CHAPTER – 6

CONCLUSION

Any literature is a product of race, milieu and moment of the writer. Literature is always an offshoot of the historical background of the age in which the writer lived – it includes major changes in social, political, economic and other public arena. The writer is also conditioned by his/her social surrounding including family, friends, neighbours, schooling, etc. and also to consider social customs and traditions in that. At last, the upheavals at the time of writing also influence the writer and his/her work. The same is true in case of the writers studied here. Toni Morrison, an Afro-American writer and Joseph Macwan, a Gujarati Dalit writer both have been the witness rather sufferers in their respective societies. Their words reveal their hearts and thus are understood to be factual accounts of what they have seen and lived. Sometimes their works move the readers also.

The research undertaken herewith from a comparative perspective in the light of the theory of Gayatri Spivak is a humble attempt to study the selected novels of Toni Morrison and Joseph Macwan. The study critiques the postcolonial and subaltern with special reference to Gayatri Chakravarty Spivak. It has tried to trace the “subaltern” with reference to these two leading writers of Afro-American and Dalit Literatures. Looking into the socio-politico-cultural backgrounds of both the nations and literatures, the thesis makes an attempt to locate the marginalised in the mainstream society/culture.

Chapter one defines post-colonialism where the once colonised nation challenges the colonial power. It looks at the strategies of representation of the colonised by the dominant class and questions and resists the subordinated status. While interrogating the power structure, post-colonialism takes into account the historical, political, cultural and textual implications of the colonial encounter. Thus, post-colonialism is not just a critical theory but an attempt towards social justice. It analyses the process of resistance and its effects on the coloniser and the colonised. It observes that passive submission of the natives makes the rule of the dominant class stronger. It is this weak subject that is designated as “subaltern”. Drawing on the line
of post-colonialism, the subaltern studies also locates and revives the voice silenced so far and thereby tries to reduce the imbalance.

Gayatri Chakravarty Spivak in her seminal essay “Can the Subaltern Speak?” takes the idea from Marxism, post-structuralism, deconstruction and feminism. Spivak takes Marxist capitalist idea of class struggle into the social realm. As the capitalist invests in the dominated nation and increases the demand of cheap labour, in society too educated class holds the seat of power subordinating the peasant or feudal class. Spivak employs two terms for representation: vertreten (representation as in politics) and darstellen (re-presentation as in art or philosophy). She states that until the political system considers the aesthetic side of representation, allowing the subalterns to represent themselves rather than speak for them, their self-image will be distorted. Her definition of the term “subaltern” is comprehensive. She includes, unlike other critics of subaltern studies, men, women, poor, peasant class as well as urban subproletariat. However, her main concern in the essay is with woman as subaltern because she is thrice removed from the elite in the sense of class, race and gender. She situates her arguments in the 19th c. India when the fight was against British Colonialism. But unfortunately the Indian proletariat re-produced colonialism by gender bias and politics of power. Calling herself an “outsider”, she justifies her point with the examples of sati and suicide. Through these examples Spivak tries to convey how women are trapped into patriarchal politics. Women are doubly effaced by the colonizers as well as by the native patriarchal dominance.

Spivak concludes her essay by admitting that the subaltern cannot speak because they are denied very social mobility – any access to public sphere. She also gives a call to the postcolonial female intellectuals to question the silencing of the subaltern, consider their voices of resistance.

Chapter two is a history of Afro-American and Dalit literatures in brief. Referring to major socio-political upheavals in America and India, it discusses how both literatures have evolved during these times of crisis. Beginning with the nomenclature “Afro-American” and “Dalit”, it investigates their struggle for social status, cultural or ancestral roots and identity in their respective societies. It notes that while the Afro-Americans were forcefully brought to America for slave trade, the condition of the Dalits in India was also pitiable. It is true that the Dalits were alienated, made the “other” in their home country but they could at least maintain
their self-esteem and identity though suppressed whereas the Afro-Americans were sold as slaves. The Afro-American women were priced high as they could earn to their masters in terms of manual labour in fields as well as by breeding children of the white masters. Thus they were exploited in more than one ways and they lived absolutely deserted life. They could earn freedom from their master by paying him some amount or by escape. It should be kept in mind that their freedom was most of the time short-lived.

America had some religious groups that condemned slavery for its unchristian qualities whereas in India Hindu scriptures established four-fold distinctions of the entire class structure, blaming the lowest cadre considering them mean. Some religious scriptures gave the sole authority to run the society in the hands of so-called elites. However there were some rational thinkers in America and India who criticised racial and caste distinctions as considering them uncivilized and irrational. Despite their struggle for emancipation, racial segregation followed the Blacks in various fields of life leading them to establish their own business, lawyers, schools and churches, that is, the entire civic structure as separate from the White society. The Dalits, on the other hand, revolted against the distinctions. They disregarded a ban on entering any public place such as temple, etc. Thus, though the attempts were made to make the Dalits feel “foreign” in the homeland, they fought bravely. But in case of the Afro-Americans they were not just deracinated but also caged in a manner that they could not even breathe freely. It should also be noted here that the Blacks were a united community. In their struggle for freedom they fought together whereas Dalits were not united or perhaps could not unite as they were constantly under the pressure and obligation of the high caste.

The chapter also notes that in the struggle for freedom and to gain basic rights literary artists also joined along with other political leaders and social reformers. As the proverb goes, “Pen is mightier than sword”, writers awakened the consciousness of the dejected through writing about their tests and trials. Literatures of the time revealed their essential spirit making them aware of communal inequality. Literature flourished in all genres – novels, drama, poetry, autobiography, recapitulating the hardships and injustices done to the downtrodden and their resistance. Ultimately, both the Afro-Americans and the Dalits succeeded in paving their way to the mainstream culture/literature. Today the histories and literatures of both the societies
are taught in academia. They are considered a genre of mainstream literature. The Afro-American and the Dalit literatures recognise an award-winning status in the present times.

Chapter Three probes into the process of subjugation through colour and caste. It discusses how one’s skin colour and birth in a particular caste determines one’s position in society. Beauty and birth fix one’s status and identity in society. Most of the time the more powerful in terms of gender, race, colour and caste dominate over the weak. Thus, a male dominates the female, rich rules over the poor; a white imposes power over the black and so on. This subjugation is as much psychological as it is economic and political. The passive submission of the “other” automatically raises the former to a higher rank. However, the characters in Morrison and Macwan do not always succumb to subjugation. They rise and resist.

Toni Morrison’s *The Bluest Eye* depicts the story of a woman who has been oppressed on three grounds as female, as poor and as child. The psychology, emotions and relations of various characters are marred by the impact of racism. The idea of beauty moves them to the extent that children tear apart the white baby doll to locate the beauty, not realising that the culture they belong to fails to see the inner beauty. Destroying the white doll also suggests rejection of the whiteness, in a way, an attempt of the blacks for acceptance in the white society.

However, the patriarchal dominance in the family and white master’s dominance outside so affects the poor women that they end in inviting doom for themselves, for their children and the entire family. The white hegemony controls the thought process, lifestyle, manners, economy and social recognition of the blacks. As a result, they are not able to express their inner self. The urge for inclusion into the mainstream is strong enough to make the female child pray for the bluest eyes. This suggests the self-hatred and self-imposed dislike that the blacks have cultivated on their own. Morrison implies that real happiness comes in being connected to one’s body and not in denying it. She wants her characters to know that every bad occurrence or ill-treatment or misfortune always gives an opportunity to create a positive meaning out of it, to feel their existence despite rejection. She implies that rejecting the rejection stands as a sign of their being. But the sense of beauty which should actually be fulfilling generates the feeling of fear and self-hatred in blacks. Consequently, they surrender to White demands and their service. Their submission
to the whites with a hope of acceptance and equality takes them away from their family and children. But they do not allow themselves to be defeated. They fight against all odds and rise above their male-counterpart. Morrison discusses the oppression of the blacks by the whites and also of the blacks by the blacks. Her characters are victims, activists, oppressors and reformers – all rolled into one.

Joseph Macwan’s *Dariya* talks about the struggles of Valmiki community. Addressing the then burning issue of casteism in India, Macwan discusses the issues such as humiliation of village sweepers by the upper caste people, the society divided into two opposite groups – one favouring the British Rule considering it as a friend of the poor and the other against the British Rule, the issue of conversion which was prevalent at that time. Despite insults and avoidance, Macwan shows his Dalit characters calm, balanced and poised. They do not indulge into any violence. One reason for their silence is also that they work under the Patels. If they go against the Patidar, they may have to leave their jobs. The novel then demonstrates a conflict between a lower caste woman and the village-head. But Macwan’s women are strong. They do not let themselves be offended by any one. They have a lion’s courage to fight. Another issue discussed in the novel is that of child marriage. Though it is arranged by circumstantial pressure in the novel, it is one of the old customs of Indian society. A woman in any society is rarely allowed to live her life independently. Her marriage is seen not as an affectionate bond between the two but as a means of security or as a stamp of protection. There are many other instances in the novel where the Valmiki community that stands for courage and bravery is looked down upon by the Patidar. It suggests the colonialists’ reading of the colonized. Though the later is powerful enough, they are seen as insignificant. The issue of marginalisation within the community is also addressed in the novel. Surprisingly, it is not a gender bias that is a focus here but dominance of a male on a male, of a brother on a brother. Being infertile, an elder brother forces a younger brother to join a group of eunuch – the group that has no identity, is never allowed in the mainstream society. But Macwan depicts such a character in the manner that it does not become a victim of derogatory status in society. Rather Macwan uplifts him through his generosity and broadmindedness. The author also shows instances of concord and harmony within the community which is the most required thing in the present world.
Mari Parnetar draws on the intra-community conflicts. The central female character in the novel is an epitome of courage and fearlessness, representing true womanhood. Centering around the evil of child marriage that left women absolutely choiceless and helpless, the novel also addresses the problems of male-dominated society where violence on women is frequent. But as noted earlier, Macwan’s women are valiant. They question the society, challenge the patriarchal dominance and change the social customs. When the priest of a temple stops Gauri from worshipping the idol of Lord Shiva, she asks if God has taught such untouchability. In her question to the existence of God and significance of worship and other rituals, her intelligence is seen. An illiterate girl dawns the knowledge in the minds of the so-called upper caste. The people of lower strata in Macwan also sacrifice their lives to save the reputation of the family. They are heroic.

In the novel Jasyo and Jaysing Rathod are converted Christians. They have got converted tired of the tortures by the high caste. It shows how the upper caste forces subalterns to change their tradition, culture, religion and thereby the very identity. But these characters live with self-esteem and pride. Thus, surviving social, economic and physical exploitation, the subalterns in Macwan struggle hard for their meaningful existence. However, in the fight for their right they do not let their self-respect go. The journey of Macwan’s characters is from “silenced” subaltern to “speaking” subaltern.

Chapter Four takes into account political and economic subjugation of the subalterns with reference to Morrison’s Beloved and Macwan’s Angaliyat. Both the novels are situated in the then political upheavals. While Beloved observes the miserable life of the slaves during Atlantic Slave Trade and on the plantations, Angaliyat refers to a swing between Gandhian and Ambedkarite ideologies during the struggle for Swaraj.

Beloved addresses physical and economic exploitation of the slaves, miserable life in underground imprisonment, familial fragmentations – all leading to psychological breakdown of the characters. The masters also take away the language of the slaves, i.e. they are tortured to the extent that they forget their mother-tongue. Forgetting the language is suggestive of rootlessness – a departure from one’s cultures, history and the entire knowledge system for that matter. Instability is yet another indication of denial of the ancestral and cultural past. In being moved from
one place to another the slaves forget their actual self, roots of their past life. However, the subalterns do not remain passive for the lifetime. As their masters used to change their names to impose the power of colonialism on them, some slaves, once freed, used to re-name themselves. This self-baptism challenged the while supremacists. A character like Baby Suggs awakens the blacks by generating the feelings of self-love and self-respect in them. She heals them for self-loathing and restores their true self. Towards the end, the primal scene of the novel – that is of the murder of an infant female child has been interpreted in many ways. Some critics take it as a nervous breakdown of Sethe due to psychological trauma; some take it as an immature act. But in fact the murderous act, as she herself has said is performed with tender hands. Death by the hands of a mother is far better than by the hands of a cruel white master. Though it sounds inhuman, it shows the curse of slavery and suggests putting a ban on it.

*Angaliyat* by Joseph Macwan is a story of conflicts between the Patel and the Vankar communities, with the former dominating. The Patels are not happy with the British reign as it keeps everything just. The story captures the social, economic and political exploitations of the Vankar community by the Patels. It addresses the issue of untouchability and that of master-servant hierarchy affecting their intra-community relations and harmony. However, as in other novels of Macwan, in *Angaliyat* also strong and heroic characters fight against the injustice. *Angaliyat* depicts two groups of characters: one is submissive to the dominance of the high caste; another is revolting against the unjust dominance. It is here that one sees Gandhian and Ambedkarite ideologies represented by two different groups of characters. One group believing in sympathetic approach, the other taking a revolutionary stance. Other issue addressed in the novel are of *diyarvatu*. The child who enters step father’s house holding mother’s finger is called *Angaliyat* (step-child). Metaphorically, it suggests the Dalit community as *Angaliyat* to the elite society. They remain on the periphery of the social structure.

In Morrison as Baby Suggs works as a healer, in Macwan also Bhavankaka awakens the depressed mass. He emphasizes not just on the revolution by the low caste but also on the realisation of the upper caste. He puts more emphasis on the upper caste becoming more welcoming, large-hearted and open-minded so as to consider all as equal.
The issue under investigation is whether the subalterns, to employ Gayatri Spivak’s terms, is vertreten (represented)) or darstellen (re-presented)). In my opinion in Morrison the subalterns fall under the former category where they hardly have any voice. They are not given any space from where they can utter or express their anguish. They live in a state of flux, a rupture. But in Macwan they are darstellen. Subalterns in Macwan are not represented by others. They speak for themselves. They are valiant. Morrison’s characters realise their subjugated position but mostly they end in struggle, in very rare case arriving a fine fruition of their struggle. Macwan’s characters, on the other hand, struggle to bring change in society. They succeed also in earning their rights.

Chapter Five shows an entirely different colour. It discusses the lost ‘self’ of the subalterns. The search for self, unlike other novels of Morrison and Macwan, is not for their status and designation in society but they aspire for spiritual upliftment.

Morrison’s Jazz, a love triangle, shows a break in romantic love. It addresses the issue such as the impact of fast city-life on the companionship of the people, orphaned children, abandoned wives, broken families – all either due to testing time in the city or due to race riots most frequent during that time. Negligent and irresponsible fathers appear in every novel of Morrison. Jazz is not an exception. Familial fragmentation is seen not just in black society but also in white. Hence almost every character in Jazz undergoes identity-crisis. They change their names in the course of time and hunt for their roots, search the ‘Trace’ their parents went off without. While it depicts racial bigotry in the then America, it also shows how a light-skinned girl helps the broken black family to start their life anew. Genuine love relationship is also seen between a light-skinned black woman and a white man. Jazz is not just a story of blacks searching for their identity in White America but also their alienation or betrayal within the community. Where a black man cheats a black woman, a black woman generates a sense of solidarity in another black woman. Thus, sometimes female characters in the novel prove to be typical examples of the gendered subaltern – dominated by the whites, by the Blacks and also changing their looks and manners to please the one who does not care.

Another issue taken up in the novel is that of migration of the blacks to the cities. But life in the city brings more critical time for them. They encounter racial prejudice even in cities. War and riots are frequent. Poverty strikes them even in the
city, ultimately leading them to commit suicide. As in *Beloved* Sethe kills her infant daughter to save her from the evils of slavery, similarly in *Jazz* Violet does not give birth to a child to protect from colour difference and depravity. The city-life takes their innocence away and makes them jealous, envious and murderous. They struggle endlessly to raise their manhood up to live with the whites. It is noteworthy here that while the time of slavery treated the Afro-Americans as mere mammies or harlots; post-slavery made them domestic servants, the cities put them in the social and economic strife. However, it is for the first time in this novel that a slave is allowed to voluntarily leave the service of the master. The blacks, at the end, are able to create a world of their own full of hope, happiness and harmony.

Marked by the period of Great Migration when number of blacks moved from the South to the North of America for better job opportunities and in the hope of equality, the novel discusses how the fast city-life affects the affectionate bonding between a husband and a wife or between any one. Love, the best form of companionship, takes the form of rivalry and has a devastating effect. Natural harmonious life of the couple is disturbed as the husband falls in love with the teenage girl. Their affair ends in the murder of the girl by her lover. It also creates a gap between the couple.

Morrison’s *Paradise*, as its title suggests, is an attempt to create Paradise on earth. It is set in an all-black town in rural Oklahoma. The very characteristic of the town – all-black says that the black community has released itself from the sovereignty and suppression by the Whites. Male dominance, women-centric institutions, racial prejudices, intra-racial conflicts, generation gap and gender difference – these are some of the issues the novel confronts with. In their attempt to create Paradise, they replicate the racism they faced under the dominance of the Whites. Or, perhaps they used female as scapegoat to express their hatred for whites in the form of dominance over a “weaker sex”. The novel covers the post-antebellum period when as the Us-government gave the blacks rights to vote and of citizenship, the Southerners demanded a return to slavery. It was at this time that to escape a barbaric treatment under slavery the blacks decide to form their own state governed by their own people. However, the town established by the nine patriarchs of the black families does not entertain the light-skinned blacks. Thus, intra-racial bias prevails within the community narrowing down the sense of Paradise.
The story centers around two groups, poles apart, in exile living at two different places: an all-black town Ruby and a raceless Convent. Besides demarcation within the community, the town also observes gender discrimination. It considers women as corrupt and as root cause of all the problems. On the other hand, the convent, seventeen miles away from Ruby serves as a place for refuge for the dejected women. Any woman, irrespective of her colour and class, can join the convent. She must enter shedding off her painful past and through a spiritual purification commence her journey to enlightenment. Morrison shows the contrast between the town and the convent by presenting the convent women independent, self reliant and self-sufficient who grow by mutual learning. Surprisingly, the townsmen who condemn the convent women for the ills taking place in the town depend on the Convent for the purchase of some odd items. But unable to see the institution run solely by women, without any support from men, they decide to destroy it. The height of racial prejudice is that they choose to kill the white girl first, though the black women are also not spared. Even murder is hierarchised.

All the women on their way to the convent transform from being frightened to fearless. They journey from suppression to sublimation. They prove to be the real nurturers of society as against corrupt and crafty men of Ruby. The men of Ruby who adopt the role of protector for their women in fact turn out to marginalise them. Ruby women do not have any voice in the matters concerning the town and its people. The townspeople suffer because of their generational conflict, intra-community divide and other problems. But instead of introspecting they blame the convent for their doom.

Morrison shows her women characters as aspirants of higher knowledge and spiritual bliss. Patricia Best prepares the genealogy of Ruby’s people by records in the church and also by interacting with people. Thus, she becomes a true researcher. Other women transform their sensuous love into spiritual love. Under the guidance of Consolata, they realise that body is ephemeral, spirit is eternal. She teaches loud dreaming – a self-healing process to her fellow-women in which they are supposed to cleanse themselves of their past trauma, hatred, guilt and forgive themselves and others in return. In the end, after the murderous attacks of the townsmen on the Convent women no trace of the violent attack or their dead bodies is found. The erasure of the trace also stands as an erasure of crime giving another chance to Ruby
to look within and rectify. The novel ends with the women re-uniting with the people from their past, preparing to shoulder the work they are created to do in Paradise. Thus, being pure from within they attain Paradise. Morrison suggests that the Paradise cannot be realised by the narrow limitations of the mind. It requires a selfless, humane soul to realise the Paradise.

Though Morrison’s concern here is to discuss the spiritual quest of the characters, it should be noted that she shows subalterns in the novel at various levels – the people of Ruby are subalterns as they are disallowed by the light-skinned and vice versa; convent women are also subalterns as they are always looked down by the Ruby-dwellers; also, the white women are subalterns as in Ruby blacks possess the power to rule over and even kill them. But the real strength of the so-called “subaltern” women at the convent lies in forgiving the evil-doers. They rise above such worldly distinctions and attain a privileged place.

Joseph Macwan’s *Lakshamanni Agnipariksha* takes a lift from typical class conflict or caste distinction. It refers to an ideal converted Christian family that maintains the customs of their actual society. Macwan once again discusses the practice of *diyarvatu* in this novel after *Angaliyat*. But *diyarvatu* remains a ritual only in the eyes of the world. Otherwise Sarita and Shashikant live a pious life of celibacy. Another point that draws one’s attention is that though Sarita, the central female character is economically independent and enjoys a respectable position in society, she is bound by some orthodox practices of the society. Thus, though liberated economically, she is marginalised socially.

In the course of the novel Macwan contrasts a simple, humble life in the village with the chaotic, busy life in the city. He depicts the village folk full of intimacy and warm feelings for people whereas the city-dwellers lack sense of belongingness. In the story Shashikant, a step-father of Alpesh performs the role of a husband, a father, a brother, a friend and a brother-in-law. He lives multiple identities in one time and yet at the end he is none of them. Nobody accepts any of his relations leaving him to question his identity. Sarita and Shashi swing between the two extremes of old and new societal customs – where the old society does not allow a widow to live her remaining life alone, the new society does not approve the remarriage. But Sarita and Shashi transcend the ritual by promising each other to live a virtuous life. However, God does not grant the family eternal happiness. Alpesh’s
aunt Febi doubts the chastity of Sarita and instigates Alpesh against her. It creates an irreparable divide between the son and the parents, to the extent that he leaves his home, his parents and changes his name taking the name of his biological father. This is an identity crisis of Alpesh. He feels cheated by his parents. Unaware of parents’ sacrifice for him and the family and their unconditional love, he rejects them. The one who sacrifices becomes the victim. Shashikant passes through the fire-test by not succumbing to bodily desires and being a true protector. In this way it is his *agnipariksha* (fire-test). For Sarita and Shashi love is worship. They elevate their sensual pleasures to attain supremacy in love.

The question then is: who is subaltern? Is it Sarita who had to do *diyarvatu*? Is it Shashikant for he cannot cross *Lakshamanrekha* and more so when he is rejected as father? Is it Alpesh who undergoes identity-crisis? Is the entire family/community subaltern finding acceptance through conversion? Or is no one subaltern because they have graduated from a submissive and narrow-minded life to a free life; because they have elevated themselves?

All the three novels teach a great lesson of love – human as well as divine. Where *Jazz* talks about romantic love relationship, *Paradise* signifies spiritual love; *Lakshamanni Agnipariksha* merges the two – to take a leap from human love to attain spiritual love.

It is important to note here that while black men could own their business and black women could work as a domestic servant of the white families or as a nurse of the white children, the Dalit men and women in India never shared the same position. At every stage of their life they confront with the upper caste. At the most they worked as sweepers but that also brought utmost humiliation. There is no question of appreciation of their work as sometimes blacks privileged. The positive aspect of the Afro-American society was that they were not divided from within as the Indian society was. However both the societies had realised the fact that the real acceptance can come only if they are given equal rights in political system. No reform can succeed if they are not given political support. Let us also consider a fact that the Afro-Americans in America could win a desired status also because of a public platform on media – a Talk show of Oprah Winfrey. They could get a large network to speak which Dalits could never and still have not. Had they been given such a platform, their situation would have been different, they would have been heard.
Both Toni Morrison and Joseph Macwan present inter-class and intra-class conflicts. Patriarchal dominance, gender discrimination, various exploitations, violence, etc. are common issues discussed by both the writers. Both the societies had undergone a stigma, a period of stagnancy. Both pass through a phase of awakening and march for the revolt. But in Morrison the resistance is not as strong as in Macwan. Morrison’s characters are quite often submissive to their superiors whereas Macwan’s characters make their superiors surrender. They are the harbinger of change in society. The struggle of every individual in Morrison and Macwan for the recognition and status is representative of collective struggle of the community. Their quest for identity is the community’s quest for identity. Despite struggle at home and in the world, Morrison shows female-centric families in her novels. Male figures are in one way or the other, absent or escapists. Macwan does not depict women in the centre of all the chores. But he certainly shows both the counterparts jointly fighting against the pressures of the upper caste. They do not allow their families to break, their home to catch fire as it happens in Morrison.

At last, both the writers give a call for human love to get rid of the riddles of life. They both suggest that to come out of the narrow boundaries of “we” and “they” and to realise the common good of the humanity in general, one must take recluse in spiritual union where no distinction of race, colour, caste, gender exists.

Spivak’s conclusion that there is no place from where the sexed subaltern can speak is proven wrong in case of female characters in Macwan. Characters like Kasna, Tara, Gauri, Kanku, etc. are the examples of how Dalit women – doubly oppressed can also fight against the injustice, protect their self-esteem, question the social conduct and force the upper caste to change them. They set an example of being fearless in a society that is constantly degrading them. Though some exceptional characters like Methi have to surrender to the destiny, most of the women are courageous and noble.

In Morrison Spivak’s statement comes closer enough as most of Morrison’s characters end in breaking the family-tie. They are not able to pursue a strong fight with their counterpart or the hegemony as Macwan’s characters do. They either submit to the white standard, white master or find an escape. Sethe escapes from farm in Kentucky whereas Kasna takes up the broom in her hand to beat Mukhi, the village-head.
Spivak’s another stance that white men save brown women from brown men is also seen in Morrison’s some of the characters. When Pauline in The Bluest Eye takes up the job in the white family she is appreciated for her work. But it is not a genuine reward born of true fondness. It is rather a strategy of the white family to exercise power over her at a later stage. However, Morrison moves beyond such narrow-mindedness of any sort of distinctions, goes beyond subalternity in Paradise. In Paradise she shows a raceless Convent. She even does not make clear which woman is black and which one is white. Her concern in the novel is the spiritual upliftment, transcendence from mere worldly matters. She implies that it is only when one creates casteless, raceless society on earth that the Paradise can be attained. Only then the question of subaltern does not arise.

Some of Morrison’s characters take recluse in death. It is either a voluntary act or a forced endeavour or at times even a murder. Thus, it is ghastly. Macwan’s characters also meet with death. But for them it is a depiction of valour and heroism. They do not find escape in death nor do they indulge into killing anyone. They rise in death.

From the study it is concluded that the two socially, politically, economically and culturally diverse societies had more or less similar stories of distress and difficulties. The Blacks and the Dalits were subjugated by the superior class in their respective societies and denied entry into the mainstream. However in case of Afro-Americans the situation was grimmer as they were not just marginalised but deleted their roots.

It is also inferred that both the peoples had their period of resistance. They both fought for their rights and social status. They revolted against the hierarchies set by the elites of the society. Thus, they have moved from suppression to self-expression. Realising and then resisting the status of ‘subaltern’, these people have made their way into the mainstream.

Spivak’s claim that the subaltern can speak only when they are given the language or given the platform is partially true. The novels under study have revealed how the subalterns sometimes changed the binary position and rejected their peripheral position. It is true that both the societies asked for political support from their nations as they knew that without winning right to represent in the political system of the nation they will not be able to uplift themselves. Thus, to come out of
their colonised position they demanded to participate in the political make-up of the nations considering it a powerful medium to establish themselves.

Last but not the least, the subalterns in case of India are more benefited as compared to the elite class through Reservation. While it gives them privileges in education, job opportunities and other gains on the basis of caste distinctions, it pushes the high class into the margin. The class structure in India which was based on the division of work is subverted by availing political and economic facilities. However, though the Dalits have assured other benefits, they have not been able to change the social psychology of people at large. The high/low dichotomy still prevails in the mind of people creating discord in the society. Reservation has given them seats in education and political system. But it has not been able to create social equality which the USA enjoys at present. Hence it is suggested that further research may be pursued on the line that investigates the issue of the subaltern from an interdisciplinary point of view – considering their representation not just in literature but also in the entire political system which has probably put the upper caste in the margins and has brought those in the periphery to the centre.

I submit that instead of asking can the subalterns speak one should ask if the elites can hear. It is not a question of the silence of the subaltern but the deaf ears that the society pays to them. In the present context, the Dalits availing positions in civic structure of the society through reserved seats should be replaced by their economic status irrespective of the caste they belong to. Reservation system has given Dalits privileges in every sphere and Dalits too enjoy their low status for the sake of availing benefits. This political scene has to end to create social harmony.