

## TONI MORRISON DEEP STUDY ON THE STRUGGLE AND PATHETIC CONDITION OF AFRICAN AMERICANS IN HER NOVELS

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### ABSTRACT

*Toni Morrison works as a social reformer by her keen interest to see the world of blacks free from any impact of past trauma of slavery. People in America are well aware of her class consciousness. Though her personal life has been full of ups and downs, she has achieved her goals to be a successful in bringing a revolutionary change in society as well as in her personal life by achieving literary cannon as a black female author. The black and brown colors are also very attractive but the idea is in vogue are that only the blue and white colors characterizing beauty. The effects of such misleading thoughts on the blacks are apparently visible in the behavior of the parents with their children. They hate their own children and never give them affection which is a necessity for their mental growth. The blacks in the present time have excelled in many fields. Now, those who have been living successful city life feel disconnected from the simple living style. They are now so disparaging for their insulting attitude for simple life style. Toni Morrison delineates their gaps between the successful blacks and the simply living people in the society. Different economic standards are becoming barriers by spreading inequality among the blacks.*

**KEYWORDS:** Toni Morrison, American, Black, Pathetic Condition, Economic Standards.

### Introduction

An American Negro has usually been presented in terms of a savage beast, a clown or a docile "Sambo". The full image of a man as projected by great literary art is sadly lacking in the context of a Black. The forces of good and evil, instinct and intellect, passion and spirituality are not pitted in conflict. With this black lack of conflict, what emerges is an over simplified picture. The images of this stereotype have cast its shadow in literature. When the history of the Black in the United States is taken into account, the concept of the stereotype does not appear surprising. This has been treated as a figure of moral debate and historical controversy and has therefore been considered more as a formula. Since most Black literature is a result of social environment, it may be necessary to dwell upon this problem within a socio-historical framework. Arriving in America in Chains, the Black was systematically and legally robbed of his humanity. Since the inception of the institution of slavery there, he was subjected to the severity of the norms and conditions of his bondage by white men. The social sanctity of the newly emerged United States had three provisions that denied the black man his humanity.

Firstly, it was provided that foreign slave trade was to continue for two decades after the signing of the constitution. Secondly, the constitution stated that fugitive slaves apprehended in free states were to be returned to their masters. And thirdly, in matters of appointment and taxation, the black man was to be counted as three-fifth of a man. Slavery was thus written into the constitution. With the invention of the cotton in 1794, slavery received a fresh impetus. In such a climate it is hardly surprising that there was no conscious creation of works of art. On the other hand, studies devoted to Black in American literature scarcely existed before the twentieth century, and did not flourish before the nineteen-twenties when the rage for all things black gave impetus to the Negro-Renaissance. Since then, such studies kept pace with the Civil Right movements.

In spite of the 280 years of slavery and the inability to devote time towards conscious creation of works of art, literature by blacks dates back to slavery days. We find literature by black's dates back to

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slavery days. We find Phillips Wheatley's poems on various subjects, Religious and moral in 1773 and before Phillips Wheatley there were pious poems of the slave Jupiter Hammon. In the early nineteenth century, another slave, George Moses Horton wrote love lyrics, as did James. Whitfield, one of the first no slave black poets of mid-nineteenth century. They desired to be read and studied as widely as circumstance permitted, and wrote down their thoughts in the forms approved by the times. However, these were works of little literary value. Poor craftsmanship and servile imitation in theme and context punctuated their style. They failed to portray the conditions, feared and aspirations of suffering humanity. The early life of the black man in America was better portrayed by the work songs, ballads, folk rhymes, folk tales and black spirituals. In this we experienced their humour, pathos, aspirations and tragedy. The black's protest against the world, he did not belong to, was reflected in the songs.

However, most of the Blackman's protest against slavery found expression in spirituals like "Mary Don't You Weep" and "Let My People Go", his sense of alienations and homelessness was reflected in the homely chords of "Sometimes I Feel Like a Motherless Child". And the anguish of man driven to death by inhuman competition and an industrial-capitalist society was consumable revealed by "Johan Henry". Finally the hope for a better life in another world beyond this temporal existence found expression in "When the Saints go Marching in". Thus we found in black folk expression an accurate reflection of the socio-historical conditions. The two streams of black experience-conscious literature and folk tradition moved along separate courses until the end of the nineteenth century and beginning of the twentieth century. These come together in Paul Lawrence Dunbar and Charles Chesnut who attempted conscious creations and made use of folk art too.

#### Literature Review

**Ron David (2000)**, Ron David writes in our Books "Toni Morrison Explained, A readers Road Map to the Novels": for having courage to address an aspects of the Black Experience that many of us would rather forget, our hatred of over selves".

**Valerie Smith (2001)**, writes our book gives more details on such conflicts: quit as it is kept, there were no marigolds in the fall of 1941....The secret kept quiet in the fall of 1941 is that the community, having internalized the racism of the dominant group, is itself largely the reason for the dominant group, is itself largely the reason for the failure of one of its flowers, Pecola Breedlove, to thrive. That the failure has its roots in the ground of a particular African American Community".

**Simpson Ritashona (2008)**, Simpson Ritashona comments on the sentence style in the novel. She writes in her book Black Looks of Black Acts: the language of Toni Morrison in the Bluest Eye & Beloved that the non standard dialect and the standard dialect are accessed by Toni Morrison in her novels. The syntax, selection of less polished words, falling expressions, lines without spacing and poem like structure of few lines are used by Toni Morrison to give life to her novels. Her novel's language is speaking the unspoken truths.

**Emmett Till (2010)**, Toni Morrison placed the murder of Emmett Till in the Novel, Son of Solomon to remind the reader of the history of racial violence and to show that racial conflict still exists. In Song of Solomon, Guitar, Milkman's friend, belong to the Seven Days. The Seven Days was a group of seven black men who killed white people to keep the black and white ratio equal, in retaliation for whites killing blacks. In the Emmett Till case he was killed for talking to white woman. Both case showed senseless killing, Ironically, Milkman holds a view opposite of Guitar's and ends in mortal combat with his former friend, a sad reminder of how white killing blacks has evolved today into blacks killing blacks.

#### Objective of the Study

- A study of the victimization of the Blacks by the dominant Whites.
- A study on displaying the sexism present in the society.

#### Research Methodology

This work is based on secondary data like Novels, Magazines', News papers, editorials and etc. Though Toni Morrison has written many novels but for this research work four novels are analyzed:

1. Sula 2. Tar Baby

#### Sula

Sula is a 1973 novel move against Nobel Prize winning author Toni Morrison. Sula depicts the social structure on the structure. On the surface Nel and Sula may appear as two poles apart, dissimilar characteristics with divergent world views though Morrison's nuanced character portrayals and overall narrative construction resists any attempt at setting into static binary opposition, including those that might hold varying expressions of motherhood. At the outset Morrison Porpays the complexity of the

women we confront. They are multi faced being with equally Complex relationship. The first female character introduced belongs to the fourth generation of women in Nel's family. Sula opposes simple answer, exhibiting the imprecision, charm, and terror of life, in both its triumphs and danger. The novel portrays the story of a friendship between two black women: Nel and Sula. They have very affectionate and intense relationship as their friendship grew in their childhood. They fancy spending much of their time with each other. But as they transform from children to teens to adult women, a series of mishaps- the death of a young boy, Sula spending time with the married man, Nel's adherence to societal norms- threatens to run their friendship forever.

Like much of Morrison work, Sula exhibits the lives of black Americans and the ordeals wrought by racism, on the issue of gender discrimination, relating between man and woman, relationship between mothers and daughters. Morrison said that she has dealt in recording African American history and while Sula mostly highlights on Nel and Sula, we also come across the community of which they belong to the customs and rituals they share and the way they deal with pain, fear love, sex and death. Sula portrays the ways the black people struggle, the odds and oddities of black's lives while living in America, a country with a notorious past of oppressing and crushing black people. Black character in the novel face the burden of the history where white American consistently Duped Black's Out of their property and inheritance and their rights by imposing laws, social codes and conduct and even languages itself. It's crucial to get the role of race and social discrepancy in Sula.

#### **Tar Baby**

Tar Baby by Toni Morrison has been raised above the social racism. The novel pictures love affairs between Jadine and Son, two black Americans from distinct worlds. The novel portrays the Quest of self-esteem of Jadine, the protagonist of the novel. Jadine does not raise her voice and protest against white culture and Society infects unquestioningly she accepted it. Tar Baby explores how being a woman imprisons the female characters. The male characters of the novel tend to look at the woman characters as foolish and inferior, simply because they are women. Son humiliates Jadine by saying her that she had performed a number of sexual favors for expensive presents and modeling jobs. The men really do not have any respect or regard for women. In fact they are harsh, blunt and offensive. With Tar Baby, Morrison portrays the struggle of African American women who is in search of her identity and dignity despite the efforts of her lover who would domesticate her like the ladies of his childhood. Morrison is very careful and skilled while portraying the characters age she gives such insight into each. One that absolute judgments are impossible. The novels do not have evil or good characters but human only. Morrison creates the most pressing human conflicts in American society rich versus poor, black versus white, old versus young, male versus female. It deals with the issue of abandonment and how it relates to the character in her stories.

#### **Findings & Results**

Facts and finding are based on the novels read by the researcher. Finding are based on the burning issues presented or highlighted by Toni Morrison in her novels like African-American struggle, slavery, sexism class and gender discrimination, victimization of the blacks by the dominants whites.

#### **Sula**

Sula highlights several double or parallel between the characters of the novel. It is a novel about ambiguity. The novel deals with the complex mysteries of human sentiments and relationship. It concluded that social convention is insufficient as a foundation for living one's life. The novel all uses the reader to apply the opposed terms of "good and evil", "correct and incorrect" to the characters and their actions, and all together shows why it is mandatory the oppose such alluration. The characters in the novel that are almost black, have been trained to think themselves as second class citizen, to hate a lot in life and to hate another for being black. In Sula Morrison studies how a group of Black class people strive so hard for the elevation of their social standard, but the society is constructed in a way where such elevation and improvement is next to impossible- a theme that is relevant to readers of all race, caste and community.

#### **Tar Baby**

The combat or conflict between nature and civilization is clearly viewed through out Tar Baby. Most characters are the embodiment of either nature or culture. Son, Therese, Gideon, the resident of Eloe and the White horsemen represent nature. These characters give value and worth to racial and familial connection and the highlight the relevance of places of origin. To some extent, the blacks have alignment with nature and White characters are associated with Civilization. Jadine strives to make out what it means to be black; she shifts from civilization to nature side. But at the end Jadine while returning to Europe picks up white culture and civilization. Morrison choose black colour in order to highlight nature

and the object of the natural world. In the beginning of the story, Son swims in the black Ocean under the black Sky. The swamp where Jadine nearly gets stuck has at its centre a pit of Black Tar Baby. The success of the novel depends on the depth and the quality of that messages that the author implies. Toni Morrison's uses varied themes in order to carry intense messages, deep meaning and fabulous plots. Not only the individual theme has been applied to the specific novel but also similar themes seen through her many works. Some of the shared themes in her novels are racial tension, lustful desire and sexism-it will be evident Morrison's ardent dedication to creating an overall message for the reader to discover.

Morrison portrays the theme of racism, sexuality, oppression, and sacrifice in all her novels. The inner conflict between blacks, the conflict between whites and blacks, the bloodshed, Morrison has highlighted the violence in each novel in a peculiar way. She exhibits violence in all its forms. Her first novel *The Bluest Eye* begins with Pecola's missing and psychological disorder. Her heart is devoid of joy and happiness but guilt, hopelessness and wasteland all around. Not even gardens fronting the lake showed marigolds that year.... It never occurred to us that the earth itself might be unyielding. What is clear now is that of all that hope, fear, lust, love and grief, nothing remains but Pecola and the unyielding earth. She is always left in trauma and agony is always unnamable. The cause of the violence in oppression is always unfound because of the scapegoat system prevalent in the society. Violence in *Sula* is more terrible and distribution than *The Bluest Eyes*.

Black ladies had no worth, importance in the society and that is very visibly highlighted by Morrison in her novels. The blacks were treated like cattle and wild animals and had no rights and dignity. Black women lost their real self and womanhood. In the white society women were taken as a tool to fulfill their sexual desire their self-dignity and esteem was lost. In Morrison's novel women are highlighted so oppressed and depressed that lead to mental imbalance. They are very much fear-stricken and haunted by the anxiety. In the novels of Toni Morrison the sex components is found within the women protagonist. Morrison has very realistically and effectively depicted the trauma, struggle experienced by African American women in *The Bluest Eye* and *Beloved*. Morrison portrayed the traumatic experiences of blacks in *The Bluest Eye* and *Beloved* using the image of historical myths, images of violence and hatred deeply rooted in the minds of the whites.

#### **Conclusion: Uncovering the Hidden**

Toni Morrison is a well known and black community cultured Afro-American author adequately conscious of her community in America. She has found a lot of lacunas in it. She has collected several noticed issues to point them out to bring awakening among the blacks. She warns the people about unknown and hidden aspects of their still lacking life after their freedom from the whites in America. Toni Morrison has been supporting the black authors like her who are keen to bring a next level of reformation in the society of Afro-Americans and simultaneously propelling the idea of living an unprejudiced life among the mentally slave blacks. It has been a thought issue of challenging the established norms of society irrespective of blacks or whites. Her written pieces are devoid of the heavy details of the slavery period of the South but using the period of slave hood as a backdrop for revealing the wounded psyche of the blacks in the contemporary time, she apparently appeals and urges for recognizing the impact of troubling past on the present psychologically hampered life, as it is very much visible in their day to day life of the present era. Broadly, the aspects of racialism, confusing religious beliefs, double standards of society, show internal disparities among the blacks. They are chiefly focused and deeply explain the cores of a scrawling present life of the blacks.

She opens up a new abominable hidden world of the blacks which is full of unresolved riddles. The blacks are unknowingly affected by these unknown mysteries and grudge of their painful past of slavery. Their psyche runs to get relief by filling the gaps of their powerless state of subjugated past. Now, they want to show themselves as powerful as the whites in American. Toni Morrison shows an extreme strangeness in the life of blacks. Generally, we see a sort of cold war is running between genders and then, at a small level, one to one tussle usually begins at the family level among the blacks.

Unimaginable issues like the tendency of differentiation between the light skin and dark skin blacks, parents propagation of yearning for becoming blue-eye white celebrities among their children, irreligious religious imposters, child molesters, abandoning family, boarding of the whites in the house of blacks, the affluent blacks, use of technological of female children about general biological changes are detailed to reveal the truth of the blacks pathetic stagnate life in the present era. As far as the manner of slavery is concerned, in her latest novels like *Love* and *A Mercy*, Toni Morrison gives a fresh panoramic view of it. She has proved that everyone had experienced slavery, even the European-Americans or other colonizers, earlier or later in the history of this world. She more deconstructs the issue

of slavery by propagating the idea that unlike the physical one it is a psychological concept now these days. It can paralyze anyone irrespective of official freedom in the country. Through her works, after revealing innumerable disparities between blacks, she advises to adopt the strategy of survival, as it has been good even during the time of official slavery. By reading the novels of Toni Morrison it is felt that the blacks have been passing through a next era of mental slavery after experiencing official slavery under the European Americans a time ago.

Toni Morrison works as a social reformer by her keen interest to see the world of blacks free from any impact of past trauma of slavery. People in America are well aware of her class consciousness. Though her personal life has been full of ups and downs, she has achieved her goals to be a successful in bringing a revolutionary change in society as well as in her personal life by achieving literary cannon as a black female author. The black and brown colors are also very attractive but the idea is in vogue are that only the blue and white colors characterizing beauty. The effects of such misleading thoughts on the blacks are apparently visible in the behavior of the parents with their children. They hate their own children and never give them affection which is a necessity for their mental growth. Toni Morrison wants to bring out the racial discrimination into limelight, including social and religious indifferences in the social life of emigrants on the land of America. Except the stereotypical contents of black people by the European-Americans, the internal uncompromising states are explored by Toni Morrison.

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