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**THE WHITES' HEGEMONY IN SUSAN STRAIGHT'S NOVEL A MILLION  
NIGHTINGALES: A POSTCOLONIAL STUDY**

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**Abstract**

The hegemonic relations are very common in almost all social situations, especially between unequal groups in power. People sometimes are not aware of these unhealthy relations, their weapons, and their consequences. Many researchers and students of literature, wrote about this concept. However, in this article, the researcher attempts to uncover how the whites employ hegemony in their discourses, when they are talking to or about African Americans in Susan Straight's novel 'A Million Nightingales'. The writer, here, uses the Critical Discourse Analysis as a method of analysis of his selected data and depending on the theoretical framework of the postcolonial theory and Edward Said' theory of 'the Other'. The researcher sheds light on the social situations in which the whites with various social positions exercised hegemony on the protagonist 'Moinette', on the means by which the whites sustain their hegemony, and on the results of such continuous and long hegemony on people. The researcher infers that there are domination relations are practiced upon 'Moinette' by the whites, despite, they had power or wealth or not but what is important is that being white. Their power to behave in a hegemony way with African Americans is that they are white.

**Introduction**

The concept of Hegemony is one of the foremost concepts of the post-colonial theory. The social hegemony is widely spread nowadays, especially in the communities where various races dwell in. This concept 'Hegemony' is connected with the Italian Communist Antonio Gramsci. The expression 'Hegemony' is employed by Antonio Gramsci to mean the supremacy of a social class on the other classes. Edward Said uses the notion of hegemony or predominantly of a cultural form on the others. For Stuart Hall, "hegemony is a form of power based on leadership by a group in many fields of activity at once, so that its ascendancy commands widespread consent and

appears natural and inevitable (1997, 259)." According to Said, one has to endeavor to realize the hegemony of the colonial ideology which at the end of the 19th century had turned to be embedded in all the aspects of culture (1994, 12).

Susan Straight, who is the writer of the novel '*A Million Nightingales*', was born in California in 1960. She is now the Director of the Master of Fine Arts Program. She had won many awards, some of her awards are the 2008 Edgar Award, the 2007 O Henry Prize collection, a finalist for a National Magazine Award in 2007 and a Pushcart Prize in Fiction (College, 2020).

*A Million Nightingales* tells us the story of the protagonist 'Moinette' whose mother was brought from Senegal, when her mother was just five years old, on a boat with her mother. Moinette is a good-looking mixed-blood African American slave. She is also the narrator of the novel.

Her story begins at Azure, in a sugar cane plantation south of New Orleans possessed by the Bordelons family, where she dwelt with her mother, Marie-Thérèse, who was the plantation's laundress. Moinette became the housemaid of Céphaline, the adolescent daughter of the Bordelons. After Céphaline all of the sudden death, she was sold to Laurent de la Rosière, the owner of another sugarcane plantation. After a short time of her arrival, she tried to run away and come back to her mother at Azure, but she was swiftly seized and taken to Rosière. Moinette came to be the housemaid of Madame Pélagie who is the sister of Laurent de la Rosière. There, with the help of Madame Pélagie, she became pregnant after she was sexually assaulted by three white men who were the Bordelons' son and his friends. She gave birth to a boy called 'Jean-Paul'. After Madame Pélagie's death by her husband, Laurent de la Rosière sold her because he suspected that she had a hand in the death of his sister and her husband. She was sold to Julien Antoine, a lawyer from Opelousas. In Opelousas, She pretended to be his mistress while she ran his boarding house. Ultimately, Antoine helped her to buy herself and became a free woman of color, and later on, he helps her to buy her son. However, even though Moinette became free, her life tragically ended with the brutality of white hegemony.

### **Theoretical framework**

As the researcher mentioned earlier that this study is a postcolonial one that depends on applying Said's ideas of employing cultural hegemony on the Other. Said makes use of Gramsci's ideas about cultural hegemony. Gramsci believes that the dominant people sustain their governing by the employment of cultural organizations to gain the consent of the dominated people. The dominant people develop a hegemonic culture by the employment of ideology rather

than employing power and coercion to handle and control other people to get their agreement and satisfied about their positions in lower statuses or marginalized. Relying on Gramsci's notion of hegemony, Said claims that it is by the help of culture and ideology the Whites powers have been encouraged definite methods of thinking that legitimate their ideological control on 'The Other'. Gramsci's concept of hegemony is prominently importance in establishing Said's attack on the Orientalism. For Said, hegemony is "an indispensable concept for any understanding of cultural life in the industrial West." (1979, 7) Through this concept Said is been able to demonstrate the way by which White or Western discourses depicted 'The Other' in biased ways to get the Other's agreement and satisfaction towards what they said or depicted. According to Gramsci, hegemony is practiced on the marginalized and the minorities through gaining their agreement and satisfaction by civil institutions of a community. That is to say that "Hegemony is attained through the myriad ways in which the institutions of civil society operate to shape, directly or indirectly, the cognitive and affective structures whereby men perceive and evaluate problematic social reality." (1971, 389)

Said discovers that the Orientalists' discourses is an excellent sample to know the way by which hegemony acts. These Western discourses, which are cultural representations of the West about the East, have an essential part in the creation of Western's outlooks and insights that have an impact on the way by which the Other perceive himself. That means that, through these Western's discourses, the non-Western are been able to see their culture and identity by the eyes of the Westerners as marginalized and hegemonic people as compare with them. As Said says that "the method colonized people use to assert their identity and the existence of their own history" (1979, xiii). Thus, for Said, culture is the best instrument for getting hegemony upon 'The Other' rather than the employment of power and coercion. Said declares that without handling and controlling the Others' culture, the cultural hegemony will not happen over the Other. The East may be politically and economically controlled by the West but what is important is to put their hands on the culture of the East. That is exactly what is done through the Orientalism. He believes that if someone talk of Orientalism, he consequently is talk primarily but not entirely, on the behalf of the Western cultural establishment that wishes chiefly to create hegemony on the Others by creating the West's viewpoint of the hegemonic culture and ideology in the Other's minds (1979, 4).

### **Methodology**

This paper is a qualitative library-based study and the researcher uses the critical discourse analysis as the methodology of the study. The goal of this study is to read the novel 'A Million Nightingales' which is written by the White American novelist Susan Straight. The theoretical framework of the paper relies on Edward

Said's theory of representing the Other. By employing Said and Gramsci's concept of Hegemony on Straight's selected novel, the researcher attempts to clarify the way by which the whites employ hegemony on African Americans in Straight's novel '*A Million Nightingales*'.

## Method and Discussion

The researcher, in this study, employs the Fairclough's three-dimensional model of the critical discourse analysis in his analytical framework to uncover the whites' hegemony upon African Americans in Straight's *A Million Nightingales*. These three stages of Fairclough are the Descriptive/ Textual analysis, the Interpretative/ Discursive analysis, and the Explanation/ Social analysis. The writer, in this article, will only do the third stage of analysis which is the explanation one.

### 1.1. Applying The CDA to The Study

#### 1.1.1. The Description

The descriptive or textual analysis emphasizes on the way by which discourses are recognized linguistically. It aims to demonstrate the characteristic features of the representations in the text (Fairclough, 2001, 26). Depending on Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis method, Janks evolved a Linguistic Analysis Rubric (2005, 100). The researcher employs Janks's linguistic analysis rubric as the textual data analysis framework for this study.

#### 1.1.2. The Interpretation

The interpretative or discursive analysis focuses on the interpretation of data. It aims to comprehend and interpret the relationship between the data and its producers (Fairclough, 2001, 141). The researcher, here, uses Fairclough's interpretive analysis framework.

Content	Subjects	Relations	Connections
What's going on?	Who's involved?	In what relations?	What's the role of language in what's going on?
Activities, topics and purpose (e.g. verbs,	Subjects position (e.g. a speaker or more than one and an addressee)	Relations between subjects position	Themes and Genres that connect to larger social structures.

modalities, voice)			
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**Table 1.1: Fairclough’s Interpretive Analysis Framework**

*Adopted from: Fairclough (2001)*

### 1.1.3. The Explanation

The Explanation or Social analysis emphasizes on the clarifications of a larger cultural and social discourses. It aims to describe a discourse to be a part of a social practice that displaying the way by which it is restricted by social constructions (Fairclough, 2001, 163). Discourse, in this stage, is seen as a component in social practices at the institutional and societal levels (Fairclough, 2001, 192). The researcher will relate Said's theory of representation of 'the Other' to this stage of the CDA since it captures the hegemony that is exercised on African Americans by the whites as it is portrayed in Susan Straight's novel 'A Million Nightingales'.

In *Orientalism*, Said insists on the fact that in any social process, there has to be the powerful and dominant part and the powerless and controlled one. And if there is one part which is more dominant than the other, there has to be spreading the cultural practices, outlooks, and attitudes of the dominant one, at the expense of the other. As he declares:

In any society not totalitarian, then, certain cultural forms predominate over others; the form of this cultural leadership is what Gramsci has identified as hegemony, an indispensable concept for any understanding of cultural life in the industrial West. It is hegemony, or rather the result of cultural hegemony at work, that gives Orientalism its durability and its strength. Orientalism is never far from the idea of Europe, a collective notion identifying 'us' Europeans as against all 'those' non-Europeans, and indeed it can be argued that the major component in European culture is precisely what made that culture hegemonic both in and outside Europe: the idea of European identity as a superior one in comparison with all the non-European peoples and cultures. There is, also the hegemony of European ideas about the Orient, themselves reiterating European superiority over Oriental backwardness, usually overriding the possibility that a more independent thinker may have had different views on the matter (1979, 7).

Said, here as he mentioned, gets influenced by Antonio Gramsci in the matter of hegemony. For Said, hegemony is an indispensable instrument for comprehension of the cultural reality that prevails in the West. It is the hegemony that supplies Orientalism with its power and its sustainability. It will possibly be disputed, that what precisely is the chief

component in the Western culture that makes it as the domination culture, is the belief that the Western identity is the superior one in contrast with the other identities. Therefore, as Said asserts, through hegemony one can understand the cultural and social reality of the whites' lives. It is the hegemony that enables us to uncover the type of relationship between the white and African Americans and because of the hegemony, the whites practice their power and supremacy on African Americans. African Americans are never far from the idea of 'the white' as a collective concept that recognizing them as 'us' which is against all the 'non-white'. The notion that white's identity to be as a grander one than African American peoples and cultures is the reason behind white hegemony. In all the selected whites' discourses in this article, two parts in the social situations combine between the whites in all various social positions and African American slave woman 'Moinette', in part one is the white which is the dominant one and in the other is the African American which is the dominated one. In this unbalance relations, the dominant always do many wicked and cruel things, by the help of the power of this hegemony, upon African American woman 'Moinette'.

*"The law! You are to keep your head covered!" (2006, 103)*

The societal process, that this discourse belongs to, is a white woman 'Madame Bordelon' chatting with an African American woman 'Moinette' to cover her head all the time even when she wants to sleep. The societal relationship between the white woman 'Madame Bordelon' and an African American 'Moinette' is a hegemony relation. In this quotation, Madame Bordelon practiced hegemony by employing her authority upon Moinette. Moinette felt pain in her head. This feeling of pain was resulted from the heat of the scarf that she always wore on her head. She called her scarf '*A cap of pain*' (2006, 103) and when one night she attempted to take off her scarf before she wanted to go to sleep. Madame Bordelon saw her with no scarf. Therefore, she asked Moinette that she must wear it all the time because the white law forces African American women to wear their scarves at day and night whether they are awake and asleep.

The hegemony here lies in the idea that the white woman Madame Bordelon, who is the land lord's wife, practiced the hegemony of the 'Noir Code' which is one of the civil institutions that belongs to the whites. She asked Moinette to cover her head because the white law says that she is not allowed to uncover her head while she is in the presence of her owner. She asked her to wear the scarf any time whether at day or night and even though she was suffering too much from it.

At the societal level, the white landlord's wife 'Madame Bordelon' sets off different social identities for herself and for her addressee based on the long term hegemonic relations within which she operates. As a landlord's wife, whose social relations with African Americans, knows no status boundary and respected landlord's wife who mainly endeavors to co-operate with her workers. In this discourse, Madame Bordelon, the

white landlord, is 'the dominant', and 'unkind', while Moinette, the African American woman is 'the controlled worker'.

*"Pélagie. You are without shame." "I am without a husband yet, and with a (2006, 327) abundance of hospitality required of me. There is no need to be coy, as Americans pretend to be here. She is fifteen, I think. She could have been sold for a high price in New Orleans, but she wasn't. How my brother acquired her I don't know. Ebrard will notice her again." "And what if she has a child?" "If she has girls, they will be attractive. Do you know what they are called? Daughters of joy." "And boys?" "Someone in New Orleans told me her mother drowned one like a kitten and told the woman it had died at birth. Isn't that horrible? But the men hate to see them. They're useful for nothing," (2006, 328).*

The societal process, that this discourse belongs to, is two white women 'Pélagie' and her friend 'Lise' talking about an African American woman 'Moinette'. The societal relationship between the two white women and the African American woman 'Moinette' is a hegemony relation. In this quotation, Pélagie practiced hegemony by employing her authority upon Moinette. Lise told Pélagie that she was without shame for what she had done with Moinette. 'Pélagie' said that she was in need to be generous and she had no husband. Pélagie told Moinette that Monsieur Ebrard would attend, he would remember her, and he would stay in the garçonnière. Pélagie gifted Moinette to her visitor 'Ebrard' whenever he came to her house. Lise told her if Moinette had a baby from these sexual relationships, what would be happened. She said if the baby was a boy, he would be breed like dogs. And if the baby was a girl, it would be good. The baby girl was called Daughters of joy by the whites. But if the baby was a boy, it was bad because the baby boy was not good at anything according to the white perspective.

The hegemony, here, lies in the idea that the white woman 'Pélagie' practices the hegemony of the whites upon the African American girl 'Moinette'. She gifted her female slave to her guest 'Monsieur Ebrard's son' for the second time because she wanted to be generous with her guests and because she was without a husband. She didn't care whether her female slave will become pregnancy, she cared only about being generous in front of their visitors. The hegemony, here, is very obvious. Pélagie likes her female slave to bore girls rather than boys just like the whites, they called the African American girls 'Daughters of joy'.

At the societal level, the white woman 'Pélagie' sets off different social identities for herself and for her addressee based on the long term hegemonic relations within which she operates. As a white woman, whose social relations with African Americans, knows no status boundary, and the respected white woman who mainly endeavors to co-operate with her slaves. But in this discourse, 'Pélagie', the white woman is 'the dominant', and 'the pimp', while Moinette, the African American woman is 'the controlled victim' and 'prostitute'.

*"You aren't required to know. Only to perform."* (2006, 103)

The societal process, that this discourse belongs to, is a white owner's sick daughter chatting with a little African American girl who takes care of her. The societal relationship between the white owner's daughter 'Céphaline' and the little African American, 'Moinette', is a hegemony relation. In this quotation, Céphaline practiced hegemony by employing her authority upon Moinette. She told Moinette that she didn't need to know anything but she has to only do whatever she asked her to do. Céphaline always told Moinette something about the parts of the body like the brain, then she asked her whether she knew where the brain is formed? But, Moinette didn't know what Céphaline wanted. Therefore, Moinette asked her what she needed. And Céphaline told her that she is an African American slave, she doesn't need to know anything, but she needs only to do whatever asked to do.

The hegemony here lies in the idea that the white owner's sick daughter 'Céphaline' doesn't allow the little African American girl 'Moinette' to know anything but to do what is required from her. This discourse can be considered to be as one of the clearest statement for white hegemony in this novel because the white girl Céphaline, here, doesn't accept Moinette, the African American girl, to discuss or argue about anything she says but just to perform what she says, just like the dominant whites ask African Americans to do anything and they don't allow them to argue or discuss but they tell them to do, then to discuss.

At the societal level, the white owner's daughter 'Céphaline' sets off different social identities for herself and for her addressee based on the long term hegemonic relations within which she operates. As a white owner's daughter, whose social relations with African Americans, knows no status boundary and the kind owner's daughter who mainly endeavors to co-operate with her slave who takes care of her. In this discourse, Céphaline, the white owner's sick daughter, is 'the dominant', and 'unkind', while Moinette, the African American girl is 'the controlled slave'.

In *Culture and Imperialism*, Said states that the hegemony and the imbalances of power and wealth relationships are quite prevalent in practically all social events in the whole communities. In our time, during what the global is witnessed, these relationships can be elucidated as one of the outcomes of the imperialism, in its old version and the new one. Nowadays, the Asians, the Africans, and the Latin Americans are politically independent in their countries, but they are not independent in their decisions. However, they are not directly run by Western imperialism, they are run in a way or another by the Western hegemony, as Said says:

Domination and inequalities of power and riches are permanent truths of human society. However, at present's global scenery, they are

explainable as owning something to accomplish with imperialism, its past, and its latest forms. The countries of current Asia, Africa, and Latin America are politically sovereign, however, in many ways, they are as controlled and subordinate as they were when governed straightly by Western powers (1994, 19).

Said, here, affirms that since there are inequalities of power and money between countries or communities even people, therefore, there have to be hegemony practices on these hegemonic ones. And this exactly what happened with Moinette, She suffered from this problem of inequalities of power in a society that the weak are die. She underwent from being the part that is weak in this equation, thus, she, from a situation to another, encounters white's hegemony.

*“Bright girl is worth good money in the city. Or trade with Lafitte for some men.”(2006, 162)*

The societal process, that this discourse belongs to, is a two white men 'The small Msieu' and 'The factor' talking about an African girl, Moinette who is a mixed-blood girl because her father is a white man and her mother is an African American woman. The societal relationship between the two white men and an African American 'Moinette' is a hegemony relation. In this quotation, 'The small Msieu' and 'The factor' practiced hegemony by employing their authority upon Moinette. When Msieu Bordelon wanted to sell her because every time he sees her face, he reminds his dead daughter whom Moinette took care of her. Therefore the small Msieu took her with the help of The factor to sell her. The factor treated her severely, he tied a small rope around her wrist to prevent her from escape, and from time to time, while he was walking and pulling her, he stopped suddenly till the rope scorching her wrist. Moinette felt that she is an animal that is larger than a dog and a smaller than a horse. She is like a mule. Neither a horse nor a donkey because she is a bright girl whose father is an unknown white man and her mother is an African American. Then, the factor told the small Msieu that Moinette is a bright girl and they can sell it in the city and get a lot of money or they can sell her and get some African American men instead of her.

The hegemony, here, lies in the idea that the two white men 'The small Msieu' and 'The factor' practiced the hegemony of the white people upon the African American girl 'Moinette'. They treated her so severely. They tied a small rope around her wrist, and the factor pulled her while he was walking. As if she was no more than an animal. She imagined that she was a mule because of their ill-treatment. They did all these bad things to Moinette with the help of the hegemony of the whites.

At the societal level, the white men 'The small Msieu' and 'The factor' set off different social identities for themselves and for their addressee based on the long term hegemonic relations within which they operate. As a landlord's son 'The small Msieu' and his assistant 'The factor', whose social relations with African Americans, know no status boundary and the respected and co-operative landlord's son and his

assistant who mainly endeavor to co-operate with their workers. In this discourse, 'The small Msieu' and 'The factor', the white landlord's son and his assistant, are 'the dominant', and 'cruel', while Moinette, the African American girl is 'the controlled slave'.

*“Etienne,” Pélégie's slave has been summoned. You are fortunate.” “I don't see it that way.” “Then you are foolish.” “Etienne should prove he isn't foolish. Or unnatural. You should prove it, too, Gustave. I have procured the medium of proof, but she is slow. Go find her, Etienne.” (2006, 333) “Take off your dress,” (2006, 334)*

The societal process, that this discourse belongs to, is a group of white men who are Etienne's friends talking about an African American woman 'Moinette'. The societal relationship between the white men 'Etienne's friends' and an African American 'Moinette' is a hegemony relation. In this quotation, Etienne, Gustave, and Msieu Ebrard practiced hegemony by employing their authorities upon Moinette. Gustave told Etienne that Moinette would come and he is so lucky. But Etienne said that he doesn't see it like this way. Therefore, Gustave told him that he is crazy. Then, Msieu Ebrard told them that they both need to prove that they are not crazy or abnormal. He challenged Etienne to go and prove that he is normal and not foolish because he isn't interested in her at all. He wanted him to go and sleep with her. Etienne went and found her and he asked her to take her clothes off. After he had sex with her by force, his friend, Msieu Ebrard came to her and had sex with her, too.

The hegemony, here, lies in the idea that the white men Etienne's friends practiced the hegemony of the whites upon the African American girl 'Moinette' by putting her the topic of the challenge. Msieu Ebrard challenged Etienne to go and have sex with his aunt's slave. And he went and slept with her by force. Therefore he won the challenge and proved that he is normal and not foolish for not interested in her before. When he finished with her, his friend came and had slept with her by force, too.

At the societal level, the white men ' Etienne's friends ' set off different social identities for themselves and for their addressee based on the long term hegemonic relations within which they operate. As young white men, whose social relations with African Americans, know no status boundary and the respected young white men who mainly came to visit their friend and should respect the owner's slaves because if they respect his or her slaves, they respect the owner himself or herself. In this discourse, Etienne's friends, the white men, are 'the dominants', and ' immoral', while Moinette, the African American woman, is 'the controlled victim'.

*“You are wearing underclothes. That is foolish. An impediment. You should be prepared to lift your dress at any time if that is your purpose.” (2006, 420)*

The societal process, that this discourse belongs to, is a white man 'Msieu Césaire' talking with an African American woman 'Moinette'. The societal relationship between the white man 'Msieu Césaire' and the African American 'Moinette' is a hegemony relation. In this quotation, Msieu Césaire practiced hegemony by employing his authority upon Moinette. He asked her to stand before him. Then he lifted her dress hem with his cane until the fabric edge of her dress was near to her eyes. He examined her for a long time. He noticed that she is wearing underclothes so that he accused her that she is disobedient and crazy. He told her that she must be ready at any time if her master wanted to sleep with her. Then, he dismissed her by moving his cane across her spine and pushing her toward the door.

The hegemony, here, lies in the idea that the white man 'Msieu Césaire' practiced the hegemony of the whites upon the African American girl 'Moinette' by lifting her dress to her eyes and discovering that she was wearing underclothes. Although he wasn't her master, he didn't allow her to wear underclothes because he wanted her to be ready at any time if her master desired to sleep with her. In whites rule, it is disobedient and foolish, if an African American slave wears underclothes.

At the societal level, the white man 'Msieu Césaire' sets off different social identities for himself and for his addressee based on the long term hegemonic relations within which he operates. As a white man, whose social relations with African Americans, knows no status boundary and the respected white man, who is her owner's friend, mainly endeavors to respect the owner's slave because if he respects his slave, means that he respects the owner himself. In this discourse, Msieu Césaire, the white man, is 'the dominant', and 'tyrant', while Moinette, the African American woman is 'the controlled slave'.

*"What? Nigger can't buy nigger. Yellow gal like you fetch a thousand yourself."(2006, 536)*

The societal process, that this discourse belongs to, is a white trader talking with an African American woman 'Moinette' because she wanted to buy an African American slave that he wanted to sell. The societal relationship between the white trader and an African American woman 'Moinette' is a hegemony relation. In this quotation, The trader practiced hegemony by employing his authority upon Moinette. The trader had an African American boy and he wanted to sell him. But when Moinette told him that she wanted to buy him, he refused to sell it to her because she is an African American woman. She told him that she is a free woman of color.

The hegemony, here, lies in the idea that the white trader practiced the hegemony of the whites upon the African American girl 'Moinette', the trader didn't allow to sell an African American boy to another African American woman. However, the whites accept to sell an African

American boy to a white man but they don't accept selling him to an African American.

At the societal level, the white trader sets off different social identities for himself and for his addressee based on the long term hegemonic relations within which he operates. As a trader, whose social relations with African Americans, knows no status boundary and the welcoming and outgoing trader who mainly endeavors to sell and get money. In this discourse, the white trader is 'the dominant', and 'unwelcoming', while Moinette, the African American woman is 'the controlled free woman of color'.

In Said's book *Culture and Imperialism*, he stresses on the idea of the impossibility of forgetting the agony and anguish of the colonialism from those people who suffered too much during the whole period of the long imperialism, as he states:

How easily so much could be compressed into that simple formula of unappreciated magnanimity! Dismissed or forgotten were the ravaged colonial peoples who for centuries endured summary justice, unending economic oppression, distortion of their social and intimate lives, and a recourse less submission that was the function of unchanging European superiority. Only to keep in mind the millions of Africans who were supplied to the slave trade is to acknowledge the unimaginable cost of maintaining that superiority. Yet dismissed most often are precisely the infinite number of traces in the immensely detailed, violent history of colonial intervention minute by minute, hour by hour-in the lives of individuals and collectivities, on both sides of the colonial divide. (1994, 21)

Said, here, asserts that if one can easily forget or even dismiss the brutality and oppressive of the colonialism that was practiced upon the colonized peoples who suffered a lot for centuries due to the imperialism and its deeds. One can't forget the millions of Africans who were provided in the slave trade to be the price for sustaining Western superiority. Even one can't forget the unlimited numbers of the interference of the harsh colonialism in every minute and every hour in the lives of the peoples and communities. In other words, one isn't able to forget or even force himself to forget about the Western hegemony, that took place (and takes place) minute by minute and hour by hour, upon the non-western peoples. Nowadays, the globe doesn't live in direct imperialism or colonialism but the hand of imperialism exists through Western hegemony which is colonialism itself but wearing another face. Therefore, the West or the white, to persist their imperialism and superiority on earth, they started legislating laws and Codes that confirm their remaining superior for a long time to others and whenever their laws and codes were harsh and hard to be fulfillment, their feeling that they are the dominant will be stronger. And this is the case with the Africans who were brought to America during the slave trade. to ensure their silence

and obedience, and to show their hegemony upon them. The white legislated very harsh and tough laws against them.

*“The code states that slaves cannot be manumitted until they are twenty-one. (2006, 527)*

The societal process, that these discourses belong to, is a white man 'Msieu Antoine' talking with an African Girl 'Moinette' about the hegemony of the 'Noir Code' which is one of the civil institutions that belongs to the whites, that practices its hegemony upon African Americans. The societal relationship between the white code and an African American 'Moinette' is a domination relation. In this relationship, The Code Noir or the Black Code practices the hegemony in dealing with African Americans by employing its power upon Moinette. The Code Noir says that a slave can't be freed until he becomes twenty-one years old. Even though he can be free, whether he can buy himself or another free man can buy him. In this quotation, Msieu Antoine, who is the third white owner of Moinette, wants to free her but he couldn't although he is a lawyer because she is now only twenty years old. And according to this code, she can't get her freedom till she becomes twenty-one years old. Therefore she has to wait one more year to get her freedom.

The hegemony, here, lies in the idea that the Code Noir or Black code, which is one of the civil institutions, that belongs to the whites, practices its hegemony, this time, upon the African American girl 'Moinette'. This Black Code states that meanwhile, one has born as a slave, he will stay slave, under any circumstances, and in any conditions until he will be twenty-one years old. The white hegemony, here, is very obvious, an African American isn't allowed to be free at all under any circumstances if he/she is one day less than twenty-one years old. Therefore, Moinette, here, isn't allowed to get freedom because she is less than twenty-one years old. Even though, her white master himself wants her to be free.

*“You are an investment,” he said. “You cannot walk. Even with a pass, some men in this district may harm you. You will have to wait “You will have to wear a black veil in the carriage so that people think you are a widow. A client who lost her husband, who has (2006, 438) inquiries at Rosière.”(2006, 439)*

The societal process, that these discourses belong to, is a white owner 'Msieu Antoine' talking with an African American woman 'Moinette' about the hegemony that practices upon African Americans by the Code Noir or Black code. The societal relationship between the white code and the African American 'Moinette' is a hegemony relation. In this relationship, The Code Noir practices the hegemony in dealing with African Americans by employing hegemony upon Moinette. Moinette wanted to walk to Rosière to see her son 'Jean-Paul'. But her owner, 'Msieu Antoine' told her that it is too dangerous to her as a free woman of

color to walk, ride a carriage, and wear jewels in public because Les mesdames in New Orleans have come to be very annoyed about free women of color who walk and ride a carriage, therefore, the white Americans have revised the Black code to make it much more severe for slaves and free people of color. The Code Noir states that a slave and even a free woman of color are not allowed to walk more than twelve miles, hire a carriage, and wear jewels in public. In this quotation, although, Msieu Antoine, who is Moinette's last owner, allowed her to go to Rosière to see her son, the Black code doesn't allow her to do it. Therefore, if she wants to go and see her son, she has to wear a black veil in the carriage, so that the white people will think that she is a widow.

The hegemony, here, lies in the idea that the Code Noir or Black code, which is one of the civil institutions that belongs to the whites, practices its hegemony, this time, upon the African American woman 'Moinette'. The Code Noir states that a slave and even a free woman of color are not allowed to walk more than twelve miles, hire a carriage, and wear jewels in public. According to this Code, although her master allows her to go and see her son, she can't go and see her son who is still a slave in her previous owner plantation, 'Msieu Rosière's plantation'. Thus, she has to wear a black veil to be able to go and see her son. The white hegemony, here, is very obvious again, a free woman of color isn't allowed to go and see her son because he is more than twelve miles away from her. Even though, her white master himself wants her to go and see her son.

*"My father has asked, repeatedly, exactly when you struck Msieu Vincent." Le Code Noir—the penalty for striking a master in the face was death. "Did your action make the ball hit her?" "You cannot testify in court." (2006, 381)*

The societal process, that these discourses belong to, a white landlord's son 'Etienne' talking with an African American girl 'Moinette' about the death of a white man 'Msieu Vincent' who killed his aunt because his father doubts that she killed the white man 'Msieu Vincent'. The societal relationship between the white Noir Code and the African American girl 'Moinette' is a hegemonic relation. In this relationship, the Code Noir or the Black Code practices the hegemony in dealing with African Americans by employing its power upon Moinette. This quotation shows the excessive domination that the Noir Code or the Black Code practices upon the African American girl 'Moinette'. When Msieu Vincent put his gun in Pélagie's head, Moinette tried to protect her master 'Pélagie' by swinging the silver pot and hitting him in his head, and he fired the gun into the ceiling. When Etienne came home, he found his aunt died. The white man, Msieu Vincent, who is Pélagie's husband killed her, so Etienne shot him with his hunting rifle. Msieu de la Rosière, Pélagie's brother, didn't believe that Moinette didn't have any part in the death of the white man, Msieu Vincent, and his sister. He didn't think or worry about the death of his sister but about whether an African American may

participate in the death of a white man and woman. Although, that white man is responsible for killing his sister. Therefore, his son 'Etienne' asked Moinette that his father wants to make sure whether her strick to Msieu Vincent caused his death or her hitting the ball may cause the death of Pélagie because the Le Code Noir says that the penalty for striking a master in his face is death. Etienne told Moinette that whether she has a part in the death of Msieu Vincent and Pélagie or not but she can't prove that at court.

The hegemony, here, lies in the idea that the Noir Code, which is one of the civil institutions that belongs to the whites, practices its hegemony upon the African American girl 'Moinette'. The white Le Code Noir states that the penalty for striking a master in his face is death. Thus, she will die without committing any sin just because she tried to protect her master from a white man who is killed by another white man. Although this man killed Moinette's owner and she tried to prevent this crime by hitting him by coffeepot when he was going to shoot her again and she didn't kill him but Etienne, Pélagie's nephew, killed him with his hunting rifle. As well as the Noir Code doesn't allow the African Americans to defend themselves in court. Etienne told Moinette that whether she participated in the death of Msieu Vincent and his aunt or not but she will not be able to prove that and the Le Code Noir states that the African Americans can't testify in court. The white hegemony, here, is very obvious, an African American isn't allowed to defend himself/herself in court if he/she suspects in killing a white man/woman. Therefore, Moinette, here, will be sentenced to death because she is accused of killing her white master who became her master only for a short time after killing his wife, Pélagie.

In *Culture and Imperialism*, Said says that colonialism simply means "the practice, the theory, and the attitudes of a dominating metropolitan center ruling a distant territory"(1994, 9). For him, colonialism almost at all times is the result of practicing the hegemony of the imperialism on the peoples of the settlements on distant lands. None can separate imperialism from its effective weapons which is hegemony. These metropolitan center was ruling very distant places and people by imposing their attitudes, cultures, and perspectives on the ruled places and people and by legislating laws that sustain their superiority and their benefits. With the help of these Western laws, they will make certain that these places, their people, and their resources are under their control. Here, in this novel, all the punitive and severe laws concerning the African Americans, in particular, and the slaves, in general, are practiced literally on Moinette to feel their superiority and to practice their lovely game which is exercising hegemony on the other.

*The Code Noir specifies the slave child shall not be sold from the mother before ten years, and that there is no mother here. But he specified no*

*mortgages. He has been ill-used from those transactions in the past. He wants one hundred fifty dollars in cash or the trade of another slave.”(2006, 530)*

The societal process, that this discourse belongs to, is a white man 'Msieu Antoine' talking with an African American woman 'Moinette' about her son 'Jean-Paul' and about the hegemony of the Code Noir or Black code, which is one of the civil institutions that belongs to the whites. The societal relationship between the white code and an African American boy, Moinette's son, is a hegemony relation. In this relationship, The Code Noir or the Black Code practiced the hegemony in dealing with African Americans by employing its authority upon Moinette's son 'Jean-Paul'. The Code Noir states that a slave child can't be freed or bought by his own mother until he becomes ten years old. Even though his mother is a free slave but she can't make him free, whether she buys him by herself or by another free man or woman. In this quotation, Msieu Antoine, who is Moinette's last owner, wanted to free Moinette's son, too. But he couldn't because her son 'Jean-Paul' is now only four years old. And according to this code, he can't be bought by his mother till he becomes ten years old as well as he can't be freed till he becomes twenty-one years old. Therefore she has to wait for him till he becomes ten years old to buy him and to become twenty-one years old to free him. Although she or her master has the money needed to free him, the Code Noir doesn't allow her to do that.

The hegemony, here, lies in the idea that the Code Noir or Black code, which is one of the civil institutions that belongs to the whites, practiced its hegemony upon the African American girl's son 'Jean-Paul'. This Code Noir states that meanwhile, one has born as a slave, he will not be bought by his mother or any other white man in any conditions until he will be ten years old. At the same time, he will not be freed by his mother or any other white man in any conditions until he will be twenty-one years old. The white hegemony, here, is very obvious again, an African American boy isn't allowed to be bought at all under any circumstances if he is under ten years old. Therefore, Jean-Paul, here, isn't allowed to be bought because he is less than ten years old and he isn't allowed to be freed because he is less than twenty-one years old. Even though, her white master himself wanted him to be free.

*“The indenture will be nullified, Moinette. He is twelve years old now, oui? He needs a trade.” “You should apprentice your son to François Vidrine, the upholsterer. (2006, 570)*

The societal process, that this discourse belongs to, is a white owner 'Msieu Antoine' talking with an African American woman 'Moinette' about the white hegemony that practiced upon African Americans by the hegemony of the Code Noir or Black code. The societal relationship between the white code and the African American boy, Jean-Paul 'Moinette's son' is a hegemony relation. In this relationship, The Code Noir practiced the hegemony in dealing with African Americans by employing its hegemony upon Moinette's son. Jean-Paul is now only six

years and his mother bought him from his owner. But until now, he is not safe because he doesn't know his father and his mother is a free African American woman. Therefore, Msieu Antoine suggested an indenture and he would be his guardian. After that, Msieu Antoine decided to shift his place, therefore, he couldn't protect him anymore. Jean-Paul should be apprenticed by someone because he must have a trade-in order to be safe. He needed a legal guardian and protector until he will be twenty-first years old. Thus, 'Msieu Antoine' suggested that François Vidrine, the upholsterer to apprentice Jean-Paul because François Vidrine is his friend and he trusted him.

The hegemony, here, lies in the idea that the Code Noir or Black code, which is one of the civil institutions that belongs to the whites, practices its hegemony upon the African American boy 'Moinette's son'. The Code Noir states that a slave can't be freed until he becomes twenty-one years old. Although his mother bought him, he isn't free until he will be twenty-one years old. Thus, he needs a protector and a legal guardian because his mother is a free woman of color and not a white woman. He needs to be sold to a white man to protect him by his name. The white hegemony, here, is very obvious again, a free woman of color isn't allowed to keep her son near her because he is just twelve years old now. Although his mother bought him, she can't protect him. Therefore, she has to sell him again to a white man only on paper to protect him.

### 3. Conclusion

As Gramsci believes that hegemony is exercised on the marginalized in a community by the hegemonic people of that community as well as its civil institutions to gain the agreement and satisfaction of its marginalized people. Furthermore, as Said declares that the hegemonic people in a community tends to make benefit from culture which they believe that it is the greatest device for attainment hegemony upon the Other instead of employing the power and the coercion upon them. He believes that without conducting and controlling the Others' culture, the cultural hegemony will never occur upon the Other.

In almost all the social situations that took place between the whites and African Americans in straight's novel *A Million Nightingales*, there were hegemony relations practiced by the whites, as individuals or by their civil institutions. These practiced hegemonic relations were performed by white people, nevertheless, they had power or wealth or not but what is important, that they were white. From Fairclough's three models of Critical Discourse Analysis: the textual analysis, the discursive analysis, and the societal analysis, the researcher comes with that the whites 'discourses are occupied with the sense of hegemony against the African Americans in this novel. This white hegemony didn't base on the social relationships that connected between the whites and African Americans but it was based on being white as the basis of this hegemony. Here, in Straight' *A Million Nightingale*, the social relationships between

the white characters and the African American protagonist 'Moinette' varied, in one hand, from being her owners such as 'Msieu de la Rosière' or her owner's relatives such as wife 'Madame Boldelon', sister 'Pelagie', daughter 'Cephaline', and sons 'Etienne' and 'the small Msieu' and this was obvious in the situations of the white owner Msieu de la Rosière, Madame Boldelon, Pelagie, Cephaline, Etienne, and the small Msieu whom their hegemony upon Moinette came from their authority and their aggression. Or from being, on the other hand, just owner's white wealthy friend or white wealthy friend of the owner's relatives and this was clear in the case of Etienne's friends, and Msieu Antonio's wealthy friend ' Msieu Cesaire' whom their hegemony upon Moinette came from being a white wealthy friend. Or from being, on the other hand, just white people and this was clear in the case of the white factor, and the white trader, they were not in high social rank and they were not wealthy people but just because they were white people, being white was what gave them the source of their hegemony. We have seven situations that show us the various social relations that practiced hegemony on the protagonist 'Moinette'.

The first situation between the white woman Madame Bordelon, who is the land lord's wife and Moinette. She asked Moinette to cover her head because the white law says that she is not allowed to uncover her head while she is in the presence of her owner and at any time whether at day or night. The second one between the white woman 'Pélagie' and Moinette. She gifted her to her guest 'Monsieur Ebrard's son' for the second time because she wanted to be generous with her guests and because she was without a husband. She didn't care whether her female slave became pregnancy, she cared only about being generous in front of their visitors. Pélagie liked her female slave to bore girls rather than boys just like the whites in general, they call the African American girls 'Daughters of joy'. The third situation between the white owner's sick daughter 'Céphaline' and Moinette. She didn't allow Moinette to know anything but to do what was required from her. It was one of the clearest statements for white hegemony because the white girl Céphaline didn't accept Moinette to discuss or argue about anything she said but just to perform what she said. The fourth situation is between two white men 'The small Msieu' with 'The factor' and 'Moinette'. They treated Moinette so severely. They tied a small rope around her wrist, and the factor pulled her while he was walking. As if she was no more than an animal. The fifth situation between the white men Etienne's friends and Moinette. They put her as the topic of the challenge. Msieu Ebrard challenged Etienne to go and have sex with his aunt's slave. And he went and slept with her by force. Therefore he won the challenge and proved that he was normal and not foolish for not interested in her before. When he finished with her, his friend came and had slept with her by force, too. The sixth situation between the white man 'Msieu Césaire' and Moinette. He lifted her dress to her eyes and discovering that she was wearing underclothes. Although he wasn't her master, he didn't allow her to wear underclothes because he wanted her to be ready at any time if her master desired to sleep with her. In whites rule, it was disobedient and foolish, if an African American slave wore underclothes. The last situation between the white trader and

Moinette. The trader didn't allow to sell an African American boy to another African American woman, Moinette. However, he accepted to sell an African American boy to a white man but they didn't accept selling him to an African American.

All of these white characters, as individuals, with their various social positions practiced hegemonic relationships against the protagonist 'Moinette', we can conclude that the main basis of the whites' hegemony comes from being white whether he/she is the African Americans' owner or not, or he/she is in high social rank or not, or he/she is a wealthy or not, but what is important he is white. Therefore, he/she has the right to practice the hegemony upon African Americans, this is the passport that allowed them to exercise hegemony on African Americans.

What helps white people to practice their hegemony on African Americans is that they are whites, this what the researcher mentioned earlier, despite anything. Not only being white is the origin of the whites' hegemony, but also the white civil institutions as said by Gramsci or what is called The Black Code or The Noir Code which is written by the whites to sustain their hegemony and control on African Americans. We have five situations, in this novel, that shows us how the Noir Code or The Black Code dominated the protagonist 'Moinette' and her son 'Jean-Paul' through its statements which as a result help the white people to impose their hegemony on the African Americans.

In the first situation, the Black Code states that since one has born as a slave, he will stay slave under any circumstances until he will be twenty-one years old. The white hegemony, here, is very obvious, an African American wasn't allowed to be free, at all, under any circumstances if he/she was one day less than twenty-one years old. Therefore, Moinette, here, wasn't allowed to get freedom because she was less than twenty-one years old. Even though, her white master himself wanted her to be free. In the second situation, the Code Noir states that a slave and even a free woman of color are not allowed to walk more than twelve miles, hire a carriage, and wear jewels in public. According to this Code, although Moinette's master allowed her to go and see her son, she couldn't go and see her son who was still a slave in her previous owner plantation 'Msieu Rosière's plantation'. Thus, she had to wear a black veil to be able to go and see her son. The white hegemony, here, is very obvious again, a free woman of color wasn't allowed to go and see her son because he was more than twelve miles away from her. Even though, her white master himself wanted her to go and see her son. In the third situation, the white Le Code Noir states that the penalty for striking a master in his face is death. Thus, Moinette would die without committing any sin just because she tried to protect her master from a white man who was killed by another white man. Even though this man killed her owner and she tried to prevent this crime by hitting him by coffeepot when he was going to shoot her again and she didn't kill him but Etienne, Pélagie's nephew, killed him with his hunting rifle. As well as the Noir Code didn't allow the African Americans to defend themselves in court. Etienne told Moinette that whether she participated in the death of Msieu Vincent and

his aunt or not but she would not be able to prove that and the Le Code Noir states that the African Americans can't testify in court. The white hegemony, here, is very obvious, an African American wasn't allowed to defend himself/herself in court if he/she suspected in killing a white man/woman. Therefore, Moinette, here, would be sentenced to death because she was accused of killing her white master who became her master only for a short time after killing his wife, Pélagie. In the fourth situation, this Code Noir states that since one has born as a slave, he will not be bought by his mother or any other white man in any conditions until he will be ten years old. At the same time, he will not be freed by his mother or any other white man in any conditions until he will be twenty-one years old. The white hegemony, here, is very obvious again, an African American boy wasn't allowed to be bought at all under any circumstances if he was under ten years old. Therefore, Jean-Paul, here, wasn't allowed to be bought because he was less than ten years old and he wasn't allowed to be freed because he was less than twenty-one years old. Even though, her white master himself wanted her to be free. In the fifth situation, the Code Noir states that a slave can't be freed until he becomes twenty-one years old. Although his mother bought him, he will not be free until he will be twenty-one years old. Thus, he needed a protector and a legal guardian because his mother was a free woman of color and not a white woman. He needed to be sold to a white man to protect him by his name. The white hegemony, here, is very obvious again, a free woman of color wasn't allowed to keep her son near her because he was just twelve years old now. Although his mother bought him, she couldn't protect him. Therefore, she had to sell him again to a white man only on paper to protect him.

In *A Million Nightingales*, we have vital hegemony relationships between the many different white people, as individuals, who have various social positions and the protagonist 'Moinette'. Moreover, there are many hegemonic relations between the white's civil institutions and African Americans. These white civil institutions which are represented by the Black Code or Noir Code to support them and to take their authority from it to impose hegemony on her. She suffered a lot from these white hegemony. After this long and harsh hegemonic relationship between the different white people with their various social positions and Moinette. The protagonist 'Moinette' died at last as a result of this prolonged hegemony that practiced by the white characters as well as by white civil institutions. Thus, *A Million Nightingales* discovers how the white characters practiced hegemony on Moinette that led eventually to her death.

Moinette had come across all types of hegemony that a human can face starting from the hegemony of her two owners, their wives, sisters, daughters, and sons to the hegemony of the owner's friend, the husband of the owner's sister, and the son's friends and to the hegemony of The trader and The factor who didn't relate to her not from near nor far. Because of the white hegemony, she was separated from her mother and sold just because whenever her owner sees her, he remembered his

daughter after the death of his daughter who was taken care of by Moinette. And because of this hegemony, she was accused of having a part in killing a white man and woman and sold to her last white owner and at last, also because of the white hegemony, she was led to her end, after her raping by the white trader who conveyed an infection to her from this sexual assault.

Thus, the story of Moinette gives us a social lesson about freedom in white communities and cultures. the exact meaning of freedom in such communities means slavery with all its ramifications. And in particular, Moinette's story shows us the actual meaning of the hegemony that is exercised by the white people upon African American people whether they are slaves or free men/ women of color and its outcomes. The social lesson is:- Freedom must begin first in people's minds, only at that time, we can experience real freedom.

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