richard Wright resisted construction into a collective representation. Mohammed turns to the theory of social death by Orlando Patterson to show how the controlling mechanisms of white dominant culture intentionally negated the slave's mind and thus power and identity (producing social death). Wright resisted social construction into a collective Black boy to rise as an individual self, and *Black Boy* is an account of the dialectics between this 'phylogenic' and 'ontogenic' construction of the Black boy (Smith, 2011).

Furthermore, the three essays examine Wright's autobiography- *Black Boy* (1945) and its purpose of self-representation. Adams in "I Do Believe Him Though I Know He Lies" (1985) asserts that Wright's "inability to tell the truth is Wright's metaphor for the self" (83). Adams notes instances of Wright's changing of an idea or event between one text and another or his switching of real names to fiction and fictional names to nonfiction. Kinnamon then provides paradigms of similarities with differences between the two autobiographies as narratives of childhood to youth spanning fourteen years. Their love of literature enables both Wright and Angelou to transcend obstacles of oppression in their quest for literacy and freedom (Smith, 2011).

During the Depression a federal agency, known first as the Works Progress Administration and later as the Works Projects Administration (WPA), was created to put unemployed Americans to work on public projects. One arm of the WPA was the Federal

Writers Project (FWP), which ran from 1935 to 1941. The FWP employed writers to produce travel guides, local histories, nature studies, and other books. The FWP not only produced interesting material, it also provided training for some exceptional authors, including Richard Wright and Ralph Ellison, both of whom went on to write about tensions between races and social classes. Wright's *Native Son* (1940) explores the extreme psychological pressures that drive a young urban Black man to violence. It establishes Wright as the leading African American author of the 1940s and as a key influence on younger writers, including James Baldwin (Reid, 2008).

More so, the stamp Wright placed on African American prose remains evident in the work of novelists such as William Attaway, Chester Himes, and Ann Petry. These are often interpreted as belonging to "the Wright school" of social realism. Petry's *The Street* (1946) adopted Wright's pitiless assessment of the power of environment in the lives of Black urban dwellers, but, unlike Wright, whose female characters generally exemplify demoralization and passivity, Petry created a female protagonist who fights back. It is to this end that Sherley Anne Williams' article stands as the seminal essay labeling Richard Wright as a misogynist and anti-Black feminist writer. We hear the echoing voices of Williams' premise in the articles by Kinnamon, Hakutani, Rampersad, and Joseph T. Skerrett, Jr. (although Hakutani cites the 1969 remarks of Edward Margolies, who had condemned Wright for his unfavourable portrayal of Black women) (Smith, 2011).

Toni Morrison, born in 1931, is an American writer whose works –*Tar Baby*, *The Bluest Eye* and *Beloved* among others- deal with Black experience and celebrate the Black community. Her works feature mythic elements, sharp observation, compassion, and poetic language and often concerns the relationship between the individual and

society (Toni Morrison, 2008). Being in the midst of a more than fulfilling career as a contemporary African-American master feminist novelist, her writing depicts the struggle of Black women at various points in American history. Morrison's prose, laced with soft traces of feminism can proudly compete with the highest praised novel in American literature (Doris and Jessica, 2007).

The novel, *Beloved*, is described as a text that is clearly part of the African-American tradition of social protest. He also opines that her handling of *Beloved* reminds us that history is not "over" for African-Americans, who are still struggling to write the genealogies of their people and to keep a historical consciousness alive (Chan, 2010). This implies that besides the fact that most African-American texts emerged in response to a set of lived conditions, more materials can yet be drawn from their rich historical experiences as is the case with the single mother's (Sethe's) story which is capable of making one think and think again about what is meant when people say they love their children or freedom. Set twelve years after the end of the Civil War, *Beloved* focuses on Sethe, a former slave who escaped with her four children from a Kentucky plantation known as Sweet Home in 1855. The traumatic events of her past—which include attempted suicide and her decision to murder her eldest daughter in an attempt to save her once and for all from bondage—are narrated in discontinuous flashbacks. The central concerns of *Beloved* are the ethical dilemmas posed by slavery, the complex imperatives of individual and collective memory, the dynamics of the mother-child relationship, and the importance of community (Define the Scope and the Problem of Adolescent Pregnancy, 2010).

The novel, *Beloved* is regarded as the story of Sethe, a mother who kills her daughter, Beloved, rather than have her grow up as a slave. The book explores many complex themes, including African-Americans' relationship to slavery. Morrison's use of multiple time frames and fantastic occurrences (such as the reappearance of Beloved) demonstrate her lyric storytelling abilities (Toni Morrison, 2008).

As critic John Leonard concluded in the *Los Angeles Times Book Review*, the novel "belongs to the highest shelf of American literature, even if half a dozen canonized white boys have to be elbowed off.... Without *Beloved* our imagination of the nation's self has a hole in it big enough to die from" (Beloved Study Guide, 2012).

Morrison's style is both bleak and tender. And *Beloved* is a brilliantly crafted and challengingly structured novel. She demonstrates her artistic skill in her circular structures. Her triumph is that through metaphor, dreams and a saving detachment, she melds horror and beauty into a story that will disturb the mind forever. Morrison can describe physical horror in an oddly delicate way that nevertheless makes the readers' nerve-endings jump; her metaphorical devices have an intensifying rather than distancing effect. *Beloved* is itself taking up again and reimagining the literary tradition of the American romance (Doris and Jessica, 2007).

Regarding Morrison's literary prowess, literary critics over the years have praised her lyrical descriptive style, her use of history and the extraordinary power of her writing in translating to White people what Black people know. 'Toni is always writing about what's going on underneath the kind of experience of sexism or racism or class issues ... that agony, the elation beneath those experiences,' said author Walter Mosley. 'She kind

of peels back the world and lets you look inside it even if you thought you knew it before' (Goldman, 1993).

Regarding the South African novelist whose work articulates her long-standing concern with economic, social, and political justice, Ngcobo, like Morrison is considered a feminist writer during the early 50's though her work was only published in the 80s and 90s. She is one of the main speakers during the 1956 women's anti-pass march that was held across the country, but left the country in 1963 escaping imminent arrest, and went into exile with her husband and children, moving from Swaziland to Zambia and finally settling in England where she worked as a teacher for 25 years. Soon after she left South Africa, Laretta started writing, but it was not until 1981 that her first book, *Cross of Gold*, was published. This is a book of which she says "I was contemplating what had catapulted my life into exile and how it had all come about" (South African History, 2008). With respect to *Cross of Gold*, Abubakar however considers that "Ngcobo's novel does not represent a feminist stance which sees man, often a mystified man, as the oppressor of woman. Ngcobo defines her women as partners in the struggle" (Abubakar, 1987).

Ngcobo's novels have attracted critical attention for their poignant and compassionate depiction of the challenges and suffering of Black South African women under the repressive apartheid system and traditional South African patriarchal customs. Critics trace the development of Ngcobo's portrayal of the female characters in her novels as evidence of the novelist's own growing racial and feminist consciousness: in her first book, *Cross of Gold*, she kills off her female character, Sindisiwe, because she finds it difficult to view African women as capable of effecting change; by her second

novel, *And They Didn't Die*, she is able to more fully develop a strong, if not tragic, female protagonist who undergoes her own brave journey toward political and social activism, even if it comes at great cost. Ngcobo's inability to sustain a female protagonist in *Cross of Gold* is viewed by critics as an accurate reflection of the privileged role of men in the struggle against apartheid. Other commentators note that her fiction also addresses the economic disempowerment and cultural dislocation imposed on the Black population, particularly Black rural women, by industrialization, colonialism, migrant labor, and the apartheid system (Ngcobo, Laretta, 2008).

Ngcobo's concern for Black women is highlighted in the introduction of *Let It Be Told* (1988). Therein, she assertively states that "Black women are caught between white prejudice, class prejudice, male power and the burden of history". In addition to these prejudices, Western standards of beauty and the body prejudice serve as another means of bias inflicted on the Black women (Atayurt, 2010).

In the seventies and through to the eighties and nineties, South African women contributed a substantial body of work on the continent. Thus, Laretta Ngcobo is compared with Miriam Tlali and Ellen Kuzwayo as women who become household names in South African literature alongside their male counterparts. By means of their works, these women announce themselves and what they stand for and foreground new paradigms in South African literature and their voices resonate throughout the decade (Mahala, 2008). The discourse on *Sharpeville and its aftermath: the Novels of Richard Rive, Peter Abrahams and, Alex LaGuma and Laretta Ngcobo*, also confirms that:

Novelists such Richard Rive, Peter Abrahams, Alex LaGuma, and Laretta Ngcobo, working in line with what the liberation movements were trying to accomplish, emerge as champions of the downtrodden and oppressed, after the PAC and the ANC

had been outlawed in April 1960. They have behind them a political and literary legacy which their successors of the black consciousness era and the Soweto generation are carrying forward, despite the repressive apartheid climate of South Africa (Mzamane, 2011).

Although, she is considered one of the latest novelists of the Sharpeville generation to come to prominence, the fact that Ngcobo is enlisted among a number of renowned South African writers confirms her commitment to the literary corpus of her society. To this end, the essay, *Continuities and Discontinuities in South African Literature*, describes the role played by Black women in the society in the following words: “women are the heroines of continuance, who sustain life, making sure life continues from one era to the next. They have known the agony and the ecstasy. They have known treachery, rejection, and betrayal... They will, no doubt, redeem society through the release of their creative potential” (Mahala, 2008). Ngcobo’s commitment to the South African literature are exemplified in the fact that “her work bridges the gap between the Sharpeville and Black consciousness eras. Her characters come from people who were among the principal actors in the Sharpeville drama and their offspring of the Black Consciousness generation” (Mzamane, 2011).

More so, the work on *Women in the Liberation Struggle: A Study of the Discourse on the Status and Role of Women in the South African Novels by Blacks (1969 - 1984)*, captures both Abubakar and Mzamane agreement on the vital role played by Black women in the liberation struggle in *Cross of Gold*. In an extensive discussion of the novel, Ngcobo’s focus on women depicted on how “the novel is ... expressive of the participation of Black women in the current struggle against racism” (Omokore, 1993).

One of the crucial aspects that the female writers of today have to address is the redefinition of women's role in transforming society. In her writings, Ngcobo is generous in her criticisms of apartheid and of Zulu traditions that clamped tightly on women. She once made a point saying "A woman is not only black, but at the same time must also submit to her husband, who, being oppressed, will find it necessary to oppress his women. Tradition reinforces this, and elevates man above women. In our tradition we find customs against which resistance is in vain, especially if one is an isolated individual or part of a restricted group (Vivan, 1993). More so, reviewers maintain that her novels are imbued with her own experiences struggling against the injustices of the apartheid system in South Africa in the second half of the twentieth century. Ngcobo is lauded for her ability to provide a much needed voice for Black South African rural women, who battle economic forces, social customs, and oppressive political policies with passion and dignity in their fight for equality within a patriarchal and racially discriminatory Africa (Lauretta Ngcobo, 2008).

Consequently, Ngcobo has been influenced to some extent by Bessie Head. Some sections in her *Cross of Gold* are evidence which recreate life among exiles in Botswana in a manner that is reminiscent of *When Rain Clouds Gather*. Similarly, "her work may well be moving in the direction of Bessie Head's in giving women characters a central role" (Mzamane, 2011). However:

A disappointing factor, in what is generally a distinguished and valuable first novel, is that Lauretta Ngcobo, who is the first Black South African woman to publish a novel dealing specifically with the political situation in her country, should have missed the opportunity to concentrate on a female character. Sindisiwe Zikode, with whom Cross of Gold opens, is the prevailing influence in her son's life, more important than her husband. Who is serving a life sentence on Robben

island for his involvement in the Sharpeville uprising. But her story is unsatisfactorily compressed into a long letter she leaves behind for her son. Thereafter, we have only the marginal lives of Nozipo, the woman Mandla eventually marries, and other women who cross his life presented to us. ... Ngcobo's women still have to be liberated and her views on their roles in the liberation struggle are still to be crystallized. She is still to work on the woman question more integrally into the texture of her work (Mzamane, 2011).

This confirms Mzamane's position as one of the critics that considers Ngcobo as a feminist writer. Although, his review of Alex LaGuma's *Time of the Butcher Bird* and Ngcobo's *Cross of Gold* in Kuka (1983-4), demonstrates the fact that Ngcobo gives her female characters a central role, his observation above significantly encourages an in-depth foregrounding of feminist aesthetics in her works. The dissertation which examines Black women's agency as writers through an analysis of interviews conducted with Miriam Tlali, Lauretta Ngcobo, Gladys Thomas, and Sindiwe Magona, equally compares Ngcobo and Tlali in the summation that:

*in examining the fiction of the pioneering writers Miriam Tlali and Lauretta Ngcobo, I argue that they were able to insert a counter-hegemonic vision of the nation into political discourse in their respective novels by critiquing the construction and use of apartheid space and offering an alternative vision for the reconfiguring of space for a more just and equitable social order. ... I look at Tlali's *Muriel at Metropolitan*, which centers around the experiences of a Black woman working for a furniture store in downtown, apartheid Johannesburg, and Ngcobo's *And They Didn't Die*, a novel about a woman's struggle for survival in her designated "homeland". Miriam Tlali demonstrates the unworkability of the apartheid system, which needs the Black bodies it continuously objects in order to maintain itself, and points in the direction of a different world without the dreaded pass laws and artificial boundaries within which the protagonist, Muriel, finds herself. Lauretta Ngcobo, in her imaginative, feminist utilization of space in *And They Didn't Die*, shows a model for Black women's resistance by demonstrating how Black women have literally reconfigured the oppressive spaces in which they*

find themselves, by working collectively and using their bodies to shelter each other (Boswell, 2011).

Although, this summation equally perceives and establishes Ngcobo as a feminist writer, it is imperative to note that her attempts at upholding the woman question equally paves way for her depiction of the impact which male absence in the South African society has on single parenthood, usually suffered by women. Thus, “the husbands are away in the mine or elsewhere in the cities, and often die young. The women raise the children, much of the time alone. They bring up the family, miraculously making something out of the near barren land in the Bantustan reserves. She says that their strength is admirable, yet the world knows nothing about them” (Mzamane, 2011). Another analysis of *Cross of Gold* likewise reiterates this point in buttressing the fact that Black women indeed, feel the pangs of oppression more than Black men (Abubakar, 1999).

On the whole, Ngcobo is not left out in the historical campaign that seeks to eulogies Black women’s effort at single parenting, being a harsh reality that permeates her country. She praises the unsung heroines, the rural women, whose struggles and complexities in harsh environments were further compounded by having to deal with the hardships of apartheid (South African History, 2008). The personal and public struggles of African women who opposed apartheid also encompass the harshness of rural life. Thus, “rural women suffered the most. They had to take care of their children on their own while the men left for the cities” (Sowetan, 2008). Of Ngcobo’s book *And They Didn’t Die*, Mazisi Kunene writes, “This is the most enlightened and balanced book written by a woman who is African and who understands clearly the circumstances of African women – their history and personal anguish.” Although she was in exile till 1994

her commitment to the socio-political issues of her society is evidently located in her works (*Reviewing a Dialogue between African Women Writers and Women of African Descent*, 2010).

This chapter explores how literature reveals the manner in which the socio-historical events shape men's work and family roles, with more variation within multicultural societies like the United States and South Africa. The objectives, methodology, scope, and justification of the study are also highlighted in the chapter. The nature, scope and impact of the subject matter in both societies are established from contributions of the selected writers - Wright, Morrison and Ngcobo among other scholars. In addition, the causative dimension to male absence and single parenthood is considered with the individual societies in focus. Beyond looking at realism as theoretical framework, this chapter further harnessed existing literatures to enhance the understanding of key concepts of the study. Specifically, this chapter equally highlights the essence of the study which lies in its comparative analysis of the selected writers and novels in view of male absence and single parenthood in the United States and South Africa.

Works Cited

- Abah, E.O. (2006). *Male Absence, Female Presence and Generational Continuity in Toni Morrison's Sula*. Paper Presented At The Zaria Conference on the Humanities in the 21st Century: Prospects and Challenges. Organized by Faculty of Arts, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Nigeria, 10-14 January.
- Abstract. (2011). *Modern Language Association JSTOR PMLA* Vol. 108, No. 3, May, 1993. Retrieved March 16, 2011, from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/462616>
- Abubakar, T.A.N. (1987). *South African Literature and the Changing Tempo of Politics: A Study of Prose-Fiction by Black South African Writers (1960-1986)*. Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation. A.B.U., Zaria, Nigeria.
- Abubakar, T.A.N. (1999). *The Black Novelist and Politics in South Africa*. Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Nigeria. PP. 105-110.
- Achmat, Z. (1993). 'Apostles of Civilized Vice,' 'Immoral Practices' and 'Unnatural Vice' in South African Prisons and Compounds, 1880 – 1920, *Social Dynamics*, 19/2, summer. In: Tejumola, O. and Quayson, A. (Eds) (2007). *African Literature: An Anthology of Criticism and Theory*. USA: Blackwell Publishing Ltd. Pp.753.
- Adams, T.D. (1985). "I Do Believe Him Though I Know He Lies." In: Smith, V.W. (2011). "Richard Wright: A Collection of Critical Essays". – Book Reviews. Retrieved June 11, 2011, from http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m2838/is_nl_v31/ai_195..._58k
- Adepoju, A. and Mbugua, W. (1997). *The African Family: An Overview of Changing Forms*. In: Adepoju, A. (Ed) *Family Population and Development in Africa*. London: Zed Books Ltd.
- Adogbo, M.P. and Ojo, C.E. (2003). *Research Methods in the Humanities*. Lagos: Malthouse Press Ltd. In: Kofoworola, K.G. (2010). *Myth Criticism as an Approach to the Study of Mythology, Mysticism and Madness in Selected Novels of Toni Morrison and Bessie Head*. Unpublished Ph.D. Proposal, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Nigeria.
- African American Literature. Encyclopedia Britannica Online. (2010). Retrieved December 06, 2010, from <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/926640/African-American-literature>
- Agarwal, A. (2008). *Single Parents In South Africa - How to Manage The Hard Life*. Retrieved December 06, 2010, from ezinearticles.com/?Single-Parents-In-South-Africa---How-To-Manage-The-Hard-Life&id=1661129

- All about Single Parenting in South Africa. (2010). Retrieved December 6, 2010, from Singleparentcenter.net
- Amadiume, I. (1987). *Male Daughters, Female Husbands: Gender and in an African Society*. London: Zed Books. In: Tejumola, O. and Quayson, A. (Eds) (2007). *African Literature: An Anthology of Criticism and Theory*. USA: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.
- Amato, P.R. (2000). Diversity within Single-Parent Families. In: David, H.D. *et al.*, (Eds) *Handbook of Family Diversity*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Amoateng, A.Y. and Heaten, T.B. (Eds) (2007). *Families and Households in Post-apartheid South Africa: Socio-demographic Perspectives*. Cape Town: HSRC Press. Retrieved March 6, 2011, from www.hrsccpress.ac.za.
- Apostolidis, P.T. (2002). Female Presence and Male Absence: Recent Films by Greek Women. In: *Film Criticism*. Questia Media Inc. *Journal Article* Vol. 27. Women'sforum.com Glam Family
- Appiah, K.A. (1987). Wright in the Gold Coast. In: Smith, V.W. (2011) *Richard Wright: A Collection of Critical Essays. – Book Reviews*. Retrieved June 11, 2011, from http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m2838/is_nl_v31/ai_195..._58k
- Atayurt, Z.Z. (2010). Beauty is a Fat Black Woman: Aesthetization of the placed Body in Grace Nichols's Fat Black Woman's Poems/"Guzellik, Sisman siyahi bir kadindir": Grace Nichols'un Sisman Siyahi Kadın'in Siirlerinde Yerinden Edilmis Bedenin Estetiksiel Yer Edinimi. Retrieved November 16, 2010, from <http://findarticles.com/>
- Baldick, C. (2004). *Oxford Concise Dictionary of Literary Terms*. New York: Oxford University Press Inc.
- Baldwin, J. (1962). *Another Country*. USA: Dial Press.
- Beloved Study Guide. (2012). In: *Novels for Students*, Gale Cengage. eNotes.com, Inc. Retrieved March 10, 2012, from www.enotes.com/beloved
- Benedetti, J. (1999). *Stanislavski: His Life and Art*. London: Methuen. Retrieved December 06, 2010, from [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Realism\(theatre\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Realism(theatre))
- (2005). *The Art of the Actor: The Essential History of Acting, From Classical Times to the Present Day*. London: Methuen. Retrieved December 06, 2010, from [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Realism_\(theatre\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Realism_(theatre))
- Bhaskaran, S. (2002) "The Politics of Penetration: Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code." In: Vanita, R. (Ed) *Queering India: Same-Sex Love and Eroticism in Indian*

- Culture and Society. New York: Routledge. In: Tejumola, O. and Quayson, A. (Eds) (2007). *African Literature: An Anthology of Criticism and Theory*. USA: Blackwell Publishing Ltd. Pp.753.
- Bosman, J. (2008). Obama Sharply Assails Absent Black Fathers. *The New York Times Company*. Chicago: OFFICIAL SELECTION SUNDANCE 2011 FILM FESTIVAL. Retrieved March 16, 2011, from <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/06/16/us/politics/15cnd-obama.html>
- Boswell, B. (2011). South African Women Writers: Laretta Ngcobo, Miriam Tlali, Sindiwe Magona. *Black Women Writers Rewriting the South African Nation. Intersections & Inequality*. Retrieved May 11, 2011, from www.cрге.umd.edu
- Bradley, J. (1993). *The Movement: British Poets of the 1950s*. New York: Twayne Publishers. In: Reis, H. (2004). "Presenting it, as it is": Poetics of Realism and Politics of Representation in Carol Ann Duffy's Poetry Hacettepe Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Dergisi/Cilt:21/Sayı:2/ss.133-142. Retrieved June 16, 2011, from <http://www.edebiyatdergisi.hacettepe.edu.tr/2004212HuriyeReis.pdf>
- Brians, P. (2006). Realism and Naturalism. Retrieved March 16, 2011, from http://www.wsu.edu/~brians/hum_303/naturalism.html
- Brockett, O.G. and Hildy, J. F. (2003). *History of the Theatre*. Ninth edition, International Edition. Boston: Allyn and Bacon. Retrieved December 06, 2010, from [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Realism_\(theatre\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Realism_(theatre))
- Bumpass, L. (1999). The Changing Contexts of Parenting in the United States. Retrieved February 18, 2010, from parenthood.library.wisc.edu/Bumpass/Bumpass.html
- Callister, P. and Burks, S. (2006). Two Parents, Two Households: New Zealand Data Collection, Language and Complex Parenting Family Commission Retrieved February 18, 2010.
- Campbell, D.M. (1997). Realism in American Literature, 1960 – 1990. *Literary Movements*. Department of English, Washington State University. Retrieved December 06, 2010, from <http://www.wsu.edu/~campbelld/amlit/realism.htm>
- Chan, C. (2010). Postmodern Blackness: Toni Morrison's 'Beloved' and the end of History – Novel by Black Female Author. 4u-Articles. Wordpress, Retrieved September 6, 2010 from bavotasan.com
- Coles, R.L. and Green, C. (Ed) (2009). The Myth of the Missing Father. Columbia University Press. Retrieved February 18, 2011, from <http://cup.columbia.edu/book/978-0-231-14352-3/the-myth-of-the-missing-black-father/excerpt>

- Criticism > Contemporary Literary Criticism > Morrison, Toni - (2010). Introduction *Beloved* (1987). eNotes.com, Inc. Retrieved December 06, 2010, from <http://www.enotes.com/contemporary-literary-criticism/beloved-morrison-toni>
- Define the Scope and the Problem of Adolescent Pregnancy. (2010) Chapter 13> Critical Concept Review. Pearson Education. Retrieved May 11, 2011, from wps.prenhall.com/chet_london_maternal_2/48/12417/3178795.cw/-/3178818/index.html
- Desmond, C. and Desmond, C. (2005). HIV/AIDS and the Crisis of Care for Children. In: Richter, L. and Morrell, L (Eds) (2006). *Baba: Men and Fatherhood in South Africa* (pp. 13-25). Cape Town, South Africa: HSRC Press. In: The free library>A Life Course Perspective on Fatherhood and Family Policies in the United States and South Africa> Farlex, Inc. Retrieved May 26, 2011 from [http://www.thefreelibrary.com/A life course perspective on fatherhood and family policies in the...-a0179348770](http://www.thefreelibrary.com/A+life+course+perspective+on+fatherhood+and+family+policies+in+the...-a0179348770)
- Donald, P. (2010). The Cambridge Companion to American Realism and Naturalism: Howells to London. In: Campbell, D.M. *Realism in American Literature, 1960-1990 Literary Movements*. Department of English, Washington State University. Retrieved March 21, 2010 from <http://www.wsu.edu/~campbelld/amlit/realism.htm>
- Doris, and Jessica, (Eds) (2007). Toni Morrison's writing Features in *Beloved*. Apr. 2007, Volume 5, No.4 US-China Foreign Language, USA. Retrieved December 06, 2010, from <http://www.linguist.org.cn/doc/uc200704/uc20070413.pdf>
- Douglass, F. (1845). *Narrative of the Life of Fredrick Douglass, an American Slave*. USA: Dover Publications, Inc.
- Dozon, J.P. (1996). Africa: The Family at Crossroads." In: Burguiere, A., Klisch-Zuber, C., Segalen, M. and Zonabend, F. (Eds) *A History of the Family: Volume Two the Impact of Modernity*. Cambridge MA: The Belknap Press. In: Sibanda, A. (2001, November 21-23). *Ethnic Variations in the Living Arrangements of Children in South Africa*. A paper prepared for the Virtual Conference on African Households: An Exploration of Census Data, organized by the African Analysis Project, Population Studies Center, University of Pennsylvania. Retrieved on October 22, 2010 from <http://www.pop.upenn.edu/africahh>
- Duffy, C.A. (1998). "Interview" *Bête Noire*. Winter: In: "*Presenting it, as it is*": *Poetics of Realism and Politics of Representation in Carol Ann Duffy's Poetry Hacettepe Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Dergisi 2004 / Cilt: 21 / Sayı: 2 / ss. 133-142* Retrieved December 06, 2010, from <http://www.edebiyatdergisi.hacettepe.edu.tr/2004212HuriyeReis.pdf>

- Ellwood, T.D. and Jencks, C. (2002). *The Spread of Single-Parent Families in the United States Since 1960*. John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University. Retrieved October 11, 2010, from papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=517662
- Emecheta, B. (1994). *The Joys of Motherhood*. Heinemann.
- Emile Zola: The Experimental Novel. (2011). Retrieved June 18, 2011, from www.bachelorandmaster.com
<http://bachelorandmaster.com/criticaltheories/emile-zola.html>
- Erasmus, P. (1998). Perspectives on Black Masculinity: The Abortion Debate in South Africa. *South African Journal of Ethnology*, 21, 203-206. In: Richter, L. and Morrell, R. (Eds) (2006). *Baba: Men and Fatherhood in South Africa*. Cape Town: Human Sciences Research Council. Retrieved March 6, 2011, from www.hsrcpress.ac.za
- Ferdinand, (1986). In: Bisztray, G. (1978). *Marxist Models of Literary Realism*. New York: Columbia University Press. Pp.178.
- Franklin, E.F. (1957). *The Negro in the United States*. New York: Revised Edition. The Macmillan Co.
- Gates H.L. (Jnr.) and McKay N. (Eds) (1997). *The Norton Anthology of African American Literature*. New York: W. W. Norton and Company, Inc.
- Gevissa, M. (2000). Mandela's Step-Children: Homosexual Identity in Post-Apartheid South Africa. In: Drucker, P. (Ed) *Different Rainbows*. London: Gaymen's Press. In: Tejumola, O. and Quayson, A. (Eds) (2007). *African Literature: An Anthology of Criticism and Theory*. USA: Blackwell Pub., Ltd. Pp.753.
- Goldman, J.J. (2008). Nobel Prize Goes to U.S. Author Toni Morrison *Los Angeles Times* October 8, Retrieved December 06, 2010, from Microsoft Encarta 2009 [DVD]. Redmond, WA: Microsoft Corporation.
- Goldstein and Kenney (2001). In: Coles, R.L. and Green, C. (Ed) (2009). *The Myth of the Missing Father*. Columbia University Press. Retrieved February 18, 2011, from <http://cup.columbia.edu/book/978-0-231-14352-3/the-myth-of-the-missing-black-father/excerpt>
- Guy, J. (1987). Analyzing Pre-capitalist Societies in Southern Africa. *Journal of Southern African Studies*.
- Hanssen, J.M. (2005). Everyday People and Situations. In: *Ibsen and Realism*. Retrieved February 18, 2011, from <http://www.norway.org/aboutnorway/culture/masters/ibsen/realism/>

- Harmon, W. and Holman, H. (2010). *A Handbook to Literature* 428. In: Campbell, D.M. Realism in American Literature, 1960-1990. *Literary Movements*. Department of English, Washington State University. Retrieved March 21, 2010, from <http://www.wsu.edu/~campbelld/amlit/realism.htm>
- Harrison, M. (1998). *The Language of Theatre*. London: Routledge. Retrieved December 06, 2010, from [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Realism_\(theatre\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Realism_(theatre))
- Hernandez and Brandon (2002). In: Coles, R.L. and Green, C. (Ed) (2009). *The Myth of the Missing Father*. Columbia University Press. Retrieved February 18, 2011, from <http://cup.columbia.edu/book/978-0-231-14352-3/the-myth-of-the-missing-black-father/excerpt>
- History of Realism. (2008). Retrieved December 06, 2010, from www.frontpainting.com. <http://frontpainting.com/history-realism.html>
- Hoffman, L. (2008). *On Realism (Added November, 2006)*. In: History of Realism. Retrieved December 06, 2010, from www.frontpainting.com; <http://frontpainting.com/history-realism.html>
- Hunter, M. (2006). Fathers without amandla: Zulu-speaking Men and Fatherhood. In: Richter, L. and Morrell, R. (Eds) (2006). *Baba: Men and Fatherhood in South Africa*. Cape Town: Human Sciences Research Council. Retrieved March 6, 2011, from www.hsrcpress.ac.za
- Jarrett, R., Roy, K., and Burton, L. (2002). Fathers in the 'hood: Insights from Qualitative research. In: *The free library>A life Course Perspective on Fatherhood and Family Policies in the United States and South Africa>Farlex Inc*. Retrieved May 26, 2011 from [http://www.thefreelibrary.com/A life course perspective on fatherhood and family policies in the...-a0179348770](http://www.thefreelibrary.com/A+life+course+perspective+on+fatherhood+and+family+policies+in+the...-a0179348770)
- Jeffreys, M. (1951). Lobolo is Child Price. *African Studies*, 10: 145 – 83. In: Richter, L. and Morrell, R. (Eds) (2006). *Baba: Men and Fatherhood in South Africa*. Cape Town: HSRC Press. Retrieved March 6, 2011, from www.hsrcpress.ac.za
- Kankan, M. (2010). Urban Dictionary.
- Ku, L. *et al.*, (1998). Understanding Changes in Young Metropolitan Men's Sexual Activity: 1979-1995. *Family Planning Perspectives* 30 (6): 256-262.
- Lamb, M. (1996). Speaking at the IPPR Conference 'Men and their Children' in London, 30th April Transcript by David Cannon - Shared Parenting Information Group (SPIG) UK- *promoting responsible shared parenting after separation and divorce* - What are fathers for? Retrieved November 3, 2010, from www.spig.clara.net/ippr/lamb.htm

- Landow, G.P. (2003). "Realism." Brown University: Victorian Web Home —> Authors —> Genre, Technique, and Style. Retrieved November 3, 2010, from <http://www.victorianweb.org/genre/realism.html>
- Larkin, P. (1982). *Required Writing: Miscellaneous Pieces 1955-1982*. New York: Farrar. In: Reis, H. (2004). "Presenting it, as it is": *Poetics of Realism and Politics of Representation in Carol Ann Duffy's Poetry Hacettepe Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Dergisi/Cilt:21/Sayı:2/ss.133-142*. Retrieved June 16, 2011, from <http://www.edebiyatdergisi.hacettepe.edu.tr/2004212HuriyeReis.pdf>
- La Rossa, R. (1997). *The Modernization of Fatherhood*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago. In: Roy, K. (2008). *Free Online Library: A life course perspective on fatherhood and family policies in the United States and South Africa*. Farlex Inc. Retrieved March 16, 2010, from www.thefreelibrary.com > ... > Fathering > March 22, 2008.
- Levine, G. (1981). *The Realistic Imagination: English Fiction from Frankenstein to Lady Chatterley*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Retrieved May 26, 2011 from <http://www.victorianweb.org/genre/realism.html>
- Mahala, S. (2008). *Black South African Women Novelists*. @Book SA, August 25. Retrieved March 16, 2011, from <http://siphwomahala.book.co.za/blog/2008/08/05/black-south-african-women-novelists/>
- Marc, D. (2008). Richard Wright (author). Retrieved June 11, 2011, from Microsoft Encarta 2009 [DVD]. Redmond, WA: Microsoft Corporation.
- Marsiglio, W. (1995a). *Fatherhood Scholarship: An Overview and Agenda for the Future*. In: Marsiglio, W. (Ed.), *Fatherhood: Contemporary Theory, Research, and Social Policy*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. . In: Richter, L. and Morrell, R. (Eds) (2006). *Baba: Men and Fatherhood in South Africa*. Cape Town: HSRC Press. Retrieved March 6, 2011 from www.hsrcpress.ac.za
- (1995b). *Fathers diverse Life Course Patterns and Roles: Theory and Social Interventions*. In: Marsiglio, W. (Ed) *Fatherhood: Contemporary Theory, Research, and Social Policy*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. In: Richter, L. and Morrell, R. (Eds) (2006). *Baba: Men and Fatherhood in South Africa*. Cape Town: HSRC Press. Retrieved March 6, 2011 from www.hsrcpress.ac.za
- Mallie *et al.*, (2003). *Effects of Parenting, Father's Absence and affiliation with Delinquent Peers on Delinquent behavior among African-American Male Adolescents*. *Health Care Industry. BNET Publications*. Retrieved November 11, 2010, from <http://www.cbsinteractive.com/adfeedback/>

- Marx, and Engels, (1976). *On Literature and Art*. Moscow: Progress. Pp.23.
- Moodie, *et al.*, (1988). Migrancy and Male Sexuality on the South African Gold Mines, *Journal of South African Studies*, 14. 1, 1998: 228 – 56. In: Munro, B. Queer Features: The Coming –Out Novel in South Africa. In: Tejumola, O. and Quayson, A. (Eds) (2007). *African Literature: An Anthology of Criticism and Theory*. USA: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.
- Moore, J.B. (1989). In: In: Smith, V.W. (2011) Richard Wright: A Collection of Critical Essays. – Book Reviews. Retrieved June 11, 2011, from http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m2838/is_nl_v31/ai_195..._58k
- Morial, M. (2011). State of Black America: Future of Black Men Critical for "American Family" *National: BlackPressUSA.com* (2001-2011) National Newspaper Publishers Association, Inc. Retrieved January 20, 2011, from <http://www.blackpressusa.com/News/Article.asp?SID=3&Title=HotStories&NewSID=12934>
- Morrison, T. (1988). *Beloved*. New York: Penguin Group.
- Munro, B. (2007). Queer Features: The Coming –Out Novel in South Africa. In: Tejumola, O. and Quayson, A. (Eds) (2007). *African Literature: An Anthology of Criticism and Theory*. USA: Blackwell Publishing Ltd. Pp.753-764.
- Murray, S.O. and Will, R. (Eds) (1998). *Boy Wives and Female Husbands: Studies of African Homosexuals*. New York: St. Martins Press. In: Munro, B. Queer Features: The Coming –Out Novel in South Africa. In: Tejumola, O. and Quayson, A. (Eds) (2007). *African Literature: An Anthology of Criticism and Theory*. USA: Blackwell Publishing Ltd. Pp.753.
- Mzamane, M.V. (2011). Sharpeville and its Aftermath: The Novels of Richard Rive, Peter Abrahams, Alex La Guma, and Laretta Ngcobo. Retrieved November 28, 2011 from <http://ariel.synergiesprairies.ca/ariel/index.php/ariel/arti...>
- Mzamane, M.V. (1983-84). A Review of Alex La Guma's *Time of the Butcherbird* and Laretta Ngcobo's *Cross of Gold* in *Kuka*. Pp. 76-9. In: Omokore, O.S. (1993). *Women in the Liberation Struggle: A Study of Discourse on the Status and Role of Women in the South African Novel by Blacks (1960 - 1984)* Unpublished PhD Dissertation. Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Nigeria.
- Neal, M.A. (2005). In: Coles, R.L. and Green, C. (Ed) (2009). *The Myth of the Missing Father*. Columbia University Press. Retrieved February 18, 2011, from <http://cup.columbia.edu/book/978-0-231-14352-3/the-myth-of-the-missing-black-father/excerpt>
- Nelson, (2004). In: Coles, R.L. and Green, C. (Ed) (2009). *The Myth of the Missing Father*. Columbia University Press. Retrieved February 18, 2011, from

<http://cup.columbia.edu/book/978-0-231-14352-3/the-myth-of-the-missing-black-father/excerpt>

- Ngcobo, L. (1988). "Introduction" *Let It Be Told: Essays by Black Women in Britain*. London: Virago, 1-34. In: Atayurt, Z.Z. (2010). "Beauty is a fat Black woman": Aesthetization of the placed body in Grace Nichols's *Fat Black Woman's Poems*/"Guzellik, sisman siyahi bir kadindir": Grace Nichols'un *Sisman Siyahi Kadin'in Siirlerinde Yerinden Edilmis Bedenin Estetiksel Yer Edinimi*. Retrieved November 16, 2010, from <http://findarticles.com/>
- Ngcobo, L. (2007). *African Motherhood – Myth and Reality*. In: Tejumola, O. and Quayson, A. (Eds) (2007). *African Literature: An Anthology of Criticism and Theory*. USA: Blackwell Publishing Ltd. Pp.533.
- Ngcobo, L. (1981). *Cross of Gold*. London: Longman Group Limited.
- Ngcobo, L. (1990). *And They Didn't Die*. Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press.
- "Ngcobo, Laretta 1931-."(2008). *Black Literature Criticism: Classic and Emerging Authors since 1950*. The Gale Group, Inc. Retrieved April 09, 2011, from www.highbeam.com/doc/1G2-3079400081.html -
- Ogwude, S.O. (1989). *An Exile Writing on Home: Protest, Commitment and Liberation in the Works of Bessie Head* Unpublished PhD Thesis, A.B.U., Zaria, Nigeria. In: Omokore, O.S. (1993). *Women in the Liberation Struggle: A Study of Discourse on the Status and Role of Women in the South African Novel by Blacks (1960 - 1984)*. Unpublished PhD Dissertation, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Nigeria.
- Omokore, O.S. (1993). *Women in the Liberation Struggle: A Study of Discourse on the Status and Role of Women in the South African Novel by Blacks (1960 - 1984)*. Unpublished PhD Dissertation, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Nigeria.
- Palkowitz, R. (2002). *Involved Fathering and Child Development: Advancing our Understanding of good fathering*. In: Tamis-LeMonda, C. and Cabrera, N. (Eds) *Handbook of Father Involvement: Multidisciplinary Perspectives*. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum. In: Richter, L. and Morrell, R. (Eds) (2006). *Baba: Men and Fatherhood in South Africa*. Cape Town: HSRC Press. Retrieved March 6, 2011 from www.hsrcpress.ac.za
- Petry, A.L. (1946). *The Street*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin. In: Bruck, P. and Karrer, W. (Eds) (1982). *The Afro-American Novel since 1960*. Netherlands: B.R. Gruner Publishing Co. Pp. 219-235.
- Preston-Whyte, E.M. and Zondi M. (1992) *African Teenage Pregnancy: Whose Problem?* In: Burman, S. and Preston-Whyte, E. (Eds) *Questionable Issue: Illegitimacy in South Africa*. (247-281). Cape Town: Oxford University Press. In: Richter, L. and

- Morrell, R. (Eds) *Baba: Men and Fatherhood in South Africa*. Cape Town: Human Sciences Research Council, Pp.241. Retrieved March 6, 2011 from www.hsrcpress.ac.za
- Ramphela, M. (2002). *Steering by the Stars: Being Young in South Africa*. Cape Town: Tafelberg. In: Richter, L. and Morrell, R. (Eds) *Baba: Men and Fatherhood in South Africa*. Cape Town: Human Sciences Research Council. Retrieved March 6, 2011 from www.hsrcpress.ac.za
- Realism (2007). Poetry Home | English 88 Reading List | Poetry News | Filreis Home EDT. Retrieved March 16, 2011, from <http://www.english.upenn.edu/~afilreis/88/realism.html>
- Realism. (2010). Retrieved November 3, 2010, from *123HelpMe.com*.
- Reid, M. (2008). American Literature: Prose. Retrieved November 23, 2011, from Microsoft Encarta 2009 [DVD]. Redmond, WA: Microsoft Corporation.
- Reilly, J.M. (1986). Richard Wright and the Art of Nonfiction. In: Smith, V. W. (2011). *Richard Wright: A Collection of Critical Essays*. – Book Reviews. Retrieved November 23, 2010, from http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m2838/is_nl_v31/ai_195..._58k
- (1956). “The Colour Curtain.” In: Smith, V. W. (2011). *Richard Wright: A Collection of Critical Essays*. – Book Reviews. Retrieved November 23, 2010, from http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m2838/is_nl_v31/ai_195..._58k
- Reis, H. (2004). “Presenting it, as it is”: *Poetics of Realism and Politics of Representation in Carol Ann Duffy’s Poetry Hacettepe Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Dergisi / Cilt: 21 / Sayı: 2 / ss. 133-142*. Retrieved June 16, 2011, from <http://www.edebiyatdergisi.hacettepe.edu.tr/2004212HuriyeReis.pdf>
- Renewing a Dialogue between African Women Writers and Women of African Descent. (2010). In: *Women’s Words: African Worlds*. Posted August 20, 2010. Retrieved November 6, 2011, from womenswordsafricanworlds.wordpress.com/page/2/
- Reuben, P.P. (2011). Chapter 7: Richard Wright. *PAL: Perspectives in American Literature- A Research and Reference Guide*. Retrieved November 23, 2011, from <http://www.csustan.edu/english/reuben/pal/chap7/wright.html>
- Richter, L. et al., (2004). Harnessing our Manpower. *Children First*, 8, 16-20. In: Richter, L. and Morrell, R. (Eds) (2006). *Baba: Men and Fatherhood in South Africa*. Cape Town: HSRC Press, Pp.64. Retrieved March 6, 2011, from www.hsrcpress.ac.za

- Richter, L. and Morrell, R. (Eds) (2006). *Baba: Men and Fatherhood in South Africa*. Cape Town: HSRC Press. Retrieved March 6, 2011, from www.hsrcpress.ac.za
- Rose, P.I. (1974). *They and We: Racial and Ethnic Relations in the United States*. New York: Random House. In: Nathan, G. and Daniel, P.M. (2009). The Black Experience in America is Unique. *ChickenBones: A Journal for Literary and Artistic African-American Themes*. Retrieved October 22, 2010, from www.nathanieltturner.com/blackexperienceunique.htm
- Ruas, C. (1984). *Conversation with American Writers*. New Delhi: Macmillan India Ltd. In: Abah, E.O. (2006). *Male Absence, Female Presence and Generational Continuity in Toni Morrison's Sula*. Paper Presented At The Zaria Conference on the Humanities in the 21st Century: Prospects and Challenges. Organized by Faculty of Arts, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Nigeria, 10-14 January.
- Ruggles, S. (1994). "The Origins of African-American Family Structure." *American Sociological Review*, 143.
- Sibanda, A. (2001, November 21-23). *Ethnic Variations in the Living Arrangements of Children in South Africa*. A paper prepared for the Virtual Conference on African Households: An Exploration of Census Data, organized by the African Analysis Project, Population Studies Center, University of Pennsylvania. Retrieved October 22, 2010 from <http://www.pop.upenn.edu/africahh>
- Single Parent Families –The well-being of Children raised in Single- Parent- Homes. (2010). Net Industries and its Licensors. Retrieved October 22, 2010, from social.jrank.org/.../Single-Parent-Families-Well-Being-Children-Raised-in-Single-Parent-Homes.html
- Single-parent. (2010). In: *Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia*. Wikimedia Foundation, Inc. Last modified on 1 December 2010 at 21:40. Retrieved March 16, 2011, from <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Single-parent>
- Smith, V.W. (2011). Richard Wright: A Collection of Critical Essays. – Book Reviews. Retrieved October 22, 2011, from http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m2838/is_nl_v31/ai_195..._58k-
- South African History Online. (2008). Retrieved May 11, 2011, from <http://literature.kzn.org.za>; [http://www.mediamonitoring.org.za\(PDF\)](http://www.mediamonitoring.org.za(PDF)); <http://feministpress.org>
- Sowetan In: South African History Online. (2008). Retrieved May 11, 2011, from <http://literature.kzn.org.za>; [http://www.mediamonitoring.org.za\(PDF\)](http://www.mediamonitoring.org.za(PDF)); <http://feministpress.org>

- Tejumola, O. and Quayson, A. (Eds) (2007). *African Literature: An Anthology of Criticism and Theory*. USA: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.
- Toni Morrison 1931- (2008). Retrieved March 3, 2011, from Microsoft Encarta 2009 [DVD]. Redmond, WA: Microsoft Corporation.
- Turning the Corner on Father Absence in Black America: A Statement from the Morehouse Conference on African American Fathers*. (1999). New York: Morehouse Research Institute 830 West view Drive, SW Atlanta, Institute for American Values 1841 Broadway, Suite 211. Retrieved May 26, 2011 from www.morehouse.edu/mri.htm; oclayton@morehouse.edu. www.americanvalues.org
- Van de Walle, E. (1999). Where are the Children of Botswana? Unpublished Manuscript: Population Studies Center, University of Pennsylvania. In: Sibanda, A. (2001, November 21-23). *Ethnic Variations in the Living Arrangements of Children in South Africa*. A Paper Prepared for the Virtual Conference on African Households: An Exploration of Census Data, Organized by the African Analysis Project, Population Studies Center, University of Pennsylvania. Retrieved October 22, 2010 from <http://www.pop.upenn.edu/africahh>
- Vivan, I. An Interview. In: Hunter, E. and Mackenzie, C. (Eds) (1993). *Between the Lines II*. Grahamstown: National English Literacy Museum. Pp.102. In: South African History Online (2008). Retrieved May 11, 2011, from <http://literature.kzn.org.za>; <http://www.mediamonitoring.org.za>(PDF); <http://feministpress.org>
- Walker, C. (1995). Conceptualizing Motherhood in the Twentieth-century South Africa. *Journal of Southern Africa Studies*, 21, 417-437. In: Richter, L. and Morrell, R. (Eds) (2006). *Baba: Men and Fatherhood in South Africa*. Cape Town: HSRC Press. Retrieved March 6, 2011, from www.hsrcpress.ac.za
- Waite and Gallagher (2000). In: Barber, N. Evolutionary Explanations for Societal Differences in Single Parenthood. *Evolutionary Psychology*, USA: 3: 142-174. Retrieved December 12, 2010, from <http://humannature.com/ep//printable/ep03142174.html>
- Warren, K. (2010). *Black and White Strangers*. In: Campbell, D.M. (1997). Some information adapted from *Resisting Regionalism: Gender and Naturalism in American Fiction, 1885-1915* Athens: Ohio University Press. In: Campbell, D.M. (2010). Realism in American Literature, 1960 – 1990. *Literary Movements*. Department of English, Washington State University. Retrieved December 06, 2010, from <http://www.wsu.edu/~campbelld/amlit/realism.htm>
- Wertheim, A. (1982). “Journey to Freedom: Ernest Gaines’ *The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman* (1971).” In: Bruck, P. and Karrer, W. (Eds) (1982). *The Afro-*

American Novel since 1960. Netherlands: B.R. Gruner Publishing Co. Pp. 219-235.

Westminster City Council. (2011). Council Services > Libraries and Archives > Books & Reading > Black writing City of Westminster. T: 020 7641 6000E: Retrieved March 16, 2011, from info@westminster.gov.uk
<http://www.westminster.gov.uk/services/libraries/reading/bla...>

Whitaker, M. (2010). *U.S. History Encyclopedia: African Americans*. Answer.Com Reference Answers: The World's Leading Q & A Site. Home>Library>History, Politics & Society.>U. S. History Encyclopedia. Retrieved October 22, 2010.

Why Single Mothers. (2010). Charity: She Cares Foundation. Retrieved October 22, 2010, from <http://shecaresfoundation.org/whysinglemothers/whysinglemoms.html>

Wright, R. (1957). *White Man Listen*. Garden City , New York: Doubleday

----- (1947). *Twelve Million Black voices: A Folk History of the Negro in the United States of America*. London: Lindsay Drummond.

----- (1945). *Black Boy*. New York: Harper Perennial Modern Classics

----- (1940). *Native Son*. New York: The Modern Library.

CHAPTER TWO:

2.0 Male Absence and Single Parenthood in African American Families in Richard Wright's *Black Boy* and Toni Morrison's *Beloved*

2.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on Richard Wright's *Black Boy* and Toni Morrison's *Beloved* as novels that feature male absence and single parenthood in African-American families. In line with the view that male absence entails both physical and emotional 'none presence' of men in homes and institutions or places where their presence is desired, this chapter attempts to establish that single parenthood is a direct effect of male absence particularly in situations where children, whether biological or foster are involved. Consequent to the fact that poverty, squalor, unemployment, divorce, dehumanization, separation and death among other social challenges usually result from racial discrimination against African-Americans, this chapter considers how Wright and Morrison's novels connect such experiences to the spread of male absence and single parenthood in African-Americans' families. Through the instrumentality of their novels, this chapter also examines Wright and Morrison's negotiation of the outlined challenges within the context of the statistics which show that about 70 percent of African-American children are born to unmarried (divorced, widowed, or teenage) mothers and at least about 80 percent of them are expected to spend a significant part of their childhood without their fathers (*Turning the Corner on Father Absence in Black America*, 1999). More so, this chapter evaluates the thematic and stylistic polarities between both authors' responses to the spread of male absence and single parenthood in African-American families.

2.2 Male Absence and Single Parenthood in African American Families

The family unit affects and is affected by various socioeconomic, cultural, and political institutions. It can be perceived as multidimensional in nature. Besides the institutions which form the social structure of the society, other changes in the structure and function of the family are occasioned by the institutions in the family's environment. Some of the environmental conditions that facilitate these changes in African-American families include:

Shifting occupational structures (from manufacturing to services), stagnating real wages, and the declining relative demand for low-skilled labor undermined the economic status of many Black men. Welfare policies that focused on helping mothers and children, to the exclusion of fathers, had the practical effect of keeping or driving men out of the home and away from children. Housing discrimination that facilitated the movement of whites out of the cities while hampering the mobility of African Americans, the increasing suburbanization of employment, inadequate urban school systems, and the growing incarceration of Black men, fueled in large measure by the war on drugs, also played crucial roles in undercutting opportunities for many Black men. ... the percent of Black female-headed households rose dramatically as Black male unemployment and underemployment also increased. In the absence of genuine opportunities, and in the face of persistent poverty, more and more young Black males dropped out of both the labor force and family life. All of these trends, moreover, occurred within the context of a growing societal belief that fathers, when all is said and done, are non-essential. (Turning the Corner on Father Absence in Black America, 1999)

In preparing the grounds for establishing the effects of these factors on familial unity Wright, in *Black Boy*, paints a palpable picture of families that are grappling with socio-economic challenges. Thus, *Black Boy* is a story about the hardships and obstacles faced by a poverty-stricken family. The challenges the family face further deny them the privilege of benefiting from such familial essentials as love, security and acceptance

(Turner, 2009). The portrayal generally, reduces the family's potential of meeting the requirement of an ideal family which is "frequently (although not exclusively) identified on the basis of shared residential space and presence of emotional bonds and support relationships among members" (Single Parent Families, 2010).

As the structural changes in the U.S economy increasingly disadvantaged lower-skilled workers, the disproportionate number of underemployed and underpaid African-Americans obviously adds to the inability of affected fathers to financially provide for their families. Thus, in spite of the long hours of absence which Richard's father grapples with in working to earn a living as well as measure up to his 'sole provider' responsibility, he yet fails at improving their standard of living. Their poor disposition is gauged by the retrogression perceived in the family's migration from Mississippi to Memphis. From the perspective of Richard's disappointment, this issue is aptly featured thus:

For days I had dreamt about a huge white boat floating on a vast body of water, but when my mother took me down to the levee on the day of leaving, I was disappointed and when time came to go on board I cried and my mother thought that I did not want to go with her to Memphis, and I could not tell her what the trouble was.... In Memphis, we lived in a one-storey brick tenement. The stone buildings and the concrete pavements looked bleak and hostile to me. The absence of green, growing things made the city seem dead. Living space for four of us- my mother, my brother, my father, and me- was a kitchen and a bedroom. In the front and rear were paved areas in which my brother and I could play, but for days I was afraid to go into the strange city streets alone. (P.7)

The fact that Richard's family condition is far from being improved is expressed in his unrealized expectation of a better life signified by the exquisite boat he desires to board. Instead of a better cause, Richard perceives a worse fortune in their change of

location. His description of their new environment as bleak, hostile and devoid of green (which signifies life) is predictive of the eventual suffering that confronts them on account of their father's desertion. Their compacted living area symbolizes poverty which appears as the most important factor undermining the role of fatherhood in the involvement of fathers (Coles, 2002; McAdoo and McAdoo, 1995).

Despite his attempted commitment to the 'provider' responsibility of fatherhood, Richard's father inevitably fails in developing the emotional bond expected of a father with his family. His frustration with the social demands of fatherhood is manifest in the unfriendly and autocratic attitude he exerts in relating with his children. Among other challenges, the emotional laxity which results from his action significantly threatens the survival of the family's tie. In his portrayal of this as a potent factor that likewise destabilizes the African-American families as well as triggers male absence, Wright features a scenario that climaxed in the bitter hatred which Richard gradually develops against his father. Thus:

It was in this tenement that the personality of my father first came fully to the orbit of my concern. He worked as a night porter in a Beale street drugstore and he became important and forbidding to me only when I learned that I could not make noise when he was asleep in the daytime. He was the lawgiver in our family and I never laughed in his presence: I was used to lurk timidly in the kitchen doorway and watch his huge body sitting slumped at the table He was always a stranger to me always somehow alien and remote. (P. 7)

Like some responsible men, Richard's father seeks a paid job to provide for his family. In spite of this effort, his threatening and unfriendly disposition towards his family obviously fostered rather than steer away the 'claim that fatherhood gives men power over women and children and justifies authority and tyranny'. Although this is not

applicable to all men, the character of Richard's father rightly subscribes to the position that 'men have tended to be distant and detached from family affairs to do with children' Tanfer and Mott's (1997). Similarly, Richard's description shows that his father's attitude defies the demands that fatherhood should be a role that integrates men into families, rather than separating them from children, women and other men (Richter and Morrell, 2006). More so, his inability to establish a warm, close and nurturing relationship with his children significantly deters Richard's father from having an enormous positive influence expected of fatherhood on his boys' development (McKeown, Ferguson and Rooney, 2006: 15). In essence, his action also hinders his being a good role model to his children. Wright's portrayal of 'Father's absence' in the physically present, but emotionally absent father, further agrees that fathers' presence to an extent, is more detrimental to the children than his absence altogether. Furthermore, the menial as well as exhaustive jobs available to most African-American fathers constitutes another factor that consume the time, energy and atmosphere they needed to develop emotional bonds with their families. As such, antagonism, bitter enmity and criticism are sometimes expressed against those fathers. As Richard spitefully decries his father's action:

I had had my first triumph over my father. I had made him believe that I had taken his word literary. He could not punish me without risking his authority. I was happy because I had at last found a way to throw my criticism of him into his face. I had made him feel that, if he whipped me for killing the kitten, I would never give serious weight to his word again. I had made him know that I felt he was cruel and I had done it without his punishing me. (P.9)

In the absence of a 'better quality relationship with, and emotional support from fathers or father figures', the 'predicted lower depression and lower rates of delinquent behavior among poor Black adolescent boys in the United States' is usually defeated

(Zimmerman *et al.*, 1995). Richard's resolve to kill the cat so as to criticize his father's tyranny represents familial conflict that ensues between Black men and their children. Beyond the socio-economic situations that make a vegetable of Black men, contentious challenges as reflected above likewise increase the chances of desertion by most fathers. Among other insolent behaviour exerted by Richard, the success he achieves by convicting his father of wickedness, adds up to the supposed factors that contribute to the desertion his entire family eventually suffers.

In *Black Boy*, Wright further depicts how 'desertion by fathers' is prompted by their inability to bear the burden of being primary providers (Ramphela, 2002: 158). The frustration of Richard's father, being an uneducated and unskilled labourer, culminates in his desertion of the very family he earlier stakes his life for. For this cause, the mounting dislike which Richard cultivates against his father evidently prevents him from noticing the instance of the latter's departure (which gives him liberty to be unusually free to play and scream with his brother as he desires). However, the biting hunger which suddenly grips him also triggers the realization that their sudden lack is not unconnected to his father's absence. Therefore:

Hunger stole upon me so slowly that I was not aware of what hunger really meant. Hunger had always been more or less at my elbow when I played, but now I began to wake up at night to find hunger standing by my bedside, staring at me gauntly... "Mama, I'm hungry," I complained one afternoon. ... "Where is your father?" she asked me. I stared in bewilderment. Yes, it was true that my father had not come home to sleep for many days now and I could make as much noise as I wanted. Though I had not known why he was absent, I had been glad that he was not there to shout his restrictions at me. But it had never occurred to me that his absence would mean that there would be no food.... As the days slid past the image of my father became associated with

my pangs of hunger, and whenever I felt hunger I thought of him with a deep biological bitterness. (P. 11, 12)

From the above, male absence is depicted with a dual effects on Black children in affected homes. On a lighter note, it is portrayed as the source of freedom to children whose father symbolizes weapon of harassment in the home. On the other hand, it is reflected as the means by which poverty and starvation equally creep into the home. Whereas, the former perspective subscribes to the position that ‘under certain circumstances, living with a father is not in the interest of a child’, ‘the presence of the father can have negative consequences for the child’ (or children) (Richter and Morrell, 2006: 15; Jaffee et al, 2001); the latter position however, undermines the strength motherhood in surmounting poverty in single-parent households. In this guise, the second point also agrees with the conclusion that ‘two-parent households, where fathers are present, are better off than single-mother households.’ More so, the ‘fiscal support and fulfillment of the provider role by males have the typical effect of lifting children out of or preventing their descent into poverty’ (Jarrett, 1994; Morrell, 2005: 55). Notwithstanding, it is contested that ‘men have used the argument that children need their (biological) fathers to pursue anti-feminist campaigns designed to return women to their dependence on men or to reduce their autonomy’ (Connell, 1995; Messner, 1997). Although we should celebrate positive fatherhood, we should not romanticize it as we might end up denigrating motherhood.’ Whatever the reason for the foregone arguments, the fact that Wright, to an extent subscribes to the opinion that undermines the place of motherhood in better children upbringing is evident in the above quotation (Ngobeni, 2002).

Besides the fact that Richard's father has failed at being a good role model, it is obvious that Richard's hatred for him is aggravated by the unrealized expectation that his father should protect him from the evils in the world, instead of becoming one to him. In reaction to the court case that dissolves his parent's marriage as well as relieves his father of his social responsibility towards them, Richard sadly decides:

... I did not want my father to feed me; I was hungry, but my thoughts of food did not now centre about him. ...it had been painful to sit and watch my mother crying and my father laughing... back at home my mother cried again and talked complainingly about the unfairness of the judge who had accepted my father's word. After the court scene, I tried to forget my father; I did not hate; I simply did not want to think of him. Often when we are hungry my mother would beg me to go to my father's job and ask him for a dollar, a dime, a nickel. ... But I would never consent to go. I did not want to see him. ... if someone had suggested that my father be killed, I would perhaps have become interested; if someone had suggested that his name never be mentioned, I would no doubt have agreed; if someone had suggested that we moved to another city, I would have been glad. (P. 22, 23)

To a larger extent, this portrayal is reminiscent of the lamentation that "too many Black men are weak and powerless. Others turn their anger and frustrations on their own Black people: as the racist Whites as well as socioeconomic situation "draws (your manhood) out of you or ... make you a beast – make you use it in a brutish way. You use it on a woman without caring for her, you use on children, you use it on other men, you use it on yourself..." (Bryant, 1987: 157; Everett, 1987: 157). Although it appears that Richard is too young to loathe his father; his reaction simply suggests that his father obviously caused it (kwilliams2, 2010). This is because the rift that ensues between them is considered an attitude problem that is birthed by lack of manhood wherefore sons of weak fathers no longer respect them (Noss, 1987: 157).

In a further attempt to depict the frequency of desertion by African-American men, Wright features an in Uncle Hoskins - Aunt Maggie's second husband, another occasion of desertion. Consequently, this situation leads to her 'casting about for a living' (P. 223). Unlike some couples who may choose to maintain an intact household despite conflict, the union between Richard's parent as well as Aunt Maggie and her second husband's replicate many others wherein separation prevails by means of desertion (Effect of Family without a Father, 2009). Even though, most instances of desertion is connected to a father's inability to meet up with his 'sole provider' responsibility, the fact that Aunt Maggie's desertion by her second husband is not connected to any cogent reason, projects the act as a general and deliberate attitude by a number of African-American men.

Beyond the issue of desertion, Wright also establishes male absence in the death rate of African-Americans who he features in the character of Uncle Hoskins (Aunt Maggie's first husband) – a victim of brutal murder by the White racists. 'Uncle Hoskins' death explores the intricacies of racism which deprives Blacks of any right to own valuable things including promising businesses capable of empowering them financially. In the bid to obstinately maintain his flourishing liquor business for which his life is threatened, Uncle Hoskins suddenly gets killed by the same whites who coveted it for a long time. His desire to 'hold on a while to amass more money' is truncated. Therefore, Richard explains his mother and Aunt Maggie's plight when he says; "shocked, frightened, alone without their husbands or friends, my mother and Aunt Maggie lost faith in themselves and, after much debate and hesitation, they decided to return home to Granny and rest, think, map out new plans for living." These among other issues constitute few instances which led to the conclusion that approximately '50% of today's

children will spend at least part of their childhood in a single-parent-female-headed household' (Brown-Cheatham, 1993 in Rodney and Mupier, 1999).

Another instance of male absence is established in the suppressed voice of Richard's maternal grandfather. Instead of having him tower in authority above especially the women in the house, granny (his maternal grandmother) is seen at the helm of the family's affairs. However, the former only features as a weakling the moment he is called upon to chastise Richard for being disrespectful.

In *Black Boy*, Wright also explores the implications of male absence and single parenthood on especially Black children in a decaying society. At the wake of their desertion by her husband, Richard's mother exerts a committed effort at securing a job to earn a living for her family. Whereas her effort is laudable, the absence of adequate vigilance it creates in her parenting endeavour results in the detrimental case of her older son (Richard) who become a drunk at age six. Thus, he confesses that:

... when my mother had gone to work I would follow a crowd of black children-abandoned for the day by their working parent ... (Sometimes) To keep us out of mischief, my mother often took my brother and me to her cooking job. Standing hungry and silently in the corner of the kitchen, we would watch her go from stove to the sink Watching the white people eat would make my empty stomach churn and I would grow vaguely angry I now found it irresistible to roam during the day while my mother was cooking in the kitchens of white folks. A block away from our flat was a saloon in front of which I used to loiter all day long One summer afternoon – in my six year – while peering under the swinging doors of the neighborhood saloon, a black man caught hold of my arm and dragged me into its smoky and noisy depths.

... Whisky was set before me.

“Drink it, boy” somebody said....

“Don't teach that boy that,” someone said.

“He doesn't know what it is,” another said....

To beg for drinks in the saloon became an obsession. Many evenings my mother would find me wondering in a daze and take me home and beat me; but the next morning, no sooner had she gone to her job than I would run to the saloon and wait for someone to take me in and buy me a drink.

My mother protested tearfully to the proprietor of the saloon, who ordered me to keep out of his place. But the men – reluctant to surrender the sport – would buy me drinks anyway, letting me drink out of their flask on the streets, urging me to repeat obscenities. I was a drunkard in my sixth year, before I had begun school. (P. 15, 16, 17, & 18)

Despite the effort which invested in catering for her family's needs, Richard's mother yet fails at preventing her children from developing abominable behaviors. In effect, Wright's presentation apparently subscribes to the view that "in all cases the absence of the father is catastrophic for the emotional and psychological development of the child." Although, it is true that a father's absence, in some cases, breeds poverty as well as causes other menace in the home, the fact that general male absence, as represented in the amoral behaviour of drunken men who rather promote than dissuade immorality, also promote delinquent behaviour in the society is clearly expressed above (Lim, 2011; Morial, 2011). Therefore, it can be surmised that children are not only affected by the inadequacies of the home-front situation, they are invariably disadvantaged when they belong to a society that is without access to social position, labour, financial and moral support provided by responsible men in a community (Townsend, 2002: 270).

At another level, the insufficient and lack of finance necessary for maintaining a smooth running and permanent home does not only result in the incessant migration experienced by Richard's family; it also culminates in the unsteady and disrupted academic pursuit he experiences while growing up. Although, Uncle Clark cautions him about regretting never having a single year of steady school in the future, Richard stubbornly counters him by being obstinate about his decision leave. However, the latter subsequently ruminates thus:

I did not re-enter school. Instead, I stayed alone in the backyard bouncing a rubber ball off the fence, drawing figures in the soft clay with an old knife or reading what books I found about the house...for a time I remained out of school to wait upon my mother, then granny came to visit us and I returned to school.... Until I enter Jim Hill public school, I had had but one year of unbroken study; each time I had begun a school term something happened to disrupt it (P.23, 106).

Beyond his refusal to continue school at Uncle Clark's place, the numerous challenges that foster the disruption in Richard's academic pursuit portray him as a victim of his environment as well as parental rejection. His disappointment with several issues surrounding his life leads to his developing an independent mind. Thus, he learns to distrust and defy authority symbolized by his father, grandparents, Uncle Clark, Auntie Addie, his principal and Miss Simon among others. In the orphanage, when Miss Simon attempts to win his confidence, he rejects her bearing in mind how distrust had already become a daily part of his being. He becomes aware of himself as a distinct personality striving against others (P. 25). As a number of Americans believe, growing up in single-parent families has some negative effects on children independent of its effect on family income. Indeed, the idea that two loving parents can raise children better than one appears self-evident to most couples who get along reasonably well. But when parents do not get along, the possibility that their children will always fare better if the parents live together becomes problematic (Ellwood and Jencks, 2002). More so, the effect of single parenthood on especially single mothers is expressed in the health challenge that eventually paralyses Richard's mother.

Gleaning from the experiences above, it can be surmised that the characters' actions and reactions are informed by the social realities of their environment. Suffice it to say that Wright's exploration of male absence and single parenthood in the text also

subscribes to the view that African-Americans are both victims of the racist and segregationist environment as well as its emergent traits.

Therefore, some social scientists' discovery which links most teenage delinquent behaviour to children from single parent household exposes how male absence and single parenthood is detrimental to both deserted, widowed or unmarried mothers and their children.

Beloved (1987), being Morrison's most sung novel also furthers the scope and context of male absence and single parenthood among African-Americans. Besides its mythic perspective, the novel features the extent to which slavery encourages male absence and single parenthood among Blacks in the US. The experiences of Sethe as an emancipated slave woman as well as a single mother clearly express this. Her apparent good fortune at successfully escaping Sweet Home to Cincinnati (her mother-in-law's spiritually nourishing home) vanishes only 28 days later (Doris and Jessica, 2007). The novel depicts Morrison's attempt at grappling with slavery and the tenacity of its legacy. *Beloved* is 'dedicated to the tens of millions of slaves who died in the trans-Atlantic journey (Biography of Toni Morrison 1931, 2011). Thus, it 'could be called a foundation story (like Genesis or Exodus) for Black-Americans.'

As in *Black Boy*, the general instance of male absence in *Beloved* finds expression in the autocratic, brutal and dehumanizing realities of slavery which cripple, quell and strip Black men of their manhood. During the arrest of Sethe by the slave catchers and schoolteacher (who brutally dealt with her before her escape), the fact that no male character could assert his maleness by defending her confirms the state of absence by

men's inability to prove their worth in defending their wives, children or family from the very vice that cripples them. Thus:

Caught red-handed, so to speak, they would seem to recognize the futility of outsmarting a Whiteman and the hopelessness of outrunning a rifle.... Six or seven Negroes were walking up the road toward the house: two boys from the slave catcher's left and some women from his right.... The slave catcher ... joined others. Schoolteacher and the nephew moved to left of the house; a crazy old nigger was standing in the woodpile with an ax....grunting-making low, cat noises like. About twelve yards beyond that nigger was another one-a woman...standing stock still-but fanning her hands as though pushing cobwebs out of her way. Both, however, were staring at the same place -a shed. Nephew walked over the old nigger boy and took the ax from him. Then all four started toward the shed. Inside ... (is) the woman (Sethe) who schoolteacher bragged about, the one he said made fine ink...good soup, pressed his collars the way he liked besides having at least ten breeding years (but) left. They unhitched from the schoolteacher's horse the borrowed mule that was to carry the fugitive woman back to where she belonged, and tied it to the fence. ... The sheriff wanted to back out ... She stayed still and he had made up his mind to go near her and ... bind her wet red hands.... Outside a throng, now, of black faces stopped murmuring. ...Sethe walked past them in their silence and hers. ...they waited till the cart turned about, headed west to town. Then no words. Humming No words at all. (Pg.148, 149, 151, 152, 153).

From the above, it is obvious that Black men's subjugation is tantamount to male absence. Their helplessness before the Whiteman – slave master is expressed in inability to save themselves the shame of being incapable to save the woman whose safety should be within their means. Consequently, their eventual loss of faith in manning the home as men and husbands is enhanced by the humiliation they suffer before the very woman and family members they expect submission from. More so, Sethe's dilemma vividly signifies the helplessness of single mothers who constitute victims of slavery in a paralyzed society where their safety cannot be guaranteed. Thus, it is the conglomeration

of these issues that support the fact that in *Beloved*, it is women characters that confront successfully the incidence of slavery, when nearly all the men falter (Abah, 2002: 89). For instance, it is the heavily pregnant Sethe who rescues her children from slavery by escaping Sweet Home in Kentucky to Cincinnati Ohio. The Black male characters – Sixo, Halle, and the Paul brothers appear forever doomed never to make it out of slavery. Although Paul D eventually escapes to Ohio, it takes him twenty years to do that. The brutal murder and harsh treatment of male slaves similarly portrays another phase of male absence under the horrors of slavery. Among other slaves in *Beloved*, the circumstances that surround Sixo’s death during his escape clearly reflect this:

Sixo is about to crawl out to look for the knives he buried. He hears something. Forget the knives. Now. The three of them climb up the bank and schoolteacher, his pupils and four other Whitemen move toward them. With lamps. Sixo pushes the Thirty-Miled woman and she runs further on in the creekbed. Paul D and Sixo run the other way toward the woods. Both are surrounded and tied. ...Paul D ... is thinking about ...where Paul A might be when Sixo turns and grabs the mouth of the nearest pointing rifle.... Five guns were trained on him.... Finally one of them hits Sixo on the head with his rifle.... Smoky, stubborn fire. They shoot at him.... Sixo is dead; the Thirty-Miled woman ran....away with his blossoming seed. (Pg. 225, 226, 228, 229)

This suggests the futile struggle by Black men to surmount the fetters of slavery. Despite Sixo’s effort in struggling with the slave catchers, the fact that he died in the process confirms Gaines statement that “a Black man’s simple attempt to be a man will lead toward danger” (O’Brien, 1987: 157). The number of murdered slaves in the text signifies the frequency at which Black males encounter death in the U.S., especially during slavery. This is confirmed in the speech that says, “young Black males between the ages of 15 and 34 years are nine times more likely to be killed by firearms” (Morial in

Edny, 2007). Similarly, male absence that is given impetus by other factors as, displacement and desertion by the male character also finds expression in the novel. Morrison depicts this in the characters that ploy to escape slavery. Among the displaced slaves that plan the escape, Sixo whose pregnant girlfriend runs ahead is killed, but Sethe and her husband -Halle are only separated without any clue of survival on both sides. They never saw each other again. Therefore, they conclude that:

Nobody knows what happened. Except for the churn, that was the last anybody ever saw of Halle. What Paul D knew was that Halle disappeared, never told Sethe anything Maybe when he got to the gate and asked to see Sethe, the schoolteacher heard a tint of anxiety in his voice- the tint that would make him pick up his ever-ready shotgun. Maybe Halle made a mistake of saying "my wife" in some way that put a light in the schoolteacher's eye. Sethe says now that she heard shots, but did not look out the window of Mrs. Garner's bedroom. But Halle was not killed or wounded that day because Paul D saw him later, after she had run off with no one's help; ... maybe schoolteacher shot after him, after his feet, to remind him of the trespass. Maybe Halle got in the barn, hid there and got locked in with the rest of schoolteacher's stock. Maybe anything. He disappeared and everybody was on his own. (Pg. 224)

This explores the uncertainty of Halle's death. It also establishes the extent to which displacement under slavery disrupts many families as well as thriving relationships. The general crippling of Black men under slavery is also manifest in some slave masters' act of breeding more slaves through marital and out of wedlock birth among Black slaves in their custody. As is the case in the *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave* (1845), Morrison's *Beloved*, explores Schoolteacher's reflection over the activity of his progenitor:

...he mated them niggers to get him some more... he planned them to marry! If that don't beat them all! Schoolteacher sighs, and say doesn't he know it? He has come to put the place

aright. Now it faced greater ruin than what Garner left for it, because he is not sure they will find the one called Halle. The sister-in-law is too weak to help out and doggone if now there ain't a full-scale stampede on his hands. He would have to trade this here one for \$900 if he could get it, and set out to secure the breeding one, her foal and the other one, if he found him. With the money from "this here one" he could get two young ones, twelve or fifteen years old. And maybe with the breeding one, her three pickaninnies and whatever the foal might be, he and his nephews would have seven niggers and Sweet Home would be worth the trouble it was causing him. ... He (Paul D) wasn't surprise to learn that they had tracked her (Sethe) down in Cincinnati, because, when he thought about it now, her price was greater than his; property that reproduced itself without cost. (P. 226-227, 228)

From the above, it is obvious that the effects of the challenges confronting African-Americans are exacerbated by a series of racially specific historical events that begin with slavery and its legacies. The exercise of breeding slaves does not only add to the number of slaves in the slave masters' custody, it particularly increases the number of single parents in the environment. Therefore, racism and economic quest represent some intrinsic part of American society and the African-American experience (*Turning the Corner on Father Absence in Black America*, 1999). In *Beloved*, this is further given impetus by other situations which expose female slaves to the challenge of having several children by different fathers. Therefore:

... in all of Baby's life, as well as Sethe's own, men and women were moved around like checkers. Anybody Baby Suggs new, let alone loved, who hadn't run off or been hanged, got rented out, loaned out, bought up, brought back, stored up, mortgaged, won, stolen, or seized. So Baby's eight children had six fathers. What she called the nastiness of life was the shock she received upon learning that nobody stopped playing checkers just because the pieces included her children. Halle she was able to keep the longest. Twenty years. A lifetime. Given to her, no doubt, to make up for hearing that her two girls, neither of whom had their adult teeth, were sold and gone and she had not been able to wave goodbye. To make up for coupling with a straw boss for four

*months in exchange for keeping her third child, a boy, with her-
only to have him traded for lumber in the spring of the next year
and to find herself pregnant by the man who promised not to and
did. That child she could not love and the rest she would not.
“God take what he would,” She said. And he did ... then gave her
Halle who gave her freedom when it didn’t mean a thing. Sethe
had the amazing luck of six whole years of marriage to that
“somebody” who had fathered every one of her children. (pg. 23)*

Herein, it is equally evident how Morrison insists upon a realistic projection of ‘racial identities of her fictional people - Black men and women under stresses peculiar to them and their station in the U.S’ (Gray, 1993). The very issues that frustrate such union as Sixo and the Thirty-Mile Woman, Halle and Sethe and Baby Suggs with her several sex partners likewise indicate a number of factors foster the rise of single-parent Black households. In 2005, it is recorded that only 12 percent of such households are led by men however, ‘more than 42 percent of them are female-headed’ (Morial in Edny, 2007). In line with this, when the rates of out-of-wedlock births begin to escalate dramatically in 1960, 22 percent of all Black babies were born to unmarried mothers. But by 1996, the figure increasingly jumps to 70 percent. Furthermore, this view is buttressed in the argument that after 1808, the proportion of African-born slaves became tiny (*Turning the Corner on Father Absence in Black America*, 1999). However, the emergence of the native-born slaves has numerous important consequences. For example, among African-born slaves, who were imported for their ability to perform physical labor, the few children and men outnumbered women by about two to one. In contrast, American-born slaves begin their slave careers as children and included approximately even number of males and females (Kolchin, 2008). In *Beloved*, one among other challenges that results from the proportion of male and female slaves in Mr. Garner’s farm vividly manifests this:

There had been six of them who belonged to the farm, Sethe the only female. ... Sethe was thirteen when she came to Sweet Home and already iron-eyed. She was a timely present for Mrs. Garner who had lost Baby Suggs to her husband's high principles. The Five Sweet Home men looked at the new girl and decided to let her be. They were young and so sick with the absence of women they had taken to calves. Yet they let the iron-eyed girl be, so she could choose in spite of the fact that each one would have beaten the other so mush (sic) to have her. It took her a year to choose – a long, tough year of thrashing on pallets eaten up with dreams of her. A year of yearning, when rape seemed the solitary gift of life. ...they were Paul D Garner, Paul F Garner, Paul A Garner, Halle Suggs, and Sixo... minus women, fucking cows, dreaming of rape, thrashing pallets, rubbing their thighs and waiting for the new girl... she waited a year. Sweet Home men abused cows while they waited with her. She chose Halle for their first bedding she sewed herself a dress on the sly.... Because of the Thirty-Mile Woman Sixo was the only one not paralyzed by yearning for Sethe. Nothing could be as good as the sex with her Paul D had been imagining off and on for twenty-five years. (P. 9, 10, 11, 25)

As a means of expiating their 'castrated' manhood, the male slaves on Mr. Garner's farm could not but constantly manifest an urge to copulate with the opposite sex in the absence of whom they mate with animals in the fields. Morrison's depiction of this event crystallizes the capacity of such action expose women to the danger of being frequent victims of rape or sexual abuse which more often than not results in out-of-wedlock births. Consequently, a number of single mothers who made attempts at protecting their children from the very evil that cripple their lives eventually end up as victims of psychosis. Morrison's portrayal of Sethe replicates Black women who were doubly traumatized by their state as single parents and their helplessness against the weapons of slavery. Similarly, a further evidence of the psychological trauma which Black single mothers grapple with is expressed in Sethe as she strangulates her daughter-Beloved to death and intends to do same with her other children in order to redeem them from the horrors of slavery:

Little nigger-boy eyes open in sawdust; little nigger-girl eyes staring between the wet fingers that held her face so her head wouldn't fall off; little nigger-baby eyes crinkling up to cry in the arms of the old nigger whose eyes were nothing but silvers looking down at his feet. ... Baby Suggs noticed who breathed and who did not and went straight to the boys lying in the dirt. The old man moved to the woman gazing and said, "Sethe. You take my armload and gimme yours." She turned to him and glancing at the baby she was holding, made a low sound in her throat as though she'd made a mistake, left the salt out of the bread or something. ... But neither Stamp Paid nor Baby Suggs could make her put her crawling-already? girl down. ...Baby Suggs had got the boys inside and was bathing their heads, rubbing their hands, lifting their lids... she bound their wounds and made them breathe camphor before turning her attention to Sethe. She took the crying baby from Stamp Paid and carried it on her shoulder for full two minutes, then stood in front of its mother. "It's time to nurse your youngest," she said. Sethe reached up for the baby without letting the dead one go. (P. 150,151, 152)

In the bid to express love for the children she singlehandedly parent, Sethe's action reveals the horror of slavery in explicit detail, elaborating upon the result of the physical and mental abuses suffered by the slaves. The sight of her hat belonging to a cruel white owner sends she and her four children into a woodshed where Sethe is compelled to murder than allow them suffer the torments of slavery. Following the murder of "Beloved" (Sethe's own "best self and third child), Sethe is quickly overtaken in the process of swinging her infant by its heels to equally smash her head (Doris and Jessica, 2007). Such brutal inclination brings up questions about what it means to love and to be a mother in a place and time where life is often devalued. This indicates a dangerous maternal as well as a single parent's passion towards salvaging her "fantasy of the future," from slavery (Single-parent, 2010). By this, Morrison establishes the figure of a mother who believes she "owns her offspring" and reasons that she has the right to exercise the ultimate decision over them (Houchins, 1931).

Morrison's writings are greatly influenced by her family and depict the struggle of Black women at various points in American history. Her depiction of Sethe's struggles in protecting her children from the shackles of slavery therefore, signifies her parents' desire to equally protect their children from the racist environment of the South. This succeeds in many respects due to their migration to Lorain, Ohio where there was lesser problem of racial prejudice than it would have been in the slavery inclined South (Biography of Toni Morrison 1931, 2011).

Due to her previous enslavement which often times separated her from her children, the emotional bond between them is threatened. Mothers who do not often know themselves to be anything except a mother, develop a lost sense of self when faced with the inability to provide maternal care for the children who are either with or separated from them. Similarly, when a child is separated from his or her mother, he or she loses the familial identity associated with mother-child relationships (Single-parent, 2010). Thus, Sethe's failure in this respect is linked to the reality of her inability to connect with her mother who only visits on rare occasions. Even though Sethe longs to connect to her children, she inevitably falls short of knowing how to. Therefore, her traumatized complain about her stolen milk signifies a disruption in the symbolic bond between herself and her children wherefore the earliest need a child has is related to the mother: the baby needs milk from the mother.

The spread of single-parent families has played a major role in the incessant poverty that has eaten deep into the general history of the African-Americans. The fact that many single mothers seldom command high wages is compounded by the little or no child support they get from the absent father. Those who successfully secure menial jobs

sometimes find it unusually difficult to work long hours since they must also care for their children. Unmarried mothers, who cohabit with a boyfriend sometimes, tend to have significantly higher household incomes than those who live on their own. But, as it remains unclear how much of the boyfriend's income is available to support such mother's children, it does not follow that marriage or remarriage would always solve their economic problems. Thus, marrying or cohabiting with an unemployed man predictively exacerbates a mother's problems (Ellwood and Jencks, 2002). In *Beloved*, Morrison articulates this possibility in the love affair that ensues between Paul D and Sethe. Although, they have no problem cohabiting, Paul D eventually becomes an extra burden she also bears.

Like other American novels devoted to race, *Beloved* is not solely a work of protest and advocacy as Morrison has insisted, it is a work that adequately reveals how the horrors of slavery, through explicit detail, advances the spread of male absence and single parenthood among African-Americans. This is fostered by an elaboration of the physical and mental abuses suffered by the slaves. In other words, *Beloved* explores the physical, emotional, and spiritual devastation wrought by slavery, a devastation that continues to haunt those characters who are former slaves even in freedom. The most dangerous of slavery's influence is its negative impact on the ex-slaves' sense of self and family and self. Sethe's act of infanticide illuminates the perverse effect of the institution of slavery: it shows how under slavery, most helpless (single) mothers best express their love for their children by killing them with the claim of protection against the more gradual destruction wrought by system (Doris and Jessica, 2007; Metcalf, 2011).

2.3 Divergent views on Male Absence and Single Parenthood in Richard Wright's *Black Boy* and Toni Morrison's *Beloved*

To a larger extent, it can be established that Wright and Morrison agree in their presentation of the issues that influence male absence and single parenthood among African-Americans. As products of the same sociohistorical events, the similarities established in their works reflect the uniqueness of the African-Americans' experiences. Despite their agreement in the presentation of certain issues that revolves around male absence and single parenthood, there still exist areas of polarity which explain the exclusivity of people as well as gender perceptions in approaching similar issues. As earlier considered, the similar factors explored in relation to male absence and single parenthood include; poverty, migration, desertion, separation, incarceration, and death to mention but few. The divergent means through which both authors present the challenges constitute the focus of this segment.

As texts that are written by writers from the same setting *Black Boy* and *Beloved* reflect issues that connect two distinct periods of American history. Whereas *Black Boy* captures the height of the Jim Crow Laws when Black Americans yet face segregation and violent racism in South America, *Beloved* reflects the African-Americans' slavery experience and its ghostly influence on the community of ex-slaves. Central to the novel is the manner in which the ex-slaves manage to get on track with their lives. However, *Black Boy* is based on Wright's experiences of growing up in the South with the reality of segregation in form of deprivation and lynching (Griffiths, 2007).

Using the autobiographical style Wright in *Black Boy* recounts his childhood experience of male absence and single parenthood in retrospect. An autobiography as

perceived in the context of “extinctions of the truth”, “shirking of the truth”, partial revealing of the truth, with hardly an instance of plain straight truth, and the remorseless truth, subscribes to the claim that autobiographies are not devoid of fictional tendencies (Griffiths, 2007). Thus the novel’s title being *Black Boy a Record of Childhood and Youth* vividly imply this. Also, as Wright creates himself in the text, he employs falsehood as a metaphor for survival (Adams, 1985). Beyond the fictional aspects of the text, reality is featured in his presentation of the South as ‘poison’ for Black people whose homes and marriages are consequently affected. Although, a *Time Magazine* article on Toni Morrison’s work and life holds that her six novels contain few autobiographical traces which constitute intensely imaginative responses to the specific historical and social pressures she has experienced as an African-American woman, however, her writing is not autobiographical. The reason being that she fondly alludes to her past, stating, ‘I am from the Midwest so I have a special affection for it. My beginnings are always there.... No matter what I write, I begin there.... It’s the matrix for me.... Ohio also offers an escape from stereotyped Black settings, although it is neither plantation nor ghetto’ (Doris and Jessica, 2007). This position suggests that Morrison’s works are rather influenced by the socio-historical events of her society than her personal life challenges. Since the novel is inspired by the story of Margaret Garner, a runaway slave who attempted to kill her children rather than have them returned to slavery, the position of this research sticks to the view that though *Beloved* equally explores a concern with familial ties which is affected by male absence and single parenthood, it is considered against being an autobiography (Criticism > Contemporary Literary Criticism, 2010).

Regarding the narrative perspective adopted in both texts, Wright oscillates between the first person and authorial narrative to give a palpable grasp of male absence and single parenthood among other issues in *Black Boy*. This entails that the novel captures young Richard's point of view, but occasionally changes to that of the mature author who comments on his past with the knowledge he has gained in the intervening years (Black Boy by Richard Wright- Free Online Notes, 2005). On the other hand, Morrison in *Beloved* explores the place of history and legacy of slavery in the spread of male absence and single parenthood from four characters' - Sethe's, Paul D's, Stamp Paid's, and Baby Suggs' point of view. Her method, though not in the first person narrative, equally makes the characters appear in their real complexity of temperament and motive (Doris and Jessica, 2007).

Whereas, Wright adopts a linear plot to facilitate his choice and alignment of incidents to chronologically emphasize the challenge of male absence and single parenthood among other issues in the novel, Morrison, however, begins from the middle and looks back to the antebellum period when the first Blacks settled in the area that was to be known as Medallion. She uses a shifting perspective, fragmentary narrative, and a narrative voice extremely close to the consciousness of her characters to buttress her point.

Along its perspective on male absence and single parenthood *Black Boy* also concentrates on hope and determination. It depicts the economic and social struggles that were stereotypical of African-Americans of that time. It tells about the hardships and obstacles faced by a poverty-stricken family, and a boy's determination to escape the prison created by the circumstances that surround his parent's separation. Along his

struggle with hunger which started in the family, Richard also appears as an individual whose family fails at providing even the basic needs that a family is supposed to - love, security and acceptance (Turner, 2009). In *Beloved*, Toni Morrison captures the dislocations and violence of slavery through disruptions in language. The novel tells the “unspeakable” story of Sethe, a slave and single mother whose act of infanticide leaves a gap in family narrative; bars her surviving daughter, Denver, from language use; and hinders her own ability to speak. The Africans piled on the slave ships, the preverbal child who comes back in the shape of the ghost, *Beloved*, and a nursing mother who is separated from her husband in their cause of escaping slavery (*Abstract Modern Language Association*, 2011).

This chapter examines male absence and single parenthood in the context of two distinct period of American history. It captures the relationship between male absence and single parenthood by showing how it takes a man’s physical, emotional and psychological absence for a woman to assume absolute leadership of the home. It shows the extent to which challenges that permeate the era of slavery and the height of Jim Crow Law in the South respectively contribute to spread of male absence and single parenthood among African-Americans. Unlike the situation in Ngcobo’s *Cross of Gold*, the perspective of Wright and Morrison shows that beyond the environmental factors, internal conflict also results in the separation experienced in some families. More so, the chapter explores the impact of psychological and physical violence on male absence and single parenthood. As reflected by the two periods in which both novels are set, the lingering effects of this violence on successive generations of African Americans is

reflected in the fact that they still experience a wider spread of male absence and single parenthood in recent times.

Works Cited

- Abah, E. (2002). Repositioning Gender in the African American Narrative: A Study of Toni Morrison's *Beloved*. In: Aliyu, *et al.*, (Eds) *Work in Progress*. No. 13, Department of English, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Nigeria: Onis Excel Publishing.
- Abstract* Modern Language Association. (2011). JSTOR *PMLA* Vol. 108, No. 3, May, 1993. Retrieved March 16, 2011, from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/462616>
- Adams, T.D. (1985). I Do Believe Him Though I Know He Lies: Lying as Genre and Metaphor in Richard Wright's *Black Boy*. *Prose Studies* 8.2 Pp. 175-87, New York: Routledge. In: Smith, V.W. (2011). *Richard Wright: A Collection of Critical Essays*. – Book Reviews. Retrieved June 11, 2011, from http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m2838/is_nl_v31/ai_195..._58k
- Black Boy by Richard Wright- Free Online Notes. (2005). Free Barron's Booknotes. PinkMonkey.com. Retrieved March 14, 2011, from <http://www.pinkmonkey.com/booknotes/barrons/blackby06.asp>
- Biography of Toni Morrison 1931- (2011). In: Study Guides on Works by Toni Morrison. GradeSaver LLC. Retrieved March 16, 2011, from <http://www.gradesaver.com/author/toni-morrison/>
- Brown-Cheatham, (1993). In: Rodney, E.H. and Mupier, R. (1999). Behavioural Differences between African American Male Adolescents with Biological Fathers and Those without Biological Fathers in the Home, *Journal of Black Studies*, 30 (1) 45-61.
- Bryant, J.H. (1987). Ernest J. Gaines: Change, Growth and History, *The Southern Review*, 10(October, 1974), Pp. 851- 864. In: Noss, C.A. Ernest J. Gaines and the Problem of Black Manhood: Giving Positive Models. In: Emenyonu, *et al.*, (Eds) *Black Culture and Black Consciousness in Literature*. Nigeria: Heinemann Educational Books (NIG) Ltd.
- Coles, R. (2002). Black Single Fathers: Choosing to Parent Full-time. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 31, 411-439. In: Richter, L. and Morrell, R. (Eds) (2006). *Baba: Men and Fatherhood in South Africa*. Cape Town: Human Sciences Research Council. Retrieved March 6, 2011, from www.hsrepress.ac.za
- Connell, R. (1995). *Masculinity*. Cambridge: Polity Press. In: Richter, L. and Morrell, R. (Eds) (2006). *Baba: Men and Fatherhood in South Africa*. Cape Town: Human Sciences Research Council. Retrieved March 6, 2011, from www.hsrepress.ac.za

- Criticism > Contemporary Literary Criticism > Morrison, Toni - (2010). Introduction *Beloved* (1987). eNotes.com, Inc. Retrieved December 06, 2010, from <http://www.enotes.com/contemporary-literary-criticism/beloved-morrison-toni>
- Doris, and Jessica, (Eds) (2007). Toni Morrison's writing Features in *Beloved*. Apr. 2007, Volume 5, No.4 US-China Foreign Language, USA. Retrieved December 06, 2010, from <http://www.linguist.org.cn/doc/uc200704/uc20070413.pdf>
- Edny, H.T. (2007). Future of Black Men Critical for "American Family." WASHINGTON: NNPA Correspondent, National Newspaper Publishers Association, Inc. (April 26). Retrieved March 10, 2010, from http://www.infowars.com/articles/us/family_future_of_black_men_critical_for_a_merican_family.htm
- Effect of Family without a Father. (2009). eCheat.com>> Social Sciences >> Sociology >> effect of family without a father, Retrieved March 7, 2011, from <http://www.echeat.com/essay.php?t=34044>
- Ellwood, T.D. and Jencks, C. (2002). *The Spread of Single-Parent Families in the United States Since 1960*. John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University. Retrieved October 11, 2010, from papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=517662
- Everett, C. (1987). Tradition in the Afro-American Literature, *Black World*, XXXV, No. 2 (December, 1975), Pp. 20- 35. In: Noss, C.A. Ernest J. Gaines and the Problem of Black Manhood: Giving Positive Models. In: Emenyonu, *et al.*, (Eds) *Black Culture and Black Consciousness in Literature*. Nigeria: Heinemann Educational Books (NIG) Ltd.
- Gray, P. (1993). Rooms of their Own. *Time Magazine article about Toni Morrison's Work and Life*. TIME Media Kit, October, 18. Retrieved October 22, 2010, from time-webmaster@pathfinder.com; <http://www.literaryhistory.com/20thC/Morrison.htm>
- Griffiths, I. (2007). Black Boy by Richard Wright Chapter One Analysis. London: Retrieved December 06, 2010, from <http://www.blog.poet.me.uk/category/american-fiction/black-boy-richard-wright>
- Houchins, S. (Ed) Toni Morrison (b. 1931) *A Teacher's Guide to Toni Morrison*, from text book Publisher Heath
- Jaffee, *et al.*, (2001). Predicting Early Fatherhood and whether Young Fathers Live with their Children: Prospective Findings and Policy Reconsiderations. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 142, 803 – 815. In: Richter, L. and R. Morrell,

- (Eds) *Baba: Men and Fatherhood in South Africa*. Cape Town: HSRC Press, 2006. Retrieved on March 6, 2011 from www.hsrcpress.ac.za
- Jarrett, R. (1994). Living poor: Family Life among Single-parent, African American Women. *Social Problems*, 41, 30-49. In: Richter, L. and Morrell, R. (Eds) (2006). *Baba: Men and Fatherhood in South Africa*. Cape Town: Human Sciences Research Council. Pp.55. Retrieved March 6, 2011, from www.hsrcpress.ac.za
- Kolchin, P. (2008). "Slavery in the United States." Retrieved June 12, 2011, from Microsoft Encarta 2009 [DVD]. Redmond, WA: Microsoft Corporation.
- Kwilliams2, (2010). Black Boy by Richard Wright. USA: East-West School of International Studies, Flushing, NY, Submitted on Mon, 11/22/2010 - 5:12pm. Retrieved March 12, 2011, from youthvoices.net/node/47782
- Lim, E. (2011). In: Pura, M.F. Absence of a Father Figure as the Strongest Factor in Male Homosexuality. Retrieved March 16, 2011, from <http://www.exampleessays.com/viewpaper/41331.html>
- McAdoo, J. and McAdoo, J. (1995). The African American Fathers' roles within the Family. In: Kimmel, M. and Messner, M. (Eds) *Men's Lives*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon. Pp. 485-494. In: Richter, L. and Morrell, R. (Eds) (2006). *Baba: Men and Fatherhood in South Africa*. Cape Town: Human Sciences Research Council. Retrieved March 6, 2011, from www.hsrcpress.ac.za
- McKeown, K., Ferguson, H. and Rooney, D. (1999). *Changing Fathers? Fatherhood and Family Life in Modern Ireland*. Wilton, Cork: Collins Press. In: Richter, L. and Morrell, R. (Eds) (2006). *Baba: Men and Fatherhood in South Africa*. Cape Town: HSRC Press. Retrieved March 6, 2011 from www.hsrcpress.ac.za.
- Messner, M. (1997). *Politics of Masculinities: Men in Movements*. Thousand Oaks: Sage. In: Richter, L. and Morrell, R. (Eds) (2006). *Baba: Men and Fatherhood in South Africa*. Cape Town: HSRC Press. Retrieved March 6, 2011 from www.hsrcpress.ac.za.
- Metcalf, S. (2011). Why Is Beloved Beloved? Published by *emily* on February 8, 2011. In: News via twitter *Slate Magazine*... « *Humanities Journal*, Volume 8, Number 10 now available Decolonizing My Mind » Retrieved January 10, 2011, from <http://thehumanities.com/2011/02/08/why-is-beloved-beloved/>
- Morial, M. (2011). State of Black America: Future of Black Men Critical for "American Family" *National: BlackPressUSA.com* (2001-2011) National Newspaper Publishers Association, Inc. Retrieved January 20, 2011, from <http://www.blackpressusa.com/News/Article.asp?SID=3&Title=HotStories&NewSID=12934>

- Morrell, R. (2006). Fathers, Fatherhood and Masculinity in South Africa. In: Richter, L. and Morrell, R. (Eds) (2006). *Baba: Men and Fatherhood in South Africa*. Cape Town: HSRC Press. Retrieved March 6, 2011 from www.hsrcpress.ac.za
- Morrison, T. (1987). *Beloved*. New York: New American Library.
- Ngobeni, S. (2002). Representations of Fatherhood in Black U S Films and how this relates to Parenting in South Africa. Baba - Chapter 12- Representations of fatherhood in black U S films- and how this relates to parenting in South Africa.pdf - 282.5KB. Retrieved March 16, 2011, from www.africanfathers.org/page.php?p_id=191
- Noss, C.A. (1987). Ernest J. Gaines and the Problem of Black Manhood: Giving Positive Models. Pp. 157. In: Emenyonu, *et al.*, (Eds) *Black Culture and Black Consciousness in Literature*. Nigeria: Heinemann Educational Books (NIG) Ltd.
- O'Brien, J. (1987). Interviews with Black Writers. New York: Liveright, 1973, Pp.85. In: Emenyonu *et al.* (Ed) *Black Culture and Black Consciousness Literature*. Ibadan: Heinemann Educational Books (Nigeria) Ltd.
- Ramphela, M. (2002). *Steering by the stars: Being Young in South Africa*. Cape Town: Tafelberg Publishers. In: Richter, L. and Morrell, R. (Eds) (2006). *Baba: Men and Fatherhood in South Africa*. Cape Town: Human Sciences Research Council. Retrieved March 6, 2011 from www.hsrcpress.ac.za
- Richter, L. and Morrell, R. (Eds) (2006). *Baba: Men and Fatherhood in South Africa*. Cape Town: HSRC Press. Retrieved March 6, 2011 from www.hsrcpress.ac.za
- Single Parent Families –The well-being of Children raised in Single- Parent- Homes. (2010). Net Industries and its Licensors. Retrieved October 22, 2010, from social.jrank.org/.../Single-Parent-Families-Well-Being-Children-Raised-in-Single-Parent-Homes.html
- Single-parent. (2010). In: *Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia*. Wikimedia Foundation, Inc. Last modified on 1 December 2010 at 21:40. Retrieved March 16, 2011, from <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Single-parent>
- Tanfer, K. and Mott, F. (1997). The Meaning of Fatherhood for Men. Report to the NICHD Workshop on Improving Data on Male Fertility Formation, the Urban Institute, Washington, D.C, 16-17 January. In: Richter, L. and Morrell, R. (Eds) (2006). *Baba: Men and Fatherhood in South Africa*. Cape Town: HSRC Press. Retrieved March 6, 2011 from www.hsrcpress.ac.za
- Townsend, N. (2002). Cultural contexts of Father involvement. In: Tamis-LeMonda, C. and Cabrera, N. (Eds), *Handbook of Father involvement: Multidisciplinary Perspectives*. Pp. 249-277. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum. In: Richter, L. and Morrell, R. (Eds) (2006). *Baba: Men and Fatherhood in South Africa*. Cape Town: Human

Sciences Research Council. Pp.55. Retrieved March 6, 2011, from www.hsreprpress.ac.za

Turner, J.S. (2011). An Insatiable Hunger: A Literary Analysis of Richard Wright's Autobiography, *Black Boy*. *Student Pulse, LLC: Online Academic Student Journal*. Gilroy, CA. Article written October 28th, 2009 and published December 8th, 2009. Retrieved January 12, 2011, from <http://www.studentpulse.com/articles/81/an-insatiable-hunger-a-literary-analysis-of-richard-wrights-autobiography-black-boy>

Turning the Corner on Father Absence in Black America: A Statement from the Morehouse Conference on African American Fathers. (1999). New York: Morehouse Research Institute 830 West view Drive, SW Atlanta, Institute for American Values 1841 Broadway, Suite 211. Retrieved May 26, 2011 from www.morehouse.edu/mri.htm; oclayton@morehouse.edu. www.americanvalues.org

Wright, R. (1945). *Black Boy*. New York: Harper Perennial Modern Classics.

Zimmerman *et al.*, (1995). Family Structure and Psychological Correlates among Urban African-American Adolescent Males. *Child Development*, 66, 1598-1613.

CHAPTER THREE:

3.0 Racial Discrimination and the Disruption of Black South African Families in

Lauretta Ngcobo's *Cross of Gold*

3.1 Introduction

This chapter explores Lauretta Ngcobo's *Cross of Gold* as a literary work that depicts the effects of racial discrimination upon the Black South African families. As male absence and single parenthood cannot be discussed in isolation from the family setting, this chapter particularly examines the frequency and extent of racial challenges within the family context. Given the previous chapter's consideration of the rise in the number of female-headed homes resulting from out-of-wedlock births and male absence by divorce, separation, incarceration and death among other factors, the fact that South Africa in 1998, also records over a fifth of all households run by single parents confirms that such familial challenge is not restricted to the western world alone. Therefore, this chapter further establishes that beyond the above factors, the context of male absence among Black South Africans largely varies from that of the African Americans. As several scholars and the history of South Africa reveal, the imposed taxes on Black South African families in rural areas and the need to fend for impoverished family members trigger a forced migration of men and fathers to the mines in search for jobs. Consequently, generations of disrupted households as well as shift in family life towards urban areas and away from cattle to cash payment of *lobola* becomes an integral part of their familial experiences (Smit, 2001; Hunter, 2006; and Mboya and Nesengani, 1999).

3.2 Racial Discrimination and the Disruption of Black South African Families

Racial discrimination fostered by apartheid is one weapon of oppression employed by the imperialist government in subjugating Blacks among other races in South Africa. The extent to which this weapon is maximized finds expression in the jeopardized communion enjoyed by a number of Black families in South Africa. Therefore, putting the family unit in perspective, fathers are historically viewed and presented in a variety of ways to describe the script they have been seen fulfilling. Among other functions restricted to them, fathers have variously been presented as; moral overseers, breadwinners, sex role models and nurturants or participants (Lamb, 1996). As this perception gets meddled up through the challenges (migration in search of greener pastures, exile for safety, imprisonment and subsequent death) ushered by racial discrimination, a number of Black South African men become incapacitated in maintaining their positions as fathers who play active roles in the day to day care and upbringing of their children. By implication, these situations inevitably affect Black South African families by encouraging the spread of male absence and single parenthood in the society. In *Cross of Gold*, Ngcobo hints at the helplessness of mine workers faced with the struggle for economic empowerment amidst racial discrimination. Despite the obvious dangers and persistent segregation (in terms of meager salary for Black workers etc) surrounding the mining business; Black South African men continuously troop the mines and offer themselves to its slaving demands. To this end, Sindisiwe ruminates on her father's plight alongside his co-workers:

If men of the mines are cold, lonely, and home sick the whole year round, they are never more so than at this time of the year.... In the first few days in the mine, Baba had known only his wretched loneliness in the nest of doomed men.... Nights

after nights, the speeches stirred him and altered his single-minded aim of – to work and make a living for his family; it had never occurred to him before that those who toil can put down their tools and stop toiling and make claims instead. ... most of what he worked so hard for went into some other man's pockets,... Baba knew this was a dangerous road, "he knew that the white man wants nothing but gold. He hungers for it as he hungers for life. He kills for it. For the white man no human life is worth a measure of gold.... (P. 12, 13)

By this, Ngcobo paints a palpable picture of discrimination which confronts Black South African men in the mines. Despite the claim of bravery which Mandela associates with men's struggles to make a living in the hostile and 'unknown city', it is pointless denying the overwhelming power of racial discrimination and deprivation in their lives. In other words, their determination for survival is decisively weakened by the harsh reality of racial discrimination which exposes them to bad weather condition, poor health, lack of care and untimely death among other deprivations by white men. More so, the pain of separating from their families apparently results in their loneliness and contributes to their nascent tenacity for rebellion. Consequently, a number of them sustained injuries who narrowly escaped death and imprisonment. In effect, the above action is reaffirmed in the consideration of how such men "must mobilize ethnic identities to create a level of social cohesion and repel disintegrative effects of globalization that associate fatherhood with providing and protecting" (Morrell, 2005: 22).

At another level, Ngcobo features an instance of familial displacement in Sindisiwe's family, wherein her father represents a team of Black South African men who migrate to the mines to make a living for their families and children in whose upbringing they could not participate. Thus:

All over Zululand men were leaving their wives and children to seek alternative means of livelihood. It seemed to make

sense for Baba to go back to the same mine, Robinson Deep, where people knew him Maa fought a pitched battle over this decision. She used every available weapon – she coaxed, she rowed, she loved and spoilt him; she did all to convince him that he was not fit for the mines; only fit for her to care for. But she lost the battle. Late in July he left home again, left Maa in tears. As for me, I could not look at him in the eyes. ... (P. 12, 13)

In depicting the effects and extent of these movements on other families, Mandla also observes that:

... children were born, often to fathers far away at work, many of whom died there. People learned to accept death as the constant companion to life. Adults die and left their young children. Orphans swelled other families overnight. There was wide spread poverty. ... Only elderly people and women and children lived at Ekuthuleni. Young men who still had strength in their bones were out in the towns and cities and in the sugar-cane estates eking out a living for themselves and those they left behind. ... those beautiful girls at home. They learn the art of waiting from their mothers. Men are seldom around and women learn to wait – wait in love. The proof of manhood was in forsaking all the loved ones for the unknown city, face the cruel lonely life, and come back to keep long standing promises. (P. 165, 163, 161)

This portrays the frequency as well as the number of families affected by the mass rural-urban drift in search for greener pasture. In other words, the depiction shows how much the prevalence of male absence by migration or subsequent death results in the wide spread of single parenthood or female headed families in South Africa. From the above also, Ngcobo explores the plight of especially rural women who are left behind and most often than not, with children to cater for. More so, the extent to which black families get blown into fragments is reiterated in the fact that “in the homelands, the men are often away in the mines and often die young. The women thus bring up the young and take care of the aged, miraculously making something out of the barren and tired land”

(Abubakar, 1999: 105). Although Mandla eulogies the bravery of the girls who learnt the art of waiting from their mothers, the degree of their frustration is typified by the action staged by Sindisiwe's mother in the bid to convince her husband against returning to the mines where he nearly died on his first outing. Similarly, Nozipo could not help complaining about the recurring disappearance of Mandla from the village. Therefore, she considers:

... how she hated his sudden disappearances! At such times there was no one to ask, for she knew that his grandparents were ignorant as she was. They shared her perplexities, her fears and her confidence in him as a person. Her mother shared the silent pain and Nozipo learned to share her loneliness and her fears for the future not with other girls but with her mother. (P. 216)

This further portrays how the context of migration or seasonal separation received two opposing reactions from men and women. Whereas it spells a painful experience that connotes hardship and single parenthood to women, men perceive it as the 'proof of manhood' since it involves staking their lives and comfort for the women, families and society through job hunting and creating awareness for liberation struggle in the hostile city. To this regard, it is not surprising that Mandla courageously faced death penalty with the assurance that "now Manqoba will know I died fighting" (P. 272). At the point of death, Sindisiwe's thought is explored to reveal the depth of an expected family's relief from its disillusionment occasioned by separation. Therefore:

She had spent so little time with her father before 'that year' that even now she could not remember how he had looked before the instant grey hair of that year; before he came back from the mines.... A crumpled letter arrived for Maa from Johannesburg; from the Robinson Deep mine to be exact. It was from Baa. Maa had waited longer than usual for his letter. When she had opened it she had sighed deeply, even before reading it. ... She let out a frightening scream while we stood

puzzled before her.... He had written the letter several weeks from some hospital in Johannesburg, injured in a rock-fall in which several others had died.... The eternal eight weeks ended about April when Baba simply walked in; ...unannounced.... I stood there looking searchingly into his face. Putting down his suitcase, he looked straight at me and bit hard at his lower lip. With half of his life spent on the mines there had never been time for us to know each other well. and never having time to know him with my bare feelings.... I looked into his eyes; he alone could calm my fears.... While Maa wheeled around screaming from a turmoil of emotions, I rushed into his arms; 'Baba; Baba, Baba!' I had never known such an emotional upsurge- I laughed, I cried, I spun round and round. I still do not know whether I laughed because he was alive or because he had shown me loved me- he made me realize that he had hated the long hazardous separation too. All he brought us back was his life and some sweets. (p. 10, 11)

This portrays the prolonged suspense that separated families grappled with. The earnest expectation of wives and families to be in the current picture of their absent husbands, fathers and relatives' welfare is clearly expressed in the urgency with which Sindisiwe's mother opens and reads the crumpled letter she receives by her husband. Through the deployment of Sindisiwe's feelings on the return of her father, Ngcobo expresses a resurrected love and affection put asunder by filial separation. More so, her depiction of Sindisiwe's conviction over her father's professed hatred for 'the long hazardous separation' shows that male absence under intense racial discrimination connotes a spontaneous attempt by Black South African men in responding to paternal responsibility rather than outright irresponsibility due to deflated 'manhood' by social challenges. This is reminiscent of the summation that highlights of the history of apartheid, and particularly the migrant labour system among Black South Africans' unique circumstances which affect the structure and situation of families (Holborn and Eddy, 2011). Without mincing words, it is obvious that racial discrimination is not only

detrimental to the survival of those families, but it particularly upsets the natural communion enjoyed by spouses and their growing children. It is to end that the sympathy for children growing up in female-headed homes shows that some fathers have had to leave their families to find work across the country's borders while many South African children find themselves growing up without fathers (Agarwal, 2008). This, therefore, makes single parenthood a compulsory task which Black South African women champion without option.

Beside the consideration of familial displacement and its effects on Black rural dwellers of South Africa, Ngcobo's *Cross of Gold* also beams light on the certain urban families whose major confrontations stem from the frequent arrests, imprisonments and subsequent deaths (for countless offences) which permeates the whole story. Through Sindisiwe's lament about her family's displacement, Ngcobo features the beauty and serenity of a united family which her heroine could not help missing. In painful regrets, her disappointment is expressed thus:

She thought about her children and wondered why they had to come, only to see her die. What punishment is this; what for; and which God visited parents' punishment on children? – had she really sinned to suffer for this? ... her mind switched to her two sons who sat abjectly on either side of her, shielding her from the hot sun with an impoverished shade of a shirt on a stick. She thought too of Siphso, her husband. She had made a good habit of thinking rarely about him as she could possibly afford; ...how does one outgrow the habit of living with a loving husband, from whom she had since been separated by a long prison sentence? She had ached and ached and ached for him and had fumbled a lot at first, learning many new things in his absence; Once more she regretted that they had never shared and now would never share this new life she had learned in his absence ...she lapsed into silence. Thinking about her sons – their present and their future – was futile; besides, it was unbearable. ... After that time, that day, no one could hide from her: the pain of separation, the lack of love and the need for money... she had something to say to Siphso. 'tell

him death cannot divide us. I'm dying like many others, but the fight will go on. I wish I could live to see him and the end.... (P. 8, 14)

As the character on whose family challenges the story commence, Sindisiwe's helplessness obviously intensified after her husband's arrest. In the process of routing the same political course that confines him (her husband) to the prison in Robben Island, Sindisiwe sustains a bullet wound which did not only separates her from the very children she dearly seeks to protect, but has permanently robs her of the long nurtured dream of uniting her family once again. She, therefore, bemoans:

It was no longer a nameless national tragedy but flesh torn from flesh, husband from wife, (and) father from children. ... I write this to you, Siphso, and to you my children, we shall ever meet again, though I shall devote everything I am capable of toward our family reunion- to reunite my family, to live again and be deserving of that life. I am writing in the searing heat of exile. Events are crowding in and I fear I may forget the occasions that are the sum total of my life since we parted, but I fear I may forget the strange all-powerful emotions that accompany them. So when we meet somewhere, somehow, someday, I shall have recorded both the events and the feelings as untarnished as they are now. What I do today is to uphold your honour rather than suffer you humiliation and I know, you in turn did it for me and our children and all the children of our land. (P. 24, 19, 20)

This categorically reiterates the position that the novel, “characterizes the plight of Black men and women as experiences of oppression in order to demonstrate that the eradication of gender, class, and racial domination is contingent upon the elimination of apartheid” (Abubakar, 1999: 105). In other words, this also depicts a degree of the pains and sufferings experienced by Black South African families in the face of racial discrimination. The helplessness experienced by disrupted families and single parents is replicated in the painful lament that mirrors the bleak future of Sindisiwe's children. Her

yearning for a family reunion is ruffled against the uncertainty of life as prescribed by the experience of exile, imprisonment, and death among other political issues which separate people from each other. However, she has to contend with what the separation offers as well as hopes only for the day they shall meet and continue the story face to face. Notwithstanding, her death contributes to the 'new strength that Mandla musters while he determines to take charge of the family affairs until his father returns'. In this vein also, 'he vows to find out what it was that has blown his family in to fragments' (P. 16). The above circumstances further suggest that children who belong to single-parents' homes also stand the risk of becoming orphans.

Similarly, Ngcobo's deployment of the number of other women whose husbands are equally serving jail terms establishes the frequency at which Black South African families are affected by racism and oppression. The danger in such women's condition lies in the succession of sexual advances a number of them contend with. Whereas some challenges which come in form of poverty, hunger, unemployment, and threatening death successfully compel a fraction of the women to compromise, others however remain resolute about their fidelity to their imprisoned husbands. Marumo's testimony about how sweet the secret compromise of women like Tana and Zethu speaks of the experiences a category of women like Mrs. Winnie Mandela fall victim of. However, judging the relentless profession of love for and regrets about their husbands' absence, Sindisiwe, Mekeletso, Nozipo and Lundi's mother represent the class of women whose commitment to faithfulness in marriage is deeply expressed. The conversation that transpires between Mekeletso and Marumo during one of his visits for politicization among single women clearly confirms this. Therefore:

You have a lot to say in this man's favour, Mekeletso. Do you love him? My goodness, no. I admire him. Besides he has his family here. 'That means nothing.' I'm jealous, Mekeletso. You know I love you. 'I thought you came because of the situation...' 'Yes, I'm ashamed to submit it, Mekeletso but there is my selfish reason... as well....' It's bad to love you; it's taking unfair advantage of Dinga – but at least you'll admit it's love we all need. ... I've loved only one man in my life and have believed myself incapable of any other love. Even the long years in jail, have not destroyed our love. If it's the kind of love I know....' No, no, please don't go any further. I was a fool to mention it. I've suffered the joy of loving you for long and have enjoyed the suffering.... I have a responsibility to look after you girls. The only trouble we men haven't even got the time to stop and enjoy knowing you. I've been lucky – the arrest of my friends has revealed to me the worth of our women.... Dinga should be back in two years,... you'll soon tell them what good wives they've got. But seriously, what do you mean we've been so good or great? And who are the others you mean? Many, very many. I meet the everywhere I go around the country. Even in the cities you find them. Zethu has been splendid, ... Tana is another You two had an affair didn't you? You are not being fair Mekeletso. It's true we did have an affair.... But it was hard for both of us having to work together so closely. It was inevitable... we broke up because she couldn't stand the guilt of an affair in the absence of Muzi.... 'Then what do you think an affair would do between us? Because we are here, now in the secrecy of darkness on foreign soil, planning and planning ... don't be mean to me. It's hard you know, its hard having to works with beautiful women, don't make it harder. I understand, we too find it hard, Marumo. It's hard to be good when the Boers take our men away for years. (P. 139 - 140)

From the above, the relentless commitment of women to the course (liberation struggle) which informs the spousal separation they suffer equally strengthen their resolve to be resolute against falling victims to the frequent sexual advances they generally contend with. As working with and among (single) women becomes cumbersome for committed men as Marumo, his mounting desire for an affair with them relegates his reasoning as well as reduced him to a cheat and back stabber of his fellow Black men currently serving jail terms. The respect with which his passion for the

struggle is received drastically dwindles as he continuously proposes love to the women among whom he propagates the struggle for liberation. But for Mekeletso and her likes who brave the pain of separation and loneliness by refusing several sexual advances among other promises made to them, the number of single women to have been cheated and adversely affected by cunning conscientizers as Marumo would have been outrageous. To this end, Ngcobo's deployment apparently eulogizes the unsung heroines whose struggles and complexities as single women as well as household heads are further compounded by having to deal with the hardships of racial discrimination (apartheid) as well as confront the conflicting economic, political, and cultural forces that shaped the South African Black female experience in general (Ngcobo, Laretta 1931-, 2008). Similarly, the exertion of strength by such women is clearly appreciated in the poem, "Praise to Our Mothers":

*If the moon were to shine tonight
To light up my face and show off my proud form
With beads around my neck and shells in my hair
And a soft easy flowing dress with the colours of Africa
If I were to stand on top of a hill
And raise my voice in praise
Of the women in my country
Who have worked throughout their lives
Not for themselves, but for the very life of all Africans
Who would I sing my praises to?
I could quote all the names
Yes, but where do I begin?!*

*Do I begin with the ones
Who gave their lives
So that we others may live a better life
The Lillian Ngoyis, the Victoria Mxenges
The Ruth Firsts
Or the ones who lost their men
To Robben Island and their children to exile
But carried on fighting
The MaMotsoaledis, the MaSisulus*

The Winnie Mandelas?

...
*And what of the women who are stranded in the homelands
With a baby in the belly and a baby on the back
While their men are sweating in the bowels of the earth?*

...
*May the lives of all these women
Be celebrated and made to shine
When I cry out Mama Nokukhanya's name
NO-KU-KHA-NYA!!!
And we who are young, salute our mothers
Who have given us
The heritage of their Queendom!!! (Mhlope, 1993: 2-4).*

By the poem's title, the poet's appreciation of mothers' as well as single women's effort in the liberation struggle among other challenges that have eaten deep into the fabric of their nation is introduced. His choice of the phrase 'Our Mothers' suggests a deep yearning for all and sundry to identify with his appreciation of the selfless commitment to the nation's course which qualifies women as mothers of all. Thus, lines 7-9 of the poem capture them as "...women in my country/ who have worked throughout their lives/ not for themselves, but for the very life of all Africans." Besides their selflessness expressed in the liberation struggle, the domestic challenges as well as the task of single parenting is equally eulogized. A typical attribute of such women is expressed in Zethu among other women in the novel. Her plight not only end with suffering "from the general repressive condition under which Black women live", but she, "in addition, has to cook, look after (her) children, maintain the house, and take responsibility for the whole family" in the absence of her husband equally serving jail terms among other Black South African men. Thus, the sympathy also goes that "Black South African women feel the pangs of oppression more than men" (Abubakar, 1987: 327).

Although, the place of a responsible father or an adult male figure in the lives of especially male children is upheld by Morrell, (2005) and Ngobeni (2002), the challenge of male absence in the novel significantly brings to bear the strength of women as well as single mothers (Mekeletso, Sindisiwe, Zethu and Nozipo among others) *vis a vis* the legacies of men like Marumo, Msebe and Mandla's Grandfather in nurturing and stirring Mandla and Manqoba's commitment to the liberation struggle against racial discrimination as well as apartheid. Viewed another way, the contribution of these individuals on Mandla, Temba and Manqoba's lives simply confirms the position that family life in South Africa has never been simple to describe or understood. The concept of the nuclear family has hardly captured accurately the norm of all South African families. Thus, when South African family is spoken of, it is not only in terms of the nuclear family, but also of extended families, as well as caregivers or guardians (Holborn and Eddy, 2011). Similarly, it is observed that "in many African communities, the spirit of communalism is characterized by the connectedness of men and their commitment to the common good, including one's descendents and one's ancestors" (Lesejane, 2005: 174). Therefore, "extended families have been able to respond strategically to ongoing disruptions in fathers' lives, offering support systems for young ... men of color" (Allen and Connor, 1997).

Furthermore, marital unfaithfulness is treated as another factor that results in dislocation in Black South African families. Whereas the reaction of other men is not established as they were not released from the prison before the close of the novel, Ngcobo comments on the reaction of a character that discovers his wife's extra marital affair. Thus:

The man they had seen passing earlier was passing again on his way back. He was talking, talking incessantly to the severed head under his arm. He was talking to it while its blood was fresh, colouring the whole of his right side. 'You think because I've got no money and no job, because you're working, that you must sleep with him? Eh? Is it my fault I've no job? Because he's got money he must sleep with my wife? Are you no longer my wife? Oh yes you are, you're my wife even after death; our ancestors will show you how wrong you were.' 'Are they coming, the police? I walking back to Ngoje to report to them. I want them to know what she's done and what I've done – she won't have to work now, and he won't take my wife away from me.... (P. 234)

Beyond its direct connection to the disruptions affecting most Black South African families, racial discrimination equally instigates quarrels between spouses. As Black South African men are increasingly dispossessed of especially economic power, their wives are deeply constrained to work under certain White authorities who in turn exploit them sexually. Although Jezile's husband, in *And They Didn't Die* is not present to either behead her like the above character did, the fact that their marriage also suffers separation is registered by the rejection she faced when her pregnancy by the White employer who raped her is discovered by her in-laws. Despite that most rape cases constitutes a serious as well as growing problem which most often than not results in out-of-wedlock births, Ngcobo in *Cross of Gold* only features the pains and helplessness of families whose women (wives, mothers or daughters) fall victims of the assaults. In the course of hiding from the army and police who invaded Msebe's village to arrest the men, several girls are further raped. Besides this instance, Ngcobo also explores the injustice employed by the mercenaries of racial discrimination in dismissing the rape case of Bessie by a white policeman. Thus:

.... She was raped the other night. She was walking home rather late...when a small car stopped alongside her and a

white man demanded her pass. She produced it. then he asked if she had a watch. She said she did not. He then he was arresting her for the curfew. She tried to argue that it couldn't have been eleven yet but he dragged her into the car, and drove off. He ravished her away in his "police station." ... At the crack of dawn she walked back to her place of work washed herself, and reported the "police man" to her madam. She was later examined by their doctor he said he could prove nothing because she had washed. He asked for her clothes and when she said had left them at home he said he had no further time to waste on the case. In other words, there was no evidence of rape. Bessie remembered the car number and the man was caught, but at his last appearance he said she had agreed. (P. 151)

The number of rape cases and sexual exploitation confronting Black South African women signifies the grim life which Black South African families usually grapple with. Though Lundi makes an attempt to see that justice prevails in Bessie's rape case, the rapist and a (White) doctor who attends to her frustrate his effort by waving the issue with the claim that her concession to it makes the act a mutual agreement. To this end, it is evident that Black South African families live in constant agony and shame resulting from the frequent rape cases. Also, this defines a dimension to the trauma they experienced vis-à-vis male absence which results from the subjugation and humiliation of Black men by racial discrimination.

Besides the issue of financial constraint which leads to a drastic decline in the number of sustainable families and marriages contracted among Black South Africans, other challenges fostered by the same racial discrimination also constrain some young men to either delay marriage or opt for celibacy. In *Cross of Gold*, Ngcobo deploys this situation in Zembe's encounter with the racist's government. On receiving a threat of eviction (from his father's apartment) for being unmarried, Zembe strategically arranges

a registry marriage with an old widow. But when confronted by Mandla, he justifies his action with the claim that:

... it means nothing to either of us. She knows she'll never be my wife in the real sense. It's just a way of getting the certificate.... I'm going to pay for this.... Do you think anybody sensible should really get married? ... if I ever do, I should not find it difficult, to get married by customary rites – if my girl would agree to that... 'you have a number of girls you could marry.' 'I love them too much to put them through the triangle that my life is; if I did it would be a punishment for me as well.' ... the same office that insist I get married will not allow Singa to bring his wife home. He's married six months now; she is expecting a baby. They say she has no permit to move outside the hospital in the location.

Having witnessed his mother's struggles and pain since arrest and imprisonment of his father, Zembe expresses fear of exposing any lady to the horrors of widowhood and single parenthood under the prevailing racists' government. Instead of attracting young people with its comforting and communal comeliness, marriage and family life in apartheid South Africa is viewed as a dreaded monster to be abhorred. The family unit to this end is blown into fragments by the incessant law codes implemented by the racists' government to subjugate as well as checkmate every black activity in the society. In other words, such system of governance is particularly aimed at mutilating and rendering impossible the survival of black families in South Africa.

Another issue which Ngcobo explores in the novel is how men get wearied by their inability to respond to their family needs. Instead of living to witness humiliation which comes with being helpless while one's children helplessly die before his very eyes, some men suddenly prefer the taunting death and arrest that bedevils their daily lives. While facing his death warrants:

... Sibili had said something about the children who would grow starving, and fatherless. (But) Mande said, "Aren't you grateful the white people have given you a reason to die with honour? Our children would have starved and died before our eyes, but now they will tell the world, before they, in their turn to die that we died fighting.... Regrettably, I'm (Msebe) here, doomed to shameful death in jail.... My wife never comes to see me, I doubt if she knows I was not murdered like the rest of them. I keep hoping she knows; I give messages to every prisoner who is set free, no matter from what corner of the country he come form. I saw other women at the end, ashen gray in their country prints torn and tattered, all the way from Zululand, crouching under those jacaranda trees in bloom, waiting for the death of their husbands. Often I wonder where they got the money to come all that way. They camped out for at least three days before the murder of the men of the valley. I did not see my wife. I keep wondering why, but I'll never know. Perhaps she could not come because of the small baby- perhaps it was sick – I wonder what baby it was. I saw several with suckling babies out there, I crane my neck to see her, but I'm certain she wasn't there; I often wonder if others saw their men before the end.... They were faithful to the end. (P. 127-128)

Regarding a single mother's helplessness during the court proceedings that results in Mandla's imprisonment, Ngcobo also figures how:

Zethu stood in the place of the boy's parents, and that dreaded moment of every parent in black South Africa had come. After the long years of protection through childhood, every parent had to face the stark reality and the humiliation that goes with the fact of being black; when the child realized just how helpless and gagged and emasculated adults really were. No doubt the child would already have seen those unexplained encounters that brought humiliation and sometimes spelt greater suffering while father got his beating in front of them or was in jail. The struggle to hide the pain and humiliation of apartheid was always arduous, but it was worth the price of life to see the free joy of living in the eyes of a child, ignorant of the guilt of and punishment for being Black. (P. 42)

Instead of a dreaded evil, death is ironically deployed as a heroic option opted for by fathers for their families and country at large. It is also embraced as an escape route

from the humiliation which men fear to suffer in the presence of their children. The commitment exerted by the women who stood by their husbands to the end is incorporated in the expressive description given of the roles they play in the society. Therefore, “women are the heroines of continuance, who sustain life, making sure life continues from one era to the next. They have known the agony and the ecstasy...” (Mzamane, 2008). More so, Msebe’s frustration and loneliness exemplifies the painful experience which confronts men when separated from their families by imprisonment. Further than the shame that comes with parents’ suffering and humiliation in the presence of their children, the second perspective shows an intensity in the situation especially when a child instead of his parents goes through the torments influenced by racial discrimination without help from the latter. Besides her focus on the public struggles and complexities that sting the Black South African families, Ngcobo also articulates personal struggles of a specific family strained by their inability to brave the pains of lack by opposing the inhumanity wrought upon them via racial discrimination. Of a character’s reaction, Ngcobo comments that:

The ... thing Martha hated about ‘Mrs.’ (Gilroy) was that she did not like Martha’s husband to be around. Martha complained endlessly about how they treated her, as half human. At first they asked her to send her children away, her last two; twin boys they were. It had been one of her bitterest decision – sending her own children, in order to look after the Gilroy’s children. ... now she won’t even allow my husband come to see me; she insists I see him Thursday and Sunday afternoons. Is that married life? ...what law says a man and wife shall no longer live normal lives? (P. 99, 100)

Amidst the harshness of the racists’ society, the extent to which Martha’s family is persecuted by her employer is explored at two levels. The irony that goes with sending her children away only to nurture her employer’s and the restrictions that surround her

nuptial life. Although she always expresses her displeasure of the events as they dehumanize her, neither she nor her husband could muster courage by deciding to back out as doing so will mean truncating their source of livelihood. At another level, the portrayal here obviously exemplifies the reason for which Zembe opted for celibacy instead of marrying correctly. Therefore, the reduced ability of Martha's family to earn more than a meager income is magnified by the lack of a male role model (in terms of financial supplies) in the home. Given these challenges, other disillusioned as well as disreputed families could not but find solace in the reckless drinking and sexual activities they suddenly embraced. Thus, Mandla observation pictures how:

People drank and sex flourished with abandon, giving nothing in return. At parties and in the streets people leapt from one woman to the next as though in chase of something in women which could carry them away - ... they drank every day as though nursing a hope that somehow they could drift into the land of their manhood. (P. 157)

This does not only depict the disillusioned state of dispossessed Blacks in South Africa, their wild behaviour also tells of the general reduced desire for contracting marriages and creating sustainable homes. In situations as these, fathers generally "become 'shadowy figures' that are symbolically important but may have little actual importance in children's daily lives" (Barbarin and Richter, 2001). On his return to South Africa from Botswana such cumulative knowledge which Mandla gathers of his people marks the beginning of a long series of initiations. Also, the reckless abandon with which they engage in sexual activities, the seamy side of township life and the frequent harassment by the police gradually becomes context for his transition from adolescence to adulthood (Morrell, 2005: 16; Mzamane, 2008).

On the whole, this chapter considers various angles through which Ngcobo explores the challenges which most Black South African families grapple with under the racists' government – settler colonialists. In view of her long-standing concern with the economic, social, and political justice, Ngcobo articulates a succession of attempts by several families to combat racial discrimination which is consequent upon the spread of male absence and single parenthood in the society. The supportive roles women like Sindisiwe, Zethu, Mekeletso and Nozipo (among others) play in the lives of their children and imprisoned husbands shows that the Black family in the racists' South African setting is not necessarily disrupted by internal conflict as it is by the external factors signified by the agents and dividends of racial discrimination. By trooping the mines in search for jobs, a number of the male characters proved their acceptance of the interpretation which confers a responsibility to provide and protect on fatherhood (Morrell, 2005). Evidently, Black South African men, unlike their African American counterparts (in the studied texts), did not altogether fail at providing for their families, rather, their quests for the means of providing as well as struggles for the liberation of their families and nation constitute, to a larger extent, the reason for their frequent absence. Therefore, Ngcobo's exploration in *Cross of Gold* captures the heroism of men and women in the struggle against racial discrimination and the conflicting economic, political, and cultural forces that shaped the Black South African's family experience in general.

Works Cited

- Abubakar, T.A.N. (1987). *South African Literature and the Changing Tempo of Politics: A Study of Prose-Fiction by Black South African Writers (1960-1986)*. Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation. A.B.U., Zaria, Nigeria. Pp.327.
- Abubakar, T.A.N. (1999). *The Black Novelist and Politics in South Africa*. Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Nigeria. PP. 105-110.
- Agarwal, A. (2008). Single Parents In South Africa - How to Manage The Hard Life. Retrieved December 06, 2010, from ezinearticles.com/?Single-Parents-In-South-Africa---How-To-Manage-The-Hard-Life&id=1661129
- Allen, W. and Conner, M. (1997). An African American Perspective on Generative Fathering. In: Hawkins, A. and Dollahite, D. (Eds) *Generative Fathering: Beyond deficit perspectives* (pp. 52-70). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. In: Roy, K. (2008). Free Online Library: *A Life Course Perspective on Fatherhood and Family Policies in the United States and South Africa*. Farlex Inc. Retrieved March 16, 2010, from www.thefreelibrary.com > ... > Fathering > March 22, 2008
- Barbarin, O. and Richter, L. (2001). *Mandela's Children: Growing up in Post-apartheid South Africa*. New York: Routledge. In: Roy, K. (2008). Free Online Library: *A Life Course Perspective on Fatherhood and Family Policies in the United States and South Africa*. Farlex Inc. Retrieved March 16, 2010, from www.thefreelibrary.com > ... > Fathering > March 22, 2008
- Holborn, L. and Eddy, G. (2011). *Fractured Families: A Crisis for South Africa. First Steps to Healing the South African Family*, Johannesburg: South African Institute of Race Relations.
- Hunter, M. (2006). Fathers without amandla: Zulu-speaking Men and Fatherhood. In: Richter, L. and Morrell, R. (Eds) (2006). *Baba: Men and Fatherhood in South Africa*. Cape Town: Human Sciences Research Council. Retrieved March 6, 2011, from www.hsrcpress.ac.za
- Lamb, M. (1996). Speaking at the IPPR Conference 'Men and their Children' in London, 30th April Transcript by David Cannon - Shared Parenting Information Group (SPIG) UK- *Promoting Responsible shared Parenting after Separation and Divorce* - What are fathers for? Retrieved November 3, 2010, from www.spig.clara.net/ippr/lamb.htm
- Lesejane, D. (2005). Fatherhood from an African Cultural Perspective. In: Richter, L. and Morrell, R. (Eds) (2006). *Baba: Men and fatherhood in South Africa* (pp. 13-25). Cape Town, South Africa: HSRC Press. In: Roy, K. (2008). Free Online Library: *A Life Course Perspective on Fatherhood and Family Policies in the United*

States and South Africa. Farlex Inc. Retrieved March 16, 2010, from www.thefreelibrary.com › ... › Fathering › March 22, 2008

Mboya, M. and Nesengani, R. (1999). Migrant Labor in South Africa: A Comparative Analysis of the Academic achievement of Father-present and Father-absent Adolescents. *Adolescence*, 34, 763-767. In: Roy, K. (2008). Free Online Library: *A Life Course Perspective on Fatherhood and Family Policies in the United States and South Africa*. Farlex Inc. Retrieved March 16, 2010, from www.thefreelibrary.com › ... › Fathering › March 22, 2008

Mhlope, (1993). "Praise to Our Mothers." In: Mphahlele, M. (2002). A Gesture of Defiance: Selected Texts by Black South African Women Writers. *Journal of Literary Studies*, Jun 1, 2002. Farlex Inc. In: Literature Society of South Africa, Gale Group. The Free Library > Date > 2002 > June > 1 > Journal of Literary Studies. Farlex Inc. Retrieved June 18, 2011, from www.thefreelibrary.com/A+gesture+of+defiance%3A+selected+texts+by+Black+South+African+women...-a0110229012

Morrell, R. (2005). Fathers, Fatherhood, and Masculinity in South Africa. In: Richter, L. and Morrell, R. (Eds) (2006). *Baba: Men and Fatherhood in South Africa* (pp. 13-25). Cape Town, South Africa: HSRC Press. Retrieved March 6, 2011 from www.hsrcpress.ac.za

Mzamane, M.V. (2008). Continuities and Discontinuities in South African Literature. In: Mahala, S. *Black South African Women Novelists*. @Book SA, August 25. Retrieved March 16, 2011, from <http://siphwomahala.book.co.za/blog/2008/08/05/black-south-african-women-novelists/>

Ngcobo, L. (1981). *Cross of Gold*. London: Longman Group Limited.

Ngcobo, L. (1990). *And They Didn't Die*. Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press.

"Ngcobo, Lauretta 1931-." (2008). *Black Literature Criticism: Classic and Emerging Authors since 1950*. The Gale Group, Inc. Retrieved April 09, 2011, from www.highbeam.com/doc/1G2-3079400081.html -

Renewing a Dialogue between African Women Writers and Women of African Descent. (2010). In: *Women's Words: African Worlds*. Posted August 20, 2010. Retrieved November 6, 2011, from womenswordsafricanworlds.wordpress.com/page/2/

Smit, R. (2001). The Impact of Migrant Labour Migration on African Families in South Africa: Yesterday and Today. *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*, 32, 533-548. In: Roy, K. (2008). Free Online Library: *A Life Course Perspective on Fatherhood and Family Policies in the United States and South Africa*. Farlex Inc. Retrieved March 16, 2010, from www.thefreelibrary.com › ... › Fathering › March 22, 2008

CHAPTER FOUR:

4.0 Black Writing and the Universality of Human Experience

This study shows that certain factors have in varied ways given rise to the recurring challenges of male absence and single parenthood in Black homesteads. Within the context of African-American and Black South African's writing, this chapter will attempt to illustrate the existence of thematic and stylistic linkages as well as polarities explored in relation to male absence and single parenthood. In an attempt to locate how these factors contribute to the universality of human experience, and foster male absence and single parenthood among African-Americans and Black South Africans, this chapter focuses on the comparative outlook of Richard Wright's *Black Boy*, Toni Morrison's *Beloved* and Laretta Ngcobo's *Cross of Gold*. The three novels capture specific socio-historical periods of the African-Americans and Black South Africans - slavery, the height of Jim Crow Law (in South America) and settlers' colonialism respectively. Given the experiences under these periods, the following issues are explored as factors that either promote or depict the state and spread of male absence and single parenthood in the studied societies: migration, poverty, hunger, arrest and imprisonment, foster parenthood or parenthood by relatives, child development under hazardous condition and consequent deaths or cold blood murder by the white oppressors. Besides reflecting separation as it ensues at varied levels, the outlined issues also reflect areas of convergence in the themes that permeate African-American and Black South African literature.

Beginning with migration which entails the process of moving from one (place) region or country to another, the studied writers feature events that necessitate their

characters' relocation to alternative environments. Gleaning from the selected novels, such compelling events or forces are largely induced by the search for; greener pastures, refuge against oppressive regimes and desired help or communality. At various points, Wright features the necessity of migration in the circumstances that influence the change of location by Richard's family. Among other instances, the bereaved Aunty Meg and Richard's deserted family are forced to relocate for fear that the killers of the former's husband (Uncle Hoskins) will not relent in their quest to destroy his entire lineage. They move again, and soon after Aunt Maggie marries Professor Matthew. As Matthews kills a white woman, he flees with Maggie to the North to avoid trouble. In Morrison's *Beloved*, however, migration is explored in the escape of Sweet Home slaves to Cincinnati - a Black neighbourhood inhabited by other ex-slaves. In the course of their escape, the displacement of spouses or families like those of Baby Suggs and her children (by several fathers), Halle and Sethe, then Sixo and the Thirty-Miled woman signifies the offshoot of male absence and single parenthood in the text. Similarly, Ngcobo's *Cross of Gold* pictures migration in the mass rural-urban drift of largely men in search for the source of livelihood and political move for liberation. Through the character of Sindisiwe's mother, Ngcobo articulates the personal struggles of rural women as sufferers of single parenthood while men leave for the cities - only to return on rare occasions or never again. Thus, most couple's relationship becomes threatened by such distance (Sowetan, 2008; Ngcobo, Laretta 1931-, 2008b).

Successions of arrest and imprisonment significantly characterize the lives of African-Americans and Black South Africans in their respective environment. The reason for this is manifest in the racial discrimination that persistently thrives against Blacks in

both societies. In showing how this threatens the survival of the family unit, Morrison in *Beloved* explores the encounter of Sweet Home slaves whose arrest and detention stems from their failed attempt at escaping slavery. Their experiences replicate the vain effort exerted by most displaced Black families to surmount the challenge of contending for their freedom as eligible citizens of the United States. Sethes' arrest and imprisonment for the murder of her child – 'Beloved' also signifies a level of separation in form of female absence which leaves children in the custody of a single grandparent (Baby Suggs). In *Cross of Gold*, Ngcobo addresses the effect of arrest and imprisonment on Black families by her exploration of the circumstances that surround the lives of Sindisiwe, Mekeletso, Zethu, and Nozipo among other women whose husbands are serving jail terms in different prisons. It is in consonance with this, it is considered that "Black men are more than six times likely than White men to be incarcerated and their average jail sentences tend to be 10 months longer than those of White men" (Morial, 2011).

The effect of the economic deprivation experienced by Blacks in both societies is expressed in the poverty and hunger which the three writers deploy among other challenges that promote male absence and single parenthood. While addressing a packed congregation at one of the city's largest Black churches, Barack Obama's message unveils the need to address the issue of parenting and personal responsibility, particularly for low-income African-American families. Speaking in Texas in February, Obama also advises his largely Black audience to take absolute responsibility for their children's welfare. In an emphatic manner, he further admonishes that fathers are expected to realize that responsibility does not end at conception, but continues in the upbringing of

the children conceived (Bosman, 2008). On the contrary, Richard's father in *Black Boy* reacts to his economic challenge by abandoning his family for a single woman who signifies 'lesser responsibility'. In narrating the extent to which they are affected by his father's decision, Richard submits that:

My mother held on her idea and one night a week later I found myself standing in a room in a frame house. My father and a strange woman were sitting before a bright fire that blazed in a grate. ... "It's not for me," my mother was saying. "It's for your children that I'm asking you for money." "I ain't got nothing," my father said, laughing. "Come here, boy," the strange woman called me. I looked at her and did not move. "Give him a nickel," the woman said. "He's cute." "Come here, Richard," my father said, stretching out his hand. I backed away, shaking my head, keeping my eyes on the fire. "You ought to be ashamed," my mother said to the strange woman. "You are starving my children." "Now, don't you all fight," my father said, laughing. ... He looked at my mother and laughed louder. ... "You ought to be dead," I said to the strange woman. The woman laughed and threw her arms about my father's neck. I grew ashamed and wanted to leave. "How could you starve your children?" my mother asked. "Let Richard stay with me," my father said. "Do you want to stay with your father, Richard?" my mother asked. "No," I said. "You'll get plenty to eat," he said. "I'm hungry now," I told him. "But I won't stay with you." "Aw, give the boy a nickel," the woman said. My father ran his hand into his pocket and pulled out a nickel.... "Don't take it," my mother said. ... "You ought to be ashamed," my mother said, weeping. "Giving your son a nickel when he's hungry. If there's a God, He'll pay you back." (27-28).

Despite Richard mother's appeal for her starving children, his father's new found succor (concubine) seared his conscience against the gravity of their suffering. In presenting how poverty and hunger wreck havoc on Black families, Ngcobo's *Cross of Gold* vividly shows the manner in which a dispossessed man murdered his wife for infidelity. This owes credence to the fact that the woman's action is born out of her response to lack. To a larger extent, such challenges are reminiscent of the lamentation that too many Black men are weak and powerless. Others turn their anger and frustrations

on their own Black people especially their wives and children (Bryant, 1987; Everett, 1987).

Going by the summation that Young Black males between the ages of 15 and 34 years are nine times more likely to be killed by firearms and nearly eight times as likely to die from AIDS, death is collectively explored in the three novels to represent another level of separation which disrupts the survival of most Black families. In *Black Boy*, this finds expression in the assassination of Auntie Meg's husband - Uncle Hoskins. His refusal to take an immediate action about the life threat he receives from some envious Whites who intend to stampede his thriving liquor business obviously costs him dearly. Morrison, in *Beloved* articulates this issue in the bloody killing of Sixo which automatically separates him from his pregnant girl friend (the Three-Miled woman). His death portends the birthing of single parenthood in his expectant girlfriend. Although, Halle's death still remains a mystery to the freed slaves, it is evident that Sethe also falls in the category of women who suffer single parenthood as a result of separation by speculated death of her husband. Through the depiction of mass and frequent killing of especially men in the mines, prisons, streets and in the course of various uprisings, Ngcobo, in *Cross of Gold* likewise enunciates the place of death in the spread of single parenthood or female-headed homes in South Africa. Although, Mandla's mother - Sindisiwe also died in the course of her political activism her children's upbringing is variously assumed by Zethu (who is equally a single mother) Marumo and her grandparents among other guardians. This depicts parenting in the guise of 'Grand parenthood' and 'parenthood by relatives' which largely complement the failing strength of single parents.

Subsequently, 'Grand parenthood' and 'parenthood by relatives' are similarly given expression in the three novels. As one of the definitions of single parenthood rightly Suggests that Single parenthood may occur for a variety of reasons. A few possible scenarios are by choice, as in, divorce, adoption, artificial insemination, surrogate motherhood (parenthood), while others are the result of an unforeseeable occurrence, such as a death, child abuse, child neglect, or abandonment by biological parents (Why Single Mothers, 2010). Either way, surrogate parenthood as a result of death and abandonment by biological parents remains the point of concern in this paragraph. In *Black Boy*, Wright expresses this issue in view of situations that confine Richard's (single parent) family to the custody of his mother's siblings and Grandparents. In *Beloved*, Morrison likewise captures the scenario of migration which lands Baby Suggs' grandchildren to her custody before the arrival of their mother. Following Sindisiwe's death in *Cross of Gold*, Ngcobo situates her children in the care of several guardians including their maternal grandparent. From the three writers' perspective of extended parenthood, two striking conclusions are established. The first is about the African-Americans and Black South Africans family ties as relatives and fellow community members show unusual readiness to participate as well as contribute their quota to the upbringing of disadvantaged Black children. Secondly, it is obvious that only maternal grandparents and family members among other guardians constitute the group of surrogate parents to such children. Therefore, the reality of extended family life is that grandparents and other female or male relatives are most likely to assume primary caregiving roles in both societies - United States and South Africa (Desmond and Desmond, 2005).

However, it is equally established that most single (parents) mothers are exposed to varied health and life threatening hazards that most often than not stampede their progress as well as undermine their efforts in children upbringing among other challenges (Single-parent, 2010). In the studied texts, the two primary challenges that catapult mothers into depression are the increase number of life stresses and decrease amount of social support. In *Black Boy*, Wright depicts this in the severe illness that overwhelms Richard's mother in the course her effort to meet the social demands of parenting by taking several jobs. In *Beloved*, Sethe develops psychosis as result of her brutal experience under slavery. In an attempt to salvage her children from going through the same experience that so battered her life, she manifests this mental disorder by killing her daughter with the intention of doing same to others before their rescue from her grip. However, Ngcobo, in *Cross of Gold* simply pictures single parents' misery in terms of disillusionment and the defenselessness of their lives and that of their children under apartheid and its consequent racial discrimination. Thus, the children Sindisiwe sends for and seeks to protect from the claws of oppression only arrive to witness her untimely death. In Zethu's situation, Ngcobo also replicates single parents' depression:

Zethu stood in the place of the boy's parents, and that dreaded moment of every parent in black South Africa had come. After the long years of protection through childhood, every parent had to face the stark reality and the humiliation that goes with the fact of being black; when the child realized just how helpless and gagged and emasculated adults really were. No doubt the child would already have seen those unexplained encounters that brought humiliation and sometimes spelt greater suffering while father got his beating in front of them or was in jail. The struggle to hide the pain and humiliation of apartheid was always arduous, but it was worth the price of life to see the free joy of living in the eyes of a child, ignorant of the guilt of and punishment for being Black. (P. 42)

Among the number of life threatening challenges single parents grapple with, depression is considered capable of interfering with their ability to parent, seek education and employment as well as significantly affect the entire families' quality of life (Single-parent, 2010). In other words, outside the support that some single mothers receive from other people, a number of them most often than not experience various hazards which incapacitate and sometimes claim their lives.

Consequently, cohabitation is collectively deployed in the three texts as a factor that 'succors' the failing strength of single parents (mothers). Being a living arrangement in which unmarried couple live together in a long-term relationship that resembles marriage, cohabitation appears to be beneficial especially to single mothers as well as widowed or divorced women. Among other benefits, this to a great extent, offers them companionship and financial security besides the opportunity to test their compatibility without committing themselves to a legal union (Denis and Ntsimane, 2005). In *Beloved*, Morrison conveys this relationship in the perspective of companionship. As a single mother whose dilemma appear too depressing for sanity, Sethe readily considers Paul D a suitable companion and sex partner regardless of his being jobless. With reference to *Cross of Gold*, what comes close to resembling cohabitation is the relationship between Marumo and Tana.

Beyond the restriction and protection involved in cohabiting, reckless sex indulgence features as a behaviour that permeates the lives of African Americans and Blacks South Africans. Besides its tendency at increasing the rate of single parenthood in teenage or out-of-wedlock pregnancies, the activity of illicit sex is reflected as a means through which the oppressed Blacks expiate their hurts and frustrations from the

repressive institutions of slavery and racial discrimination. Morrison's depiction of sexual agitation among Sweet Home slaves climaxed in their resolve to mate with animals in the absence of available women. The arrival of Sethe to Sweet Home particularly intensifies their expectation for a free sex partner. Thus:

There had been six of them who belonged to the farm, Sethe the only female. ... Sethe was thirteen when she came to Sweet Home and already iron-eyed. She was a timely present for Mrs. Garner who had lost Baby Suggs to her husband's high principles. The Five Sweet Home men looked at the new girl and decided to let her be. They were young and so sick with the absence of women they had taken to calves. Yet they let the iron-eyed girl be, so she could choose in spite of the fact that each one would have beaten the other so mush (sic) to have her. It took her a year to choose – a long, tough year of thrashing on pallets eaten up with dreams of her. A year of yearning, when rape seemed the solitary gift of life. ...they were Paul D Garner, Paul F Garner, Paul A Garner, Halle Suggs, and Sixo... minus women, fucking cows, dreaming of rape, thrashing pallets, rubbing their thighs and waiting for the new girl... she waited a year. Sweet Home men abused cows while they waited with her. She chose Halle for their first bedding she sewed herself a dress on the sly.... Because of the Thirty-Mile Woman Sixo was the only one not paralyzed by yearning for Sethe. (P. 9, 10, 11, 25)

In *Cross of Gold*, Ngcobo portrays a gathering of dispersed and disillusioned families who resort to reckless drinking and sexual activities without reserve. Therefore, the "People drank and sex flourished with abandon, giving nothing in return. At parties and in the streets people leapt from one woman to the next as though in chase of something in women which could carry them away ... they drank every day as though nursing a hope that somehow they could drift into the land of their manhood" (P. 157). Although, the three authors unanimously articulate sexual recklessness as an act which results from the desolation of Blacks in racist conscious societies, it is obvious that judging from a gender perspective, Wright's position vary from Morrison and Ngcobo's.

His account of illicit sex in, *Black Boy* only presents women as agitators of sexual gratification –the Black Landlady and prostitute at West Helena and Bess at Beale Street in Memphis. The female writers, to a larger extent balanced their delineation. For instance, the sexual engagement between Beloved and Paul D in *Beloved* and between Dudu and Mandla in *Cross of Gold* show a fairer consideration by the female authors in terms of gender involvement. Notwithstanding, the fact that such immoral behaviour is capable of affecting the survival of the family unit cannot be ignored.

As considered in the previous paragraphs, it is imperative to note that despite the striking similarities that link up the thematic and stylistic thrust of African American and South African literature with male absence and single parenthood, the fact that there exist areas of disparity by means of which male absence and single parenthood is propounded cannot be denied. Among others, these include; separation, effect of single parenthood (motherhood), the well being of children, and the decline of interest in marriage.

On the issue of spousal separation which marks a significant point in the life of every single parent, the three writers' delineation varies on the grounds of the varied sociohistorical period they consider. Although, Wright and Morrison focus on two different periods of American history, they agree in their presentation of men's calculated decision for separation. That is, separation by choice which signifies male or paternal irresponsibility in their male characters. This is reflected in the desertion by Richard's father and Paul D. in *Black Boy* and *Beloved* respectively. On the contrary, Ngcobo's depiction of separation is viewed from the perspective of coercion and necessity. In *Cross of Gold*, coercive separation is manifest in the arrests, imprisonments and death of most male characters. However, what befalls Mandla and Nozipo and other Black mine

workers replicate separation by necessity. In essence, Black South African men, unlike their African American counterparts (reacting of a crippled ego by the sociohistorical and economic discrepancies of their society) in the studied texts, did not deliberately abandon their families, rather, their quests for the means of livelihood as well as struggles for the liberation of their families and nation particularly constitute the reason for their frequent separation from family members.

As single parenthood most often than not birthed certain crisis that significantly influence the quality of parenting, so is delinquent behaviour in children also associated with its failures in most cases. In contrast to Morrison's portrayal of Sethe's parental ability which subscribes to the view that "the absence of the father is equated with the poor upbringing of the children" and "catastrophic for the emotional and psychological development of the child," Wright and Ngcobo eulogize the strength of single mothers in the eventual success achieved by their children. The impact which the encouraging input by Richard and Mandla's mother register in them is manifest in the subsequent achievement of their lives. Therefore, as Richard in *Black Boy* struggles for means of elevating his family from its poverty state, Mandla in *Cross of Gold* also sets out to succeed his mother with the resolve to combat the very evil that has so 'blown his family into fragments'. Thus, the discussing on "Representations of Fatherhood in Black US Film and how this relates to Parenting in South Africa," holds that though fatherhood is ultimately eulogized however, it should not be romanticized as this might end up denigrating motherhood" (Ngobeni, 2002). Thus:

Mothers are blamed for most of society's ills from the breakdown of 'traditional family values' to the rise in the crime rate. Single mothers are seen as feckless and irresponsible. Working mothers are seen as selfish, willing to put their own

needs above those of their children while those who are unemployed are depicted as scroungers, satisfied to live off the state. For black mothers the charge of emasculating their sons has to be added to the list. Mothers today are in a difficult situation. Even if they live in what society portrays as the normal family, that is they stay at home to look after the children while their husbands go out to work, they are still blamed for their children's shortcomings (Barzey, 2000).

In a way, this re-echoes the opinion that the boys who don't have fathers fail while those who do have fathers succeed (Wallace, 1992: 121). Despite what appears as parental failure in the situation of Sethe and her children, the fact that her action is born out of love makes it apparent that the three authors, notwithstanding, agree in their exploration of Single mothers' commitment to the struggle for survival.

In summary, it is apparent that both African-Americans and Black South Africans are witnessing a reshaping of men's roles with an emphasis on how and why men are embedded in the lives of their children, partners, and extended kin members. These changing roles are notwithstanding influenced by the sociohistorical encounters outlined in the essay. Although, the three writers agree in their depiction of male absence and single parenthood as a familial crisis confronting Blacks in general, their individual as well as unique experiences and worldviews yet surface in the areas they vary. However, their portrayal of issues closer to all Black people, Nigerians inclusive, further enhances the realistic focus of this study.

Works Cited

- Barzey, M.A.L. (2000). Thick Love: Motherhood in Toni Morrison's *Beloved* and Julian of Norwich's Revelations of Divine Love. In: *Black Theology: An International Journal, Black Theology in Britain*, Issue 5 Nov (BTIB 3.1). London: Equinox Publishing Ltd. Home > Black Theology in Britain, Issue 5 Nov 2000 (BTIB 3.1) > Barzey1 Chelsea Manor Studios Flood Street SW3 5SR UK. Retrieved June 15, 2011 from <http://www.equinoxjournals.com/BT/article/viewArticle/102>
- Bosman, J. (2008). Obama Sharply Assails Absent Black Fathers. *The New York Times Company*. Chicago: OFFICIAL SELECTION SUNDANCE 2011 FILM FESTIVAL. Retrieved December 06, 2010, from <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/06/16/us/politics/15cnd-obama.html>
- Bryant, J.H. (1987). Ernest J. Gaines: Change, Growth and History, *The Southern Review*, 10(October, 1974), Pp. 851- 864. In: Noss, C.A. Ernest J. Gaines and the Problem of Black Manhood: Giving Positive Models. In: Emenyonu, *et al.*, (Eds) *Black Culture and Black Consciousness in Literature*. Nigeria: Heinemann Educational Books (NIG) Ltd.
- Denis, P. and Ntsimane, R. (2005). Absent Fathers: Why do Men not feature in stories of families affected by HIV/AIDS in Kwa Zulu-Natal? In: Richter, L. and Morrell, R. (Eds) (2006). *Baba: Men and fatherhood in South Africa* (pp. 13-25). Cape Town, South Africa: HSRC Press. In: Roy, K. (2008). Free Online Library: *A Life Course Perspective on Fatherhood and Family Policies in the United States and South Africa*. Farlex Inc. Retrieved March 16, 2010, from www.thefreelibrary.com > ... > Fathering > March 22, 2008
- Desmond, C. and Desmond, C. (2005). HIV/AIDS and the Crisis of Care for Children. In: Richter, L. and Morrell, L (Eds) (2006). *Baba: Men and Fatherhood in South Africa* (pp. 13-25). Cape Town, South Africa: HSRC Press. In: Roy, K. (2008). Free Online Library: *A Life Course Perspective on Fatherhood and Family Policies in the United States and South Africa*. Farlex Inc. Retrieved March 16, 2010, from www.thefreelibrary.com > ... > Fathering > March 22, 2008
- Everett, C. (1987). Tradition in the Afro-American Literature, *Black World*, XXXV, No. 2 (December, 1975), Pp. 20- 35. In: Noss, C.A. Ernest J. Gaines and the Problem of Black Manhood: Giving Positive Models. In: Emenyonu, *et al.*, (Ed) *Black Culture and Black Consciousness in Literature*. Nigeria: Heinemann Educational Books (NIG) Ltd.
- Morial, M. (2011). State of Black America: Future of Black Men Critical for "American Family" *National*: BlackPressUSA.com (2001-2011) National Newspaper Publishers Association, Inc. Retrieved January 20, 2011, from <http://www.blackpressusa.com/News/Article.asp?SID=3&Title=HotStories&NewSID=12934>

- Ngcobo, Laretta 1931-. (2008). *Black Literature Criticism: Classic and Emerging Authors since 1950*. The Gale Group, Inc. Retrieved April 09, 2011, from www.highbeam.com/doc/1G2-3079400081.html -
- Ngobeni, S. (2002). Representations of Fatherhood in Black U S Films and how this relates to Parenting in South Africa. Baba - Chapter 12- Representations of fatherhood in black U S films- and how this relates to parenting in South Africa.pdf - 282.5KB. Retrieved March 16, 2011, from www.africanfathers.org/page.php?p_id=191
- Single-parent (2010). In: *Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia*. Wikimedia Foundation, Inc. Last modified on 1 December 2010 at 21:40. Retrieved March 16, 2011, from <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Single-parent>
- Sowetan (2008). In: South African History Online. Retrieved May 11, 2011, from <http://literature.kzn.org.za>; [http://www.mediamonitoring.org.za\(PDF\)](http://www.mediamonitoring.org.za(PDF)); <http://feministpress.org>
- Wallace, M. (1992). *Boyz 'n the Hood and Jungle Fever*. In: Dent, G. (Ed) *Black Popular Culture*. (pp. 123–131). Seattle, WA: Bay Press. In: Ngobeni, S. (2002). Representations of Fatherhood in Black U S Films and how this relates to Parenting in South Africa. Baba - Chapter 12- Representations of fatherhood in black U S films- and how this relates to parenting in South Africa.pdf - 282.5KB. Retrieved March 16, 2011, from www.africanfathers.org/page.php?p_id=191
- Why Single Mothers. (2010). Charity: She Cares Foundation. Retrieved October 22, 2010, from <http://shecaresfoundation.org/whysinglemothers/whysinglemoms.html>

CHAPTER FIVE:

CONCLUSION

This thesis has examined male absence and single parenthood in Black writing using the novels of Richard Wright, Toni Morrison and Laurretta Ngcobo. The study considered the various projections of issues that are consequent upon the spread of male absence and single parenthood in Black homesteads. It posits that among other factors that contribute to the proliferation of male absence and single parenthood in Black families, racial discrimination is the most influential particularly because it is pivotal to the deprivation and dehumanizing challenges which lead to both voluntary and involuntary male absence resulting automatically to single parenthood. Although this familial dilemma is not restricted to the African-Americans and Black South Africans alone, but this study only focused on the two societies as a yardstick for comparing the contemporary occurrence of male absence and single parenthood confronting the Black race among other groups. By discussing the existence of similar familial problems located in the two societies with varied socio-historical and political experiences, this study established the universality of human experience especially that which cuts across the Black race. In other words, the study confirmed the argument that there is an affinity in the literary themes and styles of African-American and Black South African literature with male absence and single parenthood.

Realism provided the basic theoretical framework for this study. The theory of realism has as one of its main focus the establishment of life-like dimension to the work of art. In this case, realistic issues and events that find expression in the selected texts are clearly identified and discussed in view of the societies that birthed them. Beginning with

the colonial experience of both societies which spans the era of slavery, the height of Jim Crow Law and apartheid respectively, frequent arrests and detention, imprisonment, migration and exile (for safety or in search of greener pasture), high standard of living in the face of financial disempowerment and subsequent deaths or murder in cold blood are discussed in view of racial discrimination and under factors that foster male absence and single parenthood as found in African-American and Black South Africa literature. In view of literature as the literary work of art that is given impetus by the very society it (seeks to) projects, Black writing as well as the issues considered by the selected Black writers make a global village of the Black societies. Their delineations also painted creativity as a means of restoring past experiences in the present.

The study explores the socio-historical processes which do not only shape human experience but constitute aspects to the events that are consequent upon the spread of male absence and single parenthood among African-Americans and Black South Africans. Although the works of Wright, Morrison and Ngcobo are bound by the common concern - male absence and single parenthood in Black writings – in this study, it is worthy of note that their approaches to it vary significantly. The three writers thus, recognized racial discrimination, poverty, oppression, dehumanization, deprivation and untimely deaths as incidents which permeate the socio-historical environment of the African-Americans and Black South Africans. However, the studied writers differ in their assessment of other issues surrounding male absence and single parenthood. Though, Wright's initial deployment of Richard as a drunken child at age six agrees with Morrison's depiction of Sethe's run away boys in showing that single mothers are indeed inadequate in the maintenance of sanity in their homes; it is also true that Richard's

success story significantly tallies with Mandla and Manqoba's in *Cross of Gold*. Thus, they establish the positive impact of single mothers on their children. In other words, this shows that Wright both concurs with Ngcobo in eulogizing the effort of single women in children upbringing as well as negates the view that undermines their potentials in parenting. Significantly, Morrison's depiction of Sethe's attempt at killing her children can equally be considered an indirect attempt by a single parent to safeguard her children's lives. Thus, she undoubtedly agrees with the other writers in negating the stereotype against women's ability at single parenting.

Whereas Wright depicts male absence in terms of death and desertion prompted by a father's inability to bear the 'burden' of a sole provider, Morrison and Ngcobo's portrayal pictures male absence in the light of attempted actions braved by Black men for the liberation of the Black race. Also, the latter perceives male absence in the light of involuntary action necessitated by racial activities as arrest, imprisonment, exile, migration and subsequent deaths. To this end, Morrison and Ngcobo's position negates Wright's postulation which confirms male absence and single parenthood as an irresponsible attitude by some Black men though indirectly informed by racial discrimination.

Although, the three writers unanimously deploy instances of other men's influence on the children of their key female characters (... , Sethe and Sindisiwe respectively), only Wright and Ngcobo establish a positive benefit of such relationships on especially the boys- Richard and Mandla respectively. Whereas Richard has the privilege of going through several hands as Uncle Hoskins, Uncle Edward and the Whiteman with the library card he later uses, Mandla benefited from Marumo, Msebe

and his grandfather. Against the emphasis laid on the presence of a male or father figure in the lives of especially male children, this establishes the place of both gender in the life and development of male children. Therefore, the areas of agreement and polarity highlighted in the themes that established the spread of male absence and single parenthood in the writers' delineation signifies aspects of similitude and diversity in human nature, opinion and experiences.

On the whole, the significance of this study lies in its drawing a comparative line upon which the works –*Black Boy*, *Beloved* and *Cross of Gold* - of prominent African American and Black South African authors like Richard Wright, Toni Morrison and Laretta Ngcobo are respectively examined in relation to male absence and single parenthood.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Sources

Morrison, T. (1988). *Beloved*. New York: Penguin Group.

Ngcobo, L. (1981). *Cross of Gold*. London: Longman Group Limited.

Wright, R. (1945). *Black Boy*. New York: Harper Perennial Modern Classics.

Secondary Sources

Abah, E. (2002). Repositioning Gender in the African American Narrative: A Study of Toni Morrison's *Beloved*. In: Aliyu, *et al.*, (Eds) *Work in Progress*. No. 13, Department of English, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Nigeria: Onis Excel Publishing.

Abah, E.O. (2006). *Male Absence, Female Presence and Generational Continuity in Toni Morrison's Sula*. Paper Presented At The Zaria Conference on the Humanities in the 21st Century: Prospects and Challenges. Organized by Faculty of Arts, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Nigeria, 10-14 January.

Abubakar, T.A.N. (1987). South African Literature and the Changing Tempo of Politics: A Study of Prose-Fiction by Black South African Writers (1960-1986). Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation. A.B.U., Zaria, Nigeria.

Abubakar, T.A.N. (1999). *The Black Novelist and Politics in South Africa*. Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Nigeria. PP. 105-110.

Achmat, Z. (1993). 'Apostles of Civilized Vice,' 'Immoral Practices' and 'Unnatural Vice' in South African Prisons and Compounds, 1880 – 1920, *Social Dynamics*, 19/2, summer. In: Tejumola, O. and Quayson, A. (Eds) (2007). *African Literature: An Anthology of Criticism and Theory*. USA: Blackwell Publishing Ltd. Pp.753.

Adepoju, A. and Mbugua, W. (1997). The African Family: An Overview of Changing Forms. In: Adepoju, A. (Ed) *Family Population and Development in Africa*. London: Zed Books Ltd.

Adogbo, M.P. and Ojo, C.E. (2003). *Research Methods in the Humanities*. Lagos: Malthouse Press Ltd. In: Kofoworola, K.G. (2010). Myth Criticism as an Approach to the Study of Mythology, Mysticism and Madness in Selected Novels of Toni Morrison and Bessie Head. Unpublished Ph.D. Proposal, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Nigeria.

- Amadiume, I. (1987). *Male Daughters, Female Husbands: Gender and in an African Society*. London: Zed Books. In: Tejumola, O. and Quayson, A. (Eds) (2007). *African Literature: An Anthology of Criticism and Theory*. USA: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.
- Amato, P.R. (2000). Diversity within Single-Parent Families. In: David, H.D. *et al.*, (Eds) *Handbook of Family Diversity*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Baldick, C. (2004). *Oxford Concise Dictionary of Literary Terms*. New York: Oxford University Press Inc.
- Baldwin, J. (1962). *Another Country*. USA: Dial Press.
- Brown-Cheatham, (1993). In: Rodney, E.H. and Mupier, R. (1999). Behavioural Differences between African American Male Adolescents with Biological Fathers and Those without Biological Fathers in the Home, *Journal of Black Studies*, 30 (1) 45-61.
- Bryant, J.H. (1987). Ernest J. Gaines: Change, Growth and History, *The Southern Review*, 10(October, 1974), Pp. 851- 864. In: Noss, C.A. Ernest J. Gaines and the Problem of Black Manhood: Giving Positive Models. In: Emenyonu, *et al.*, (Eds) *Black Culture and Black Consciousness in Literature*. Nigeria: Heinemann Educational Books (NIG) Ltd.
- Callister, P. and Burks, S. (2006). Two Parents, Two Households: New Zealand Data Collection, Language and Complex Parenting Family Commission Retrieved February 18, 2010.
- Coles, R. (2002). Black Single Fathers: Choosing to Parent Full-time. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 31, 411-439.
- Douglass, F. (1845). *Narrative of the Life of Fredrick Douglass, an American Slave*. USA: Dover Publications, Inc. In: Gates H.L. (Jnr.) and McKay N. (Eds) (1997). *The Norton Anthology of African American Literature*. New York: W. W. Norton and Company, Inc.
- Emecheta, B. (1994). *The Joys of Motherhood*. Heinemann.
- Everett, C. (1987). Tradition in the Afro-American Literature, *Black World*, XXXV, No. 2 (December, 1975), Pp. 20- 35. In: Noss, C.A. Ernest J. Gaines and the Problem of Black Manhood: Giving Positive Models. In: Emenyonu, *et al.*, (Eds) *Black Culture and Black Consciousness in Literature*. Nigeria: Heinemann Educational Books (NIG) Ltd.

- Ferdinand, (1986). In: Bisztray, G. (1978). *Marxist Models of Literary Realism*. New York: Columbia University Press. Pp.178.
- Franklin, E.F. (1957). *The Negro in the United States*. New York: Revised Edition. The Macmillan Co.
- Gates H.L. (Jnr.) and McKay N. (Eds) (1997). *The Norton Anthology of African American Literature*. New York: W. W. Norton and Company, Inc.
- Gevissa, M. (2000). Mandela's Step-Children: Homosexual Identity in Post-Apartheid South Africa. In: Drucker, P. (Ed) *Different Rainbows*. London: Gaymen's Press. In: Tejumola, O. and Quayson, A. (Eds) (2007). *African Literature: An Anthology of Criticism and Theory*. USA: Blackwell Pub., Ltd. Pp.753.
- Guy, J. (1987). Analyzing Pre-capitalist Societies in Southern Africa. *Journal of Southern African Studies*.
- Holborn, L. and Eddy, G. (2011). *Fractured Families: A Crisis for South Africa. First Steps to Healing the South African Family*, Johannesburg: South African Institute of Race Relations.
- Houchins, S. (Ed) Toni Morrison (b. 1931) *A Teacher's Guide to Toni Morrison*, from text book Publisher Heath
- Kankan, M. (2010). *Urban Dictionary*.
- Ku, L. *et al.*, (1998). Understanding Changes in Young Metropolitan Men's Sexual Activity: 1979-1995. *Family Planning Perspectives* 30 (6): 256-262.
- Marx, and Engels, (1976). *On Literature and Art*. Moscow: Progress. Pp.23.
- Moodie, *et al.*, (1988). Migrancy and Male Sexuality on the South African Gold Mines, *Journal of South African Studies*, 14. 1, 1998: 228 – 56. In: Munro, B. *Queer Features: The Coming –Out Novel in South Africa*. In: Tejumola, O. and Quayson, A. (Eds) (2007). *African Literature: An Anthology of Criticism and Theory*. USA: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.
- Munro, B. (2007). *Queer Features: The Coming –Out Novel in South Africa*. In: Tejumola, O. and Quayson, A. (Eds) (2007). *African Literature: An Anthology of Criticism and Theory*. USA: Blackwell Publishing Ltd. Pp.753-764.
- Murray, S.O. and Will, R. (Eds) (1998). *Boy Wives and Female Husbands: Studies of African Homosexuals*. New York: St. Martins Press. In: Munro, B. *Queer Features: The Coming –Out Novel in South Africa*. In: Tejumola, O. and Quayson, A. (Eds) (2007). *African Literature: An Anthology of Criticism and Theory*. USA: Blackwell Publishing Ltd. Pp.753.

- Mzamane, M.V. (1983-84). A Review of Alex La Guma's *Time of the Butcherbird* and Lauretta Ngcobo's *Cross of Gold* in *Kuka*. Pp. 76-9. In: Omokore, O.S. (1993). *Women in the Liberation Struggle: A Study of Discourse on the Status and Role of Women in the South African Novel by Blacks (1960 - 1984)* Unpublished PhD Dissertation. Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Nigeria.
- Ngcobo, L. (2007). African Motherhood – Myth and Reality. In: Tejumola, O. and Quayson, A. (Eds) (2007). *African Literature: An Anthology of Criticism and Theory*. USA: Blackwell Publishing Ltd. Pp.533.
- Ngcobo, L. (1990). *And They Didn't Die*. Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press.
- Noss, C.A. (1987). Ernest J. Gaines and the Problem of Black Manhood: Giving Positive Models. Pp. 157. In: Emenyonu, *et al.*, (Eds) *Black Culture and Black Consciousness in Literature*. Nigeria: Heinemann Educational Books (NIG) Ltd.
- O'Brien, J. (1987). Interviews with Black Writers. New York: Liveright, 1973, Pp.85. In: Emenyonu *et al.* (Ed) *Black Culture and Black Consciousness Literature*. Ibadan: Heinemann Educational Books (Nigeria) Ltd.
- Ogwude, S.O. (1989). An Exile Writing on Home: Protest, Commitment and Liberation in the Works of Bessie Head Unpublished PhD Thesis, A.B.U., Zaria, Nigeria. In: Omokore, O.S. (1993). *Women in the Liberation Struggle: A Study of Discourse on the Status and Role of Women in the South African Novel by Blacks (1960 - 1984)*. Unpublished PhD Dissertation, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Nigeria.
- Omokore, O.S. (1993). *Women in the Liberation Struggle: A Study of Discourse on the Status and Role of Women in the South African Novel by Blacks (1960 - 1984)*. Unpublished PhD Dissertation, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Nigeria.
- Petry, A.L. (1946). *The Street*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin. In: Bruck, P. and Karrer, W. (Eds) (1982). *The Afro-American Novel since 1960*. Netherlands: B.R. Gruner Publishing Co. Pp. 219-235.
- Ruas, C. (1984). *Conversation with American Writers*. New Delhi: Macmillan India Ltd. In: Abah, E.O. (2006). *Male Absence, Female Presence and Generational Continuity in Toni Morrison's Sula*. Paper Presented At The Zaria Conference on the Humanities in the 21st Century: Prospects and Challenges. Organized by Faculty of Arts, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Nigeria, 10-14 January.
- Ruggles, S. (1994). "The Origins of African-American Family Structure." *American Sociological Review*, 143.
- Tejumola, O. and Quayson, A. (Eds) (2007). *African Literature: An Anthology of Criticism and Theory*. USA: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.

Wertheim, A. (1982). "Journey to Freedom: Ernest Gaines' *The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman* (1971)." In: Bruck, P. and Karrer, W. (Eds) (1982). *The Afro-American Novel since 1960*. Netherlands: B.R. Gruner Publishing Co. Pp. 219-235.

Wright, R. (1957). *White Man Listen*. Garden City , New York: Doubleday

----- (1947). *Twelve Million Black voices: A Folk History of the Negro in the United States of America*. London: Lindsay Drummond.

----- (1940). *Native Son*. New York: The Modern Library.

Zimmerman *et al.*, (1995). Family Structure and Psychological Correlates among Urban African-American Adolescent Males. *Child Development*, 66, 1598-1613.

Electronic /Web Citations

Abstract. (2011). Modern Language Association JSTOR *PMLA* Vol. 108, No. 3, May, 1993. Retrieved March 16, 2011, from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/462616>

Adams, T.D. (1985). "I Do Believe Him Though I Know He Lies." In: Smith, V.W. (2011). "Richard Wright: A Collection of Critical Essays". – Book Reviews. Retrieved June 11, 2011, from http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m2838/is_nl_v31/ai_195..._58k

African American Literature. Encyclopedia Britannica Online. (2010). Retrieved December 06, 2010, from <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/926640/African-American-literature>

Agarwal, A. (2008). Single Parents In South Africa - How to Manage The Hard Life. Retrieved December 06, 2010, from ezinearticles.com/?Single-Parents-In-South-Africa---How-To-Manage-The-Hard-Life&id=1661129

All about Single Parenting in South Africa. (2010). Retrieved December 6, 2010, from Singleparentcenter.net

Allen, W. and Conner, M. (1997). An African American Perspective on Generative Fathering. In: Hawkins, A. and Dollahite, D. (Eds) *Generative Fathering: Beyond deficit perspectives* (pp. 52-70). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. In: Roy, K. (2008). *Free Online Library: A Life Course Perspective on Fatherhood and Family Policies in the United States and South Africa*. Farlex Inc. Retrieved March 16, 2010, from www.thefreelibrary.com > ... > Fathering > March 22, 2008

- Amoateng, A.Y. and Heaten, T.B. (Eds) (2007). *Families and Households in Post-apartheid South Africa: Socio-demographic Perspectives*. Cape Town: HSRC Press. Retrieved March 6, 2011, from www.hrscpress.ac.za.
- Apostolidis, P.T. (2002). Female Presence and Male Absence: Recent Films by Greek Women. In: *Film Criticism*. Questia Media Inc. *Journal Article* Vol. 27. Women'sforum.com Glam Family
- Appiah, K.A. (1987). Wright in the Gold Coast. In: Smith, V.W. (2011) Richard Wright: A Collection of Critical Essays. – Book Reviews. Retrieved June 11, 2011, from http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m2838/is_nl_v31/ai_195..._58k
- Atayurt, Z.Z. (2010). Beauty is a Fat Black Woman: Aesthetization of the placed Body in Grace Nichols's Fat Black Woman's Poems/“Guzellik, Sisman siyahi bir kadindir”: Grace Nichols'un Sisman Siyahi Kadın'in Siirlerinde Yerinden Edilmiş Bedenin Estetiksel Yer Edinimi. Retrieved November 16, 2010, from <http://findarticles.com/>
- Barbarin, O. and Richter, L. (2001). Mandela's Children: Growing up in Post-apartheid South Africa. New York: Routledge. In: Roy, K. (2008). Free Online Library: *A Life Course Perspective on Fatherhood and Family Policies in the United States and South Africa*. Farlex Inc. Retrieved March 16, 2010, from www.thefreelibrary.com › ... › Fathering › March 22, 2008
- Beloved Study Guide. (2012). In: Novels for Students, Gale Cengage. eNotes.com, Inc. Retrieved March 10, 2012, from www.enotes.com/beloved
- Benedetti, J. (1999). *Stanislavski: His Life and Art*. London: Methuen. Retrieved December 06, 2010, from [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Realism\(theatre\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Realism(theatre))
- (2005). *The Art of the Actor: The Essential History of Acting, From Classical Times to the Present Day*. London: Methuen. Retrieved December 06, 2010, from [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Realism_\(theatre\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Realism_(theatre))
- Bhaskaran, S. (2002) “The Politics of Penetration: Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code.” In: Vanita, R. (Ed) *Queering India: Same-Sex Love and Eroticism in Indian Culture and Society*. New York: Routledge. In: Tejumola, O. and Quayson, A. (Eds) (2007). *African Literature: An Anthology of Criticism and Theory*. USA: Blackwell Publishing Ltd. Pp.753.
- Biography of Toni Morrison 1931- (2011). In: Study Guides on Works by Toni Morrison. GradeSaver LLC. Retrieved March 16, 2011, from <http://www.gradesaver.com/author/toni-morrison/>

- Black Boy by Richard Wright- Free Online Notes. (2005). Free Barron's Booknotes. PinkMonkey.com. Retrieved March 14, 2011, from <http://www.pinkmonkey.com/booknotes/barrons/blackby06.asp>
- Bosman, J. (2008). Obama Sharply Assails Absent Black Fathers. *The New York Times Company*. Chicago: OFFICIAL SELECTION SUNDANCE 2011 FILM FESTIVAL. Retrieved March 16, 2011, from <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/06/16/us/politics/15cnd-obama.html>
- Boswell, B. (2011). South African Women Writers: Laretta Ngcobo, Miriam Tlali, Sindiwe Magona. Black Women Writers Rewriting the South African Nation. *Intersections & Inequality*. Retrieved May 11, 2011, from www.cрге.umd.edu
- Bradley, J. (1993). *The Movement: British Poets of the 1950s*. New York: Twayne Publishers. In: Reis, H. (2004). "Presenting it, as it is": Poetics of Realism and Politics of Representation in Carol Ann Duffy's Poetry Hacettepe Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Dergisi/Cilt:21/Sayı:2/ss.133-142. Retrieved June 16, 2011, from <http://www.edebiyatdergisi.hacettepe.edu.tr/2004212HuriyeReis.pdf>
- Brians, P. (2006). Realism and Naturalism. Retrieved March 16, 2011, from http://www.wsu.edu/~brians/hum_303/naturalism.html
- Brockett, O.G. and Hildy, J. F. (2003). *History of the Theatre*. Ninth edition, International Edition. Boston: Allyn and Bacon. Retrieved December 06, 2010, from [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Realism_\(theatre\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Realism_(theatre))
- Bumpass, L. (1999). The Changing Contexts of Parenting in the United States. Retrieved February 18, 2010, from parenthood.library.wisc.edu/Bumpass/Bumpass.html
- Campbell, D.M. (1997). Realism in American Literature, 1960 – 1990. *Literary Movements*. Department of English, Washington State University. Retrieved December 06, 2010, from <http://www.wsu.edu/~campbell/amlit/realism.htm>
- Chan, C. (2010). Postmodern Blackness: Toni Morrison's 'Beloved' and the end of History – Novel by Black Female Author. 4u-Articles. Wordpress, Retrieved September 6, 2010 from bavotasan.com
- Coles, R.L. and Green, C. (Ed) (2009). The Myth of the Missing Father. Columbia University Press. Retrieved February 18, 2011, from <http://cup.columbia.edu/book/978-0-231-14352-3/the-myth-of-the-missing-black-father/excerpt>
- Connell, R. (1995). *Masculinity*. Cambridge: Polity Press. In: Richter, L. and Morrell, R. (Eds) (2006). *Baba: Men and Fatherhood in South Africa*. Cape Town: Human Sciences Research Council. Retrieved March 6, 2011, from www.hsrcpress.ac.za

- Criticism > Contemporary Literary Criticism > Morrison, Toni - (2010). Introduction *Beloved* (1987). eNotes.com, Inc. Retrieved December 06, 2010, from <http://www.enotes.com/contemporary-literary-criticism/beloved-morrison-toni>
- Define the Scope and the Problem of Adolescent Pregnancy. (2010). Chapter 13> Critical Concept Review. Pearson Education. Retrieved May 11, 2911, from wps.prenhall.com/chet_london_maternal_2/48/12417/3178795.cw/-/3178818/index.html
- Desmond, C. and Desmond, C. (2005). HIV/AIDS and the Crisis of Care for Children. In: Richter, L. and Morrell, L (Eds) (2006). *Baba: Men and Fatherhood in South Africa* (pp. 13-25). Cape Town, South Africa: HSRC Press. In: The free library>A Life Course Perspective on Fatherhood and Family Policies in the United States and South Africa> Farlex, Inc. Retrieved May 26, 2011 from [http://www.thefreelibrary.com/A life course perspective on fatherhood and family policies in the...-a0179348770](http://www.thefreelibrary.com/A+life+course+perspective+on+fatherhood+and+family+policies+in+the...-a0179348770)
- Donald, P. (2010). The Cambridge Companion to American Realism and Naturalism: Howells to London. In: Campbell, D.M. *Realism in American Literature, 1960-1990 Literary Movements*. Department of English, Washington State University. Retrieved March 21, 2010 from <http://www.wsu.edu/~campbelld/amlit/realism.htm>
- Doris, and Jessica, (Eds) (2007). Toni Morrison's writing Features in *Beloved*. Apr. 2007, Volume 5, No.4 US-China Foreign Language, USA. Retrieved December 06, 2010, from <http://www.linguist.org.cn/doc/uc200704/uc20070413.pdf>
- Dozon, J.P. (1996). Africa: The Family at Crossroads." In: Burguiere, A., Klisch-Zuber, C., Segalen, M. and Zonabend, F. (Eds) *A History of the Family: Volume Two the Impact of Modernity*. Cambridge MA: The Belknap Press. In: Sibanda, A. (2001, November 21-23). *Ethnic Variations in the Living Arrangements of Children in South Africa*. A paper prepared for the Virtual Conference on African Households: An Exploration of Census Data, organized by the African Analysis Project, Population Studies Center, University of Pennsylvania. Retrieved on October 22, 2010 from <http://www.pop.upenn.edu/africahh>
- Duffy, C.A. (1998). "Interview" *Bête Noire*. Winter: In: "*Presenting it, as it is*": *Poetics of Realism and Politics of Representation in Carol Ann Duffy's Poetry Hacettepe Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Dergisi 2004 / Cilt: 21 / Sayı: 2 / ss. 133-142* Retrieved December 06, 2010, from <http://www.edebiyatdergisi.hacettepe.edu.tr/2004212HuriyeReis.pdf>
- Edny, H.T. (2007). Future of Black Men Critical for "American Family." WASHINGTON: NNPA Correspondent, National Newspaper Publishers Association, Inc. (April 26). Retrieved March 10, 2010, from

http://www.infowars.com/articles/us/family_future_of_black_men_critical_for_american_family.htm

Effect of Family without a Father. (2009). eCheat.com>> Social Sciences >> Sociology >> effect of family without a father, Retrieved March 7, 2011, from <http://www.echeat.com/essay.php?t=34044>

Ellwood, T.D. and Jencks, C. (2002). *The Spread of Single-Parent Families in the United States Since 1960*. John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University. Retrieved October 11, 2010, from papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=517662

Emile Zola: The Experimental Novel. (2011). Retrieved June 18, 2011, from www.bachelorandmaster.com
<http://bachelorandmaster.com/criticaltheories/emile-zola.html>

Erasmus, P. (1998). Perspectives on Black Masculinity: The Abortion Debate in South Africa. *South African Journal of Ethnology*, 21, 203-206. In: Richter, L. and Morrell, R. (Eds) (2006). *Baba: Men and Fatherhood in South Africa*. Cape Town: Human Sciences Research Council. Retrieved March 6, 2011, from www.hsrcpress.ac.za

Goldman, J.J. (2008). Nobel Prize Goes to U.S. Author Toni Morrison *Los Angeles Times* October 8, Retrieved December 06, 2010, from Microsoft Encarta 2009 [DVD]. Redmond, WA: Microsoft Corporation.

Goldstein and Kenney (2001). In: Coles, R.L. and Green, C. (Ed) (2009). *The Myth of the Missing Father*. Columbia University Press. Retrieved February 18, 2011, from <http://cup.columbia.edu/book/978-0-231-14352-3/the-myth-of-the-missing-black-father/excerpt>

Gray, P. (1993). Rooms of their Own. *Time Magazine article about Toni Morrison's Work and Life*. TIME Media Kit, October, 18. Retrieved October 22, 2010, from time-webmaster@pathfinder.com;
<http://www.literaryhistory.com/20thC/Morrison.htm>

Griffiths, I. (2007). *Black Boy by Richard Wright Chapter One Analysis*. London: Retrieved December 06, 2010, from <http://www.blog.poet.me.uk/category/american-fiction/black-boy-richard-wright>

Hanssen, J.M. (2005). Everyday People and Situations. In: *Ibsen and Realism*. Retrieved February 18, 2011, from <http://www.norway.org/aboutnorway/culture/masters/ibsen/realism/>

Harmon, W. and Holman, H. (2010). *A Handbook to Literature* 428. In: Campbell, D.M. *Realism in American Literature, 1960-1990. Literary Movements*. Department of

- English, Washington State University. Retrieved March 21, 2010, from <http://www.wsu.edu/~campbelld/amlit/realism.htm>
- Harrison, M. (1998). *The Language of Theatre*. London: Routledge. Retrieved December 06, 2010, from [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Realism_\(theatre\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Realism_(theatre))
- Hernandez and Brandon (2002). In: Coles, R.L. and Green, C. (Ed) (2009). *The Myth of the Missing Father*. Columbia University Press. Retrieved February 18, 2011, from <http://cup.columbia.edu/book/978-0-231-14352-3/the-myth-of-the-missing-black-father/excerpt>
- History of Realism. (2008). Retrieved December 06, 2010, from www.frontpainting.com. <http://frontpainting.com/history-realism.html>
- Hoffman, L. (2008). *On Realism (Added November, 2006)*. In: History of Realism. Retrieved December 06, 2010, from www.frontpainting.com; <http://frontpainting.com/history-realism.html>
- Hunter, M. (2006). Fathers without amandla: Zulu-speaking Men and Fatherhood. In: Richter, L. and Morrell, R. (Eds) (2006). *Baba: Men and Fatherhood in South Africa*. Cape Town: Human Sciences Research Council. Retrieved March 6, 2011, from www.hsrcpress.ac.za
- Jaffee, *et al.*, (2001). Predicting Early Fatherhood and whether Young Fathers Live with their Children: Prospective Findings and Policy Reconsiderations. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 142, 803 – 815. In: Richter, L. and R. Morrell, (Eds) *Baba: Men and Fatherhood in South Africa*. Cape Town: HSRC Press, 2006. Retrieved on March 6, 2011 from www.hsrcpress.ac.za
- Jarrett, R. (1994). Living poor: Family Life among Single-parent, African American Women. *Social Problems*, 41, 30-49. In: Richter, L. and Morrell, R. (Eds) (2006). *Baba: Men and Fatherhood in South Africa*. Cape Town: Human Sciences Research Council. Pp.55. Retrieved March 6, 2011, from www.hsrcpress.ac.za
- Jarrett, R., Roy, K., and Burton, L. (2002). Fathers in the 'hood: Insights from Qualitative research. In: The free library>A life Course Perspective on Fatherhood and Family Policies in the United States and South Africa>Farlex Inc. Retrieved May 26, 2011 from [http://www.thefreelibrary.com/A life course perspective on fatherhood and family policies in the...-a0179348770](http://www.thefreelibrary.com/A+life+course+perspective+on+fatherhood+and+family+policies+in+the...-a0179348770)
- Jeffreys, M. (1951). Lobolo is Child Price. *African Studies*, 10: 145 – 83. In: Richter, L. and Morrell, R. (Eds) (2006). *Baba: Men and Fatherhood in South Africa*. Cape Town: HSRC Press. Retrieved March 6, 2011, from www.hsrcpress.ac.za
- Kolchin, P. (2008). "Slavery in the United States." Retrieved June 12, 2011, from Microsoft Encarta 2009 [DVD]. Redmond, WA: Microsoft Corporation.

- Kwilliams2, (2010). *Black Boy* by Richard Wright. USA: East-West School of International Studies, Flushing, NY, Submitted on Mon, 11/22/2010 - 5:12pm. Retrieved March 12, 2011, from youthvoices.net/node/47782
- Lamb, M. (1996). Speaking at the IPPR Conference 'Men and their Children' in London, 30th April Transcript by David Cannon - Shared Parenting Information Group (SPIG) UK- *promoting responsible shared parenting after separation and divorce* - What are fathers for? Retrieved November 3, 2010, from www.spig.clara.net/ippr/lamb.htm
- Landow, G.P. (2003). "Realism." Brown University: Victorian Web Home —> Authors —> Genre, Technique, and Style. Retrieved November 3, 2010, from <http://www.victorianweb.org/genre/realism.html>
- Larkin, P. (1982). *Required Writing: Miscellaneous Pieces 1955-1982*. New York: Farrar. In: Reis, H. (2004). "Presenting it, as it is": Poetics of Realism and Politics of Representation in Carol Ann Duffy's Poetry Hacettepe Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Dergisi/Cilt:21/Sayı:2/ss.133-142. Retrieved June 16, 2011, from <http://www.edebiyatdergisi.hacettepe.edu.tr/2004212HuriyeReis.pdf>
- La Rossa, R. (1997). *The Modernization of Fatherhood*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago. In: Roy, K. (2008). *Free Online Library: A life course perspective on fatherhood and family policies in the United States and South Africa*. Farlex Inc. Retrieved March 16, 2010, from www.thefreelibrary.com > ... > Fathering > March 22, 2008.
- Lesejane, D. (2005). *Fatherhood from an African Cultural Perspective*. In: Richter, L. and Morrell, R. (Eds) (2006). *Baba: Men and fatherhood in South Africa* (pp. 13-25). Cape Town, South Africa: HSRC Press. In: Roy, K. (2008). *Free Online Library: A Life Course Perspective on Fatherhood and Family Policies in the United States and South Africa*. Farlex Inc. Retrieved March 16, 2010, from www.thefreelibrary.com > ... > Fathering > March 22, 2008.
- Levine, G. (1981). *The Realistic Imagination: English Fiction from Frankenstein to Lady Chatterley*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Retrieved May 26, 2011 from <http://www.victorianweb.org/genre/realism.html>
- Lim, E. (2011). In: Pura, M.F. *Absence of a Father Figure as the Strongest Factor in Male Homosexuality*. Retrieved March 16, 2011, from <http://www.exampleessays.com/viewpaper/41331.html>
- Mahala, S. (2008). *Black South African Women Novelists*. @Book SA, August 25. Retrieved March 16, 2011, from

<http://siphwomahala.book.co.za/blog/2008/08/05/black-south-african-women-novelists/>

- Mallie *et al.*, (2003). Effects of Parenting, Father's Absence and affiliation with Delinquent Peers on Delinquent behavior among African-American Male Adolescents. *Health Care Industry. BNET Publications*. Retrieved November 11, 2010, from <http://www.cbsinteractive.com/adfeedback/>
- Marc, D. (2008). Richard Wright (author). Retrieved June 11, 2011, from Microsoft Encarta 2009 [DVD]. Redmond, WA: Microsoft Corporation.
- Marsiglio, W. (1995a). Fatherhood Scholarship: An Overview and Agenda for the Future. In: Marsiglio, W. (Ed.), *Fatherhood: Contemporary Theory, Research, and Social Policy*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. . In: Richter, L. and Morrell, R. (Eds) (2006). *Baba: Men and Fatherhood in South Africa*. Cape Town: HSRC Press. Retrieved March 6, 2011 from www.hsrcpress.ac.za
- (1995b). Fathers diverse Life Course Patterns and Roles: Theory and Social Interventions. In: Marsiglio, W. (Ed) *Fatherhood: Contemporary Theory, Research, and Social Policy*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. In: Richter, L. and Morrell, R. (Eds) (2006). *Baba: Men and Fatherhood in South Africa*. Cape Town: HSRC Press. Retrieved March 6, 2011 from www.hsrcpress.ac.za
- McAdoo, J. and McAdoo, J. (1995). The African American Fathers' roles within the Family. In: Kimmel, M. and Messner, M. (Eds) *Men's Lives*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon. Pp. 485-494. In: Richter, L. and Morrell, R. (Eds) (2006). *Baba: Men and Fatherhood in South Africa*. Cape Town: Human Sciences Research Council. Retrieved March 6, 2011, from www.hsrcpress.ac.za
- McKeown, K., Ferguson, H. and Rooney, D. (1999). *Changing Fathers? Fatherhood and Family Life in Modern Ireland*. Wilton, Cork: Collins Press. In: Richter, L. and Morrell, R. (Eds) (2006). *Baba: Men and Fatherhood in South Africa*. Cape Town: HSRC Press. Retrieved March 6, 2011 from www.hsrcpress.ac.za.
- Messner, M. (1997). *Politics of Masculinities: Men in Movements*. Thousand Oaks: Sage. In: Richter, L. and Morrell, R. (Eds) (2006). *Baba: Men and Fatherhood in South Africa*. Cape Town: HSRC Press. Retrieved March 6, 2011 from www.hsrcpress.ac.za.
- Metcalf, S. (2011). Why Is Beloved Beloved? Published by *emily* on February 8, 2011. In: News via twitter *Slate Magazine...* « *Humanities Journal*, Volume 8, Number 10 now available Decolonizing My Mind » Retrieved January 10, 2011, from <http://thehumanities.com/2011/02/08/why-is-beloved-beloved/>
- Mhlope, (1993). "Praise to Our Mothers." In: Mphahlele, M. (2002). A Gesture of Defiance: Selected Texts by Black South African Women Writers. *Journal of Literary Studies*, Jun 1, 2002. Farlex Inc. In: Literature Society of South Africa,

Gale Group. The Free Library > Date > 2002 > June > 1 > Journal of Literary Studies. Farlex Inc. Retrieved June 18, 2011, from www.thefreelibrary.com/A+gesture+of+defiance%3A+selected+texts+by+Black+South+African+women...-a0110229012

Moore, J.B. (1989). In: In: Smith, V.W. (2011) Richard Wright: A Collection of Critical Essays. – Book Reviews. Retrieved June 11, 2011, from http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m2838/is_nl_v31/ai_195..._58k

Morial, M. (2011). State of Black America: Future of Black Men Critical for "American Family" *National: BlackPressUSA.com* (2001-2011) National Newspaper Publishers Association, Inc. Retrieved January 20, 2011, from <http://www.blackpressusa.com/News/Article.asp?SID=3&Title=HotStories&NewSID=12934>

Morrell, R. (2005). Fathers, Fatherhood and Masculinity in South Africa. In: Richter, L. and Morrell, R. (Eds) (2006). *Baba: Men and Fatherhood in South Africa*. Pp. 13-25. Cape Town: HSRC Press. Retrieved March 6, 2011 from www.hsrcpress.ac.za

Mzamane, M.V. (2008). Continuities and Discontinuities in South African Literature. In: Mahala, S. *Black South African Women Novelists*. @Book SA, August 25. Retrieved March 16, 2011, from <http://siphiwomahala.book.co.za/blog/2008/08/05/black-south-african-women-novelists/>

Mzamane, M.V. (2011). Sharpeville and its Aftermath: The Novels of Richard Rive, Peter Abrahams, Alex La Guma, and Lauretta Ngcobo. Retrieved November 28, 2011 from <http://ariel.synergiesprairies.ca/ariel/index.php/ariel/arti...>

Neal, M.A. (2005). In: Coles, R.L. and Green, C. (Ed) (2009). *The Myth of the Missing Father*. Columbia University Press. Retrieved February 18, 2011, from <http://cup.columbia.edu/book/978-0-231-14352-3/the-myth-of-the-missing-black-father/excerpt>

Nelson, (2004). In: Coles, R.L. and Green, C. (Ed) (2009). *The Myth of the Missing Father*. Columbia University Press. Retrieved February 18, 2011, from <http://cup.columbia.edu/book/978-0-231-14352-3/the-myth-of-the-missing-black-father/excerpt>

Ngcobo, L. (1988). "Introduction" *Let It Be Told: Essays by Black Women in Britain*. London: Virago, 1-34. In: Atayurt, Z.Z. (2010). "Beauty is a fat Black woman": Aesthetization of the placed body in Grace Nichols's *Fat Black Woman's Poems*/"Guzellik, sisman siyahi bir kadindir": Grace Nichols'un Sisman Siyahi Kadın'ın Siirlerinde Yerinden Edilmiş Bedenin Estetiksel Yer Edinimi. Retrieved November 16, 2010, from <http://findarticles.com/>

- Ngcobo, Lauretta 1931-. (2008). *Black Literature Criticism: Classic and Emerging Authors since 1950*. The Gale Group, Inc. Retrieved April 09, 2011, from www.highbeam.com/doc/1G2-3079400081.html -
- Ngobeni, S. (2002). Representations of Fatherhood in Black U S Films and how this relates to Parenting in South Africa. Baba - Chapter 12- Representations of fatherhood in black U S films- and how this relates to parenting in South Africa.pdf - 282.5KB. Retrieved March 16, 2011, from www.africanfathers.org/page.php?p_id=191
- Palkowitz, R. (2002). Involved Fathering and Child Development: Advancing our Understanding of good fathering. In: Tamis-LeMonda, C. and Cabrera, N. (Eds) *Handbook of Father Involvement: Multidisciplinary Perspectives*. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum. In: Richter, L. and Morrell, R. (Eds) (2006). *Baba: Men and Fatherhood in South Africa*. Cape Town: HSRC Press. Retrieved March 6, 2011 from www.hsrcpress.ac.za
- Preston-Whyte, E.M. and Zondi M. (1992) African Teenage Pregnancy: Whose Problem? In: Burman, S. and Preston-Whyte, E. (Eds) *Questionable Issue: Illegitimacy in South Africa*. (247-281). Cape Town: Oxford University Press. In: Richter, L. and Morrell, R. (Eds) *Baba: Men and Fatherhood in South Africa*. Cape Town: Human Sciences Research Council, Pp.241. Retrieved March 6, 2011 from www.hsrcpress.ac.za
- Ramphele, M. (2002). *Steering by the Stars: Being Young in South Africa*. Cape Town: Tafelberg. In: Richter, L. and Morrell, R. (Eds) *Baba: Men and Fatherhood in South Africa*. Cape Town: Human Sciences Research Council. Retrieved March 6, 2011 from www.hsrcpress.ac.za
- Realism. (2010). Retrieved November 3, 2010, from 123HelpMe.com.
- Realism. (2007). Poetry Home | English 88 Reading List | Poetry News | Filreis Home Last modified: Wednesday, 18-Jul-2007 16:28:23 EDT. Retrieved March 16, 2011, from <http://www.english.upenn.edu/~afilreis/88/realism.html>
- Reid, M. (2008). American Literature: Prose. Retrieved November 23, 2011, from Microsoft Encarta 2009 [DVD]. Redmond, WA: Microsoft Corporation.
- Reilly, J.M. (1986). Richard Wright and the Art of Nonfiction. In: Smith, V. W. (2011). *Richard Wright: A Collection of Critical Essays*. – Book Reviews. Retrieved November 23, 2010, from http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m2838/is_n1_v31/ai_195..._58k

- (1956). "The Colour Curtain." In: Smith, V. W. (2011). *Richard Wright: A Collection of Critical Essays. – Book Reviews*. Retrieved November 23, 2010, from http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m2838/is_nl_v31/ai_195..._58k
- Reis, H. (2004). "Presenting it, as it is": *Poetics of Realism and Politics of Representation in Carol Ann Duffy's Poetry Hacettepe Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Dergisi / Cilt: 21 / Sayı:2/ss.133-142*. Retrieved June 16, 2011, from <http://www.edebiyatdergisi.hacettepe.edu.tr/2004212HuriyeReis.pdf>
- Renewing a Dialogue between African Women Writers and Women of African Descent. (2010). In: *Women's Words: African Worlds*. Posted August 20, 2010. Retrieved November 6, 2011, from womenswordsafricanworlds.wordpress.com/page/2/
- Reuben, P.P. (2011). Chapter 7: Richard Wright. *PAL: Perspectives in American Literature- A Research and Reference Guide*. Retrieved November 23, 2011, from <http://www.csustan.edu/english/reuben/pal/chap7/wright.html>
- Richter, L. et al., (2004). Harnessing our Manpower. *Children First*, 8, 16-20. In: Richter, L. and Morrell, R. (Eds) (2006). *Baba: Men and Fatherhood in South Africa*. Cape Town: HSRC Press, Pp.64. Retrieved March 6, 2011, from www.hsrcpress.ac.za
- Richter, L. and Morrell, R. (Eds) (2006). *Baba: Men and Fatherhood in South Africa*. Cape Town: Human Sciences Research Council Press. Retrieved March 6, 2011, from www.hsrcpress.ac.za
- Rose, P.I. (1974). *They and We: Racial and Ethnic Relations in the United States*. New York: Random House. In: Nathan, G. and Daniel, P.M. (2009). The Black Experience in America is Unique. *ChickenBones: A Journal for Literary and Artistic African-American Themes*. Retrieved October 22, 2010, from www.nathanielturner.com/blackexperienceunique.htm
- Sibanda, A. (2001, November 21-23). *Ethnic Variations in the Living Arrangements of Children in South Africa*. A paper prepared for the Virtual Conference on African Households: An Exploration of Census Data, organized by the African Analysis Project, Population Studies Center, University of Pennsylvania. Retrieved October 22, 2010 from <http://www.pop.upenn.edu/africahh>
- Single Parent Families –The well-being of Children raised in Single- Parent- Homes. (2010). Net Industries and its Licensors. Retrieved October 22, 2010, from social.jrank.org/.../Single-Parent-Families-Well-Being-Children-Raised-in-Single-Parent-Homes.html
- Single-parent. (2010). In: *Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia*. Wikimedia Foundation, Inc. Last modified on 1 December 2010 at 21:40. Retrieved March 16, 2011, from <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Single-parent>

- Smith, V.W. (2011). Richard Wright: A Collection of Critical Essays. – Book Reviews. Retrieved October 22, 2011, from http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m2838/is_nl_v31/ai_195..._58k-
- South African History Online. (2008). Retrieved May 11, 2011, from <http://literature.kzn.org.za>; [http://www.mediamonitoring.org.za\(PDF\)](http://www.mediamonitoring.org.za(PDF)); <http://feministpress.org>
- Sowetan. (2008). In: South African History Online. Retrieved May 11, 2011, from <http://literature.kzn.org.za>; [http://www.mediamonitoring.org.za\(PDF\)](http://www.mediamonitoring.org.za(PDF)); <http://feministpress.org>
- Tanfer, K. and Mott, F. (1997). The Meaning of Fatherhood for Men. Report to the NICHD Workshop on Improving Data on Male Fertility Formation, the Urban Institute, Washington, D.C, 16-17 January. In: Richter, L. and Morrell, R. (Eds) (2006). *Baba: Men and Fatherhood in South Africa*. Cape Town: HSRC Press. Retrieved March 6, 2011 from www.hsrcpress.ac.za
- Toni Morrison 1931- (2008). Retrieved March 3, 2011, from Microsoft Encarta 2009 [DVD]. Redmond, WA: Microsoft Corporation.
- Townsend, N. (2002). Cultural contexts of Father involvement. In: Tamis-LeMonda, C. and Cabrera, N. (Eds), *Handbook of Father involvement: Multidisciplinary Perspectives*. Pp. 249-277. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum. In: Richter, L. and Morrell, R. (Eds) (2006). *Baba: Men and Fatherhood in South Africa*. Cape Town: Human Sciences Research Council. Pp.55. Retrieved March 6, 2011, from www.hsrcpress.ac.za
- Turner, J.S. (2011). An Insatiable Hunger: A Literary Analysis of Richard Wright's Autobiography, *Black Boy*. *Student Pulse, LLC: Online Academic Student Journal*. Gilroy, CA. Article written October 28th, 2009 and published December 8th, 2009. Retrieved January 12, 2011, from <http://www.studentpulse.com/articles/81/an-insatiable-hunger-a-literary-analysis-of-richard-wright's-autobiography-black-boy>
- Turning the Corner on Father Absence in Black America: A Statement from the Morehouse Conference on African American Fathers*. (1999). New York: Morehouse Research Institute 830 West view Drive, SW Atlanta, Institute for American Values 1841 Broadway, Suite 211. Retrieved May 26, 2011 from www.morehouse.edu/mri.htm; oclayton@morehouse.edu. www.americanvalues.org
- Van de Walle, E. (1999). Where are the Children of Botswana? Unpublished Manuscript: Population Studies Center, University of Pennsylvania. In: Sibanda, A. (2001, November 21-23). *Ethnic Variations in the Living Arrangements of Children in*

South Africa. A Paper Prepared for the Virtual Conference on African Households: An Exploration of Census Data, Organized by the African Analysis Project, Population Studies Center, University of Pennsylvania. Retrieved October 22, 2010 from <http://www.pop.upenn.edu/africahh>

Vivan, I. An Interview. In: Hunter, E. and Mackenzie, C. (Eds) (1993). *Between the Lines II*. Grahamstown: National English Literacy Museum. Pp.102. In: South African History Online (2008). Retrieved May 11, 2011, from <http://literature.kzn.org.za>; [http://www.mediamonitoring.org.za\(PDF\)](http://www.mediamonitoring.org.za(PDF)); <http://feministpress.org>

Waite and Gallagher (2000). In: Barber, N. Evolutionary Explanations for Societal Differences in Single Parenthood. *Evolutionary Psychology*, USA: 3: 142-174. Retrieved December 12, 2010, from <http://humannature.com/ep//printable/ep03142174.html>

Walker, C. (1995). Conceptualizing Motherhood in the Twentieth-century South Africa. *Journal of Southern Africa Studies*, 21, 417-437. In: Richter, L. and Morrell, R. (Eds) (2006). *Baba: Men and Fatherhood in South Africa*. Cape Town: HSRC Press. Retrieved March 6, 2011, from www.hsrcpress.ac.za

Warren, K. (2010). *Black and White Strangers*. In: Campbell, D.M. (1997). Some information adapted from *Resisting Regionalism: Gender and Naturalism in American Fiction, 1885-1915* Athens: Ohio University Press. In: Campbell, D.M. (2010). Realism in American Literature, 1960 – 1990. *Literary Movements*. Department of English, Washington State University. Retrieved December 06, 2010, from <http://www.wsu.edu/~campbelld/aamlit/realism.htm>

Westminster City Council. (2011). Council Services > Libraries and Archives > Books & Reading > Black writing City of Westminster. T: 020 7641 6000E: Retrieved March 16, 2011, from info@westminster.gov.uk <http://www.westminster.gov.uk/services/libraries/reading/bla...>

Whitaker, M. (2010). *U.S. History Encyclopedia: African Americans*. Answer.Com Reference Answers: The World's Leading Q & A Site. Home>Library>History, Politics & Society.>U. S. History Encyclopedia. Retrieved October 22, 2010.

Why Single Mothers. (2010). Charity: She Cares Foundation. Retrieved October 22, 2010, from <http://shecaresfoundation.org/whysinglemothers/whysinglemoms.html>