

## **Chapter - V**

### **CONCLUSION**

Toni Morrison marks a deep insight into the racial problems that are being confronted by the Blacks since their existence. Being African American woman, Morrison boldly presents Afro-American feminist consciousness through her literary endeavor as she strongly expresses her philosophy as a feminist. She is awakened and conscious about women's life and problems and believes that feminist consciousness is the experience in a certain way of specific contradiction in the existing social order. As a result, her novels manifest and highlight Black women who are doubly differentiated in the form of male standard and poverty as well as Euro-American women's standard. In her works, Morrison has explored the experiences and roles of black women in a racist and male-dominated society. The unique cultural inheritance of African Americans is the center of her complex and multi-layered narratives. The present thesis has aimed to study and critically explore the majority of the novels by Toni Morrison in the light of above mentioned facts.

The scholars around the globe have attempted to study and scrutinize Morrison from different points of view such as social realism, male domination and double harassment by the Black as well as White. However, accepting the limitations of the earlier studies, the researcher

has put the endeavor about exhaustive study of the novels of Morrison as he has dealt with the problems pertaining to the complex social man-woman relationship and at the same time the relationship of the individual that has to engage themselves with the Black and White Communities.

The present study earnestly meditates on the specific objectives to study, identify, discuss, analyze and interpret various problems expressed and marked in the novels of Morrison and with the purpose of exploring these aspects in the context of social complexities of her time. It studies the realistic novels more and more as an impartial presentation of real life in the contemporary rather than historical context. It studies primarily the Black and White classes and their problems pertaining to various social issues and institutions. It assesses Toni Morrison's contribution to the novel of ideas and novel of reality and her overall assessment as popular novelist of the early 20th century, as pioneering figure.

It studies Morrison's influence on serious novels from 1970 onwards. Those novelists dealt with romantic situations. It was Morrison who tried to twist novel from imagination to realism. It is prior concern to study her novels from ground reality. It is an accepted fact that African American literature forms a vital branch of literature and it is believed that it differs from post colonial literature in that it is written by

members of minority community to reside within a nation of vast economic power. It is also famous for its strong tradition of incorporating oral poetry into itself. Many examples of oral poetry in African American culture which include spirituals and gospels, music, blues, and rapes are found there and they form a part of their literature. This oral literature pictures African American tradition in a realistic manner. However, apart from several characteristics of African American literature, it is a fact that it does not form the exclusive definition of the genre. Some scholars are included in African American literature writings by African Americans which lack Black characters and situations and are not particularly targeted at Black audiences.

Thus, there is a lack of the exclusive definitions of the genre. To some extent, African American literature has shown resistance to use the Western literary theory for its analysis because scholars from the literature desired to allow the Black tradition to speak for itself, about its nature and various functions rather than to read it or analyze it in terms of literary theories borrowed wholly from the other traditions. The history of African American literature is divided under various heads such as Early African American literature, Slave Narratives, Post-slavery 200 era, Harlem Renaissance and Recent History.

African American literature was the literature of a distinct historical period, specifically, the era of constitutionally approved segregation

known as Jim Crow. African American literature is the body of literature formed in the United States by writers of African descent. It was dominated by autobiographical spiritual narratives. It is attained early high points with slave narratives of the nineteenth century. African American oral culture is rich in poetry, covering spirituals, gospel music, blues, and rap. This oral poetry in addition comes into view in the African American tradition of Christian sermons, which create use of purposeful repetition, cadence, and alliteration. A genre of African American literature that developed in the middle of the 19th century is the slave narrative. Apart from this, this chapter has explored how African American authors put their pen about a black person in the United States America. It explores brief survey of poetry, autobiography, drama, short stories, novels, essays, and films from the era of slavery to the present.

The chapter is a survey of writings by African American authors of the 18th, 19th, and 20th centuries. It presents a range of genres, including fiction, poetry, drama, autobiography, and nonfiction, from the earliest published work by African Americans through to the present day. It also examines the formal connections of this tradition-how authors work and rework certain styles, techniques, genres, and structures. It also casts light on how this tradition explores a diverse body of ideas which nonetheless coalesce around the preoccupations of

identity, freedom, mobility, and security. These issues are very much associated to how the writing and culture of African Americans replicated on and helped to shape American history. This work has analyzed the development of Toni Morrison as a prolific writer. of course I have taken into consideration the biographical profile along with the creative profile. I tried to put the step by step analysis about the life of Morrison. Accordingly, I have taken into consideration her creative writings. Every writer's credibility depends on the literature created by him/her. In this regards, Morrison is quite fortunate. Because most of her novels bagged many awards, nominations and prizes. Sula was nominated for the National Book Award in 1975, and in 1977, Song of Solomon won the National Book Critics Circle Award. It has been compared to Ralph Ellison's Invisible Man (1952).The former was a Book-of-the-Month Club alternate and the latter, a main selection. In 1988, Beloved was awarded the Pulitzer Prize.

Morrison got her name as writer because of her skillful use of language and for the sense of voice. Of course, that comes out not only in her dialogue but also in the movement of her storyline. Her fictional world is also notable for her sense of place, for the comprehensive, rational physical worlds.

Lastly, her fiction is remarkable for its portrayal of the profound psychic reality of women's experience. She walks around the conflict between

society and the individual. She manifests the portrayal of individual who confronts social. She meets some kind of sexual decadence that has developed into a controlling power on the lives of the characters. She desires the readers to join actively in her narrative. Readers are expectant to form the novel with her and to help build meaning. She makes use of magic, folktales and the supernatural in her novels. Morrison is the most sophisticated novelist in the recent times in the history of African-American literature who has accomplished as a writer and has written with her own way of literary representation. It is believed that her themes are after those expected of naturalist fiction the burdens of history; in addition to this her fictions analyzed the social effects of race, gender and class. It is also believed that they were written with the great themes of lyrical modernism which include love, death, betrayal, and the burden of the individual's responsibility for her or his own fate. The writer always caught attention of the critics and scholars of the time because of the themes she handles and the myriad subjects she deals with. She is one of the most critically acclaimed writers of present age. She gets the credit as major architect in creating a literary language for Afro-Americans. She skillfully uses various perspectives, fragmentary narrative that manifests the influence of writers like Virginia Woolf and William Faulkner. Her work marks the influence of African-American

folklore, songs, and women's gossip. She has created a literature that represents black sensibility with racial boundaries across the world.

Thus, it becomes a matter of a great importance to understand Toni Morrison's biography, her making as an artist, the influences and philosophies which shaped her creative world. The thesis is an attempt to trace out the above-mentioned elements. At this moment, I casted a brief light on the works of Toni Morrison. She has written the novels namely, *The Bluest Eye* (1970), *Sula* (1974), *Song of Solomon* (1977), *Tar Baby* (1981), *Beloved* (1987), *Jazz* (1992), *Paradise* (1997), *Love* (2003), *A Mercy* (2008) and *Home* (2012). Subsequently, she has produced Children's literature (with Slade Morrison). These are *The Big Box* (1999) and *The Book of Mean People* (2002). Her short fiction is *Recitatif* (1983). She has written plays also namely, *Dreaming Emmett* (performed 1986), *Desdemona* (first performed 15 May 2011 in Vienna) and libretti, *Margaret Garner* (first performed May 2005). Her nonfiction are: *The Black Book* (1974), *Playing in the black: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination* (1992), *Race-ing Justice, En-gendering Power: Essays on Anita Hill, Clarence Thomas, and the Construction of Social Reality* (editor) (1992), *Birth of a Nationhood: Gaze, Script, and Spectacle in the O.J. Simpson Case* (co-editor) (1997), *Remember: The Journey to School Integration* (April 2004), *What Moves at the Margin: Selected Nonfiction*, edited by Carolyn C. Denard (April 2008) and *Burn*

This Book: Essay Anthology, editor (2009). Morrison is recipient of several Awards: National Book Critics Circle Award for Song of Solomon (1977), American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters Award (1977), Robert F. Kennedy Book Award (1987-88), Helmerich Award (1988), American Book Award for Beloved (1988), Anisfield-Wolf Book Award in Race Relations for Beloved (1988), Pulitzer Prize for Fiction for Beloved (1988), MLA Commonwealth Award in Literature (1989), Nobel Prize for Literature (1993), Commander of the Arts and Letters, Paris (1993), Condorcet Medal, Paris (1994), Pearl Buck Award (1994), Rhegium Julii Prize for Literature (1994), Jefferson Lecture (1996), National Book Foundation's Medal of Distinguished Contribution to American Letters (1996), National Humanities Medal (2000), UUA: Frederic G. Melcher Book Award (named for an editor of Publishers Weekly), scholar Molefi Kete Asante listed Toni Morrison on his list of 100 Greatest African Americans (2002). She received an honorary Doctorate of Letters from Oxford University in 2005. She honored as Doctor of Letters at Rutgers University Graduation Commencement in 2011. She has received an honorary Doctorate of Letters from the University of Geneva in 2011. Apart from this, she has got the Nominations for Grammy Awards 2008 Best Spoken Word Album for Children – ‘Who’s Got Game? The Ant or the Grasshopper? The Lion or the Mouse? Poppy or the Snake?’

Morrison is famous for overarching thematic concern in her works. She primarily dealt with the issues of African-American female identity in the contemporary world. Her works offer complex examinations of problems within the African-American community, power dynamics between men and women, and issues of racism in relations between black and white America. She shows primary interest in dealing with the experiences of African American women. She had the quest for individual identity which was integrally intertwined with their community and their cultural history. Morrison's novels have been almost universally praised by reviewers, and have been the subject of numerous academic books and essays in the fields of gender studies, ethnic studies, postmodern theory, literary theory, and cultural studies.

Many critics praised Morrison's complex treatment of issues of African-American identity in her novels as various influences shaped the author as an artist which is important to study in connection with the aspect under scrutiny. The researcher has tried to cast light on the major novels of Morrison. Accordingly, *The Bluest Eye*, *Jazz*, *Sula*, *Song of Solomon*, *Beloved*, *Paradise*, *Tar Baby*, *Love* novels are taken into consideration. Her novels are exemplified by vigilantly crafted prose, in which common words were positioned in relief so as to create lyrical phrases and to draw out pointed touching reactions from her readers. Her astonishing, mythic characters are determined by their own moral

visions to great effort in order to realize truths which are larger than those held by the individual self. In *The Bluest Eye*, Morrison shows how society compels on its members an inappropriate set of beauty and worth.

This is her first novel, of course, that is about a black girl's longing for the bluest eyes, the symbol for her of what it means to be beautiful. The storyline revolves around Pecola Breedlove, who belongs to poor family. Pecola's mother, Pauline works as a domestic in a beautiful house that is an evidence of the ideal women. She is a black mammy to the wealthy blonde girl-doll who lives in the beautiful house.

*The Bluest Eye* portrays a black girl, Pecola Breedlove, at the moment she starts menstruating. She faces destructive events that take control in her life. Her father's persistent sexual abuse, which results in her consequent pregnancy and her mother's denial upon the detection. In reality, the novel gets its climax at the time Cholly starts raping his daughter; The Breed loves represent the failure of traditional family life: Cholly and his wife, Pauline, fail to love their children in the proper way. For their own relationship is stood on brutality after their children are born. Cholly requires a family replica. He is unfaithful and often drunk. He ends his life in prison after destroying the lives of his wife and offspring Sammy and Pecola. Sammy discards the house and his family out of discomfiture while Pecola carries in her body the indelible 205

mark of her father's abuse. Their lives fall to pieces. Pecola finds herself not capable to eloquent her annoyance in anticipation of she makes a decision that her contentment depends upon her having blue eyes.

The whiteness of the milk she drinks in the Shirley Temple cup as well operates as a symbol of Pecola's longing to turn out to be like the actress. The novel makes a scornful attack on the relationship between western parameters of female beauty and the psychological oppression of black female. The fundamental theme and subject of this novel is the fascination of blacks with an American values of beauty. That looks as if both unavoidable and vicious. The novel is the tragic story of a black girl's pursuit to accomplish white standards. According to the current American standards, blue eyes, blonde hair, and white skin are the indispensable features to moderate the beauty of a woman. It puts the tragic condition of Blacks, particularly women in America where the racial consciousness yet to exist. Even though the country prides yourself on of providing an atmosphere suitable to the growth of free and frank individuals, without any race or gender bias Afro-Americans. The novel tells that racism is poisonous to the self-image Afro Americans. It interprets the susceptibility of poor black girls and manifests how easily they can become victims to the white society. It is related with the sorrowful story of Pecola Breedlove who belongs to a poor family, which is far away from the normal life of a community. The

Breedloves hate themselves. They consider in their own shamefulness which is deciphered into spitefulness for the women of that family. Pecola's mother, Pauline, who works as a domestic servant in a beautiful house. She hates the ugliness of her house, her daughter, her family and herself. She doesn't like her blackness and poverty and imagines herself as undeserving for the society. Sula not only marks with popular stereotypes of black women in western literature but also marks the permanent impression as one of the few black women heroines who consciously perform the role of a pariah. This novel got wide popularity than *The Bluest Eye*. It brought Morrison national recognition. It was nominated for the National Book Award for fiction in 1975. Sula represents a Black community located in the hills above the fictional town of Medallion, Ohio.

Moreover, it monitors the status of black people within the larger society which paradoxically is the basis for the adventure and rebellion. It is notable that it features all its women as a class, rather than beautiful ornaments. The novelist brings out her female characters with serenely, emotionally or financially. Sula also walks around the cruel nature of white society toward African Americans. It is also apparent in the very name of the 'Bottom,' a hillside community. It has its origin in the duplicitous white treatment of an emancipated black slave who was promised fertile 'bottom land' along with his freedom. In a resentfully

sardonic wind, the whites take over the hillside again when they want suburban houses that will catch the breeze. The novel puts forth that the Bottom society includes both good and evil. The people are used to anguish and continuing evil. In *Song of Solomon*, Morrison again explores the making of a self.

The narrative brings out it is a departure for Morrison in that the protagonist is not female but a young man, Milkman Dead. Milkman brought up in a happy, insulated, middle-class African American family. This storyline evinces, Morrison links the themes of memory, the search for personal identity, family and community bonds and conflicts, friendship, and the recovery of family and racial history through oral reminiscences and communal folklore. *Tar Baby* manifests three kinds of relationships: the relationships between blacks and whites; the relationships within families, especially her fifties. The couple's only son, Michael, lives abroad; his arrival for Christmas is expected and denied by various characters. The black family consists of Sidney Childs, who is Valerian's valet and butler, and Sidney's wife, Ondine, who serves as cook and housekeeper. They are childless, but their orphan niece, Jadine, plays the role of their daughter. (Valerian has acted as Jadine's patron, paying for her education at the Sorbonne). Morrison's Pulitzer Prize winning novel *Beloved* mirrors Afro-American feminist consciousness successfully. It is related with the life of a female slave,

Sethe, who kills her own daughter to put off her from slavery. It is the narrative of a black female slave, Sethe, who becomes conscious of her subhuman position on the Sweet Home Plantation which confidentially forces her to enlarge a pursuit for sovereignty. The novel is found on a newspaper clipping about a fugitive slave in Ohio who killed her own infant rather than sees her return to bondage in the South. In the novel, gender oppression is not an observable problem that subsists between African men and women, but is one that exists within the context of an economic relationship between master and slave.

Race is simply an afterward explanation for the oppression of the African people. Undoubtedly, then Morrison's preference of location is relevant in crystallizing the nature of the African oppression, for the economic basis of both race and gender oppression is unobscured in slavery. The novelist's feminist consciousness is known as an original breadth through the depiction of Sethe. She recommends in the novel united class struggle in opposition to capitalism as the merely practical answer likely for the African people in the white-dominated American society. It discovers the most subjugated phase of slavery in the history of African people. Consequently, the author has luminously accomplished something in her effort to make this novel indisputably political and irreversibly striking. It is a striking storyline concerning the endurance of the inheritance of Slavery. It is as well a narrative of the

origins of a culture and of a people whose, livelihood on the periphery of life and death. They have administered to produce that culture and to remain their past alive. Morrison's awkward concern in the carnival of black woman's potency, their values and beliefs, shoots from a longing to correct the incorrect that have been historically leveled against black women. She inquires about to rejoice the legends of black women like Baby Suggs and Sethe, and interlace their dreams into myths that tolerate us to recuperate their history. The novel puts forward, life is hell. But togetherness, shared experience and brotherly love assist the characters to continue to exist. Therefore, the narrative becomes the conscious novel. It creatively embellishes an unforgettable blend of the past and present experiences. It is set in 1873 outside Cincinnati, Ohio. It narrates various extensive flashbacks that center on several facets of the slave era of American history: the horrors of the Middle Passage, the lives of slaves on a plantation, and the impact of the Fugitive Slave Act.

Thus, Morrison succeeds brilliantly in her novel *Jazz* in arriving at the solution of gender solidarity, in terms of fictional art, for the dilemma of African women. As a committed fictional artist, she drives home to us the need for sisterhood in the African community through which communication, not silence, will forge the way toward a healthy, wholesome future for all people of African descent, especially women. And with this hope and attitude, Morrison finishes her ambitions' trilogy

about the historical odyssey of African-Americans, proving herself as one of the most important international novelists of present time. Her novel *Paradise* continues Morrison's long-standing project of memorializing (or remembering) details of African-American history that have been ignored by mainstream accounts of what it is to be American. This time, though, Morrison is also carefully interrogating that project. Not only does *Paradise* seek to fill in gaps in the American grand narrative of history, but it scrutinizes the process of re-creating grand narratives in its depiction of the town of Ruby. In this way, the novel continues the meditation on reading and readership that characterizes *Beloved* and *Jazz*. *Song of Solomon* received both the National Book Critics Circle Award and the Friends of American Writers Award. The novel established Morrison as a major American writer. This was also her debut novel with a male hero. The major issue of the novel is the use of black mythology and the centre light is of black culture. It is the story of Milkman, his father Macon Dead II, mother Ruth Foster Dead, sisters Magdalene called Lena and First Corinthians, and Aunt Pilate Dead, her daughter Reba and granddaughter Hagar. On the other hand, Milkman is linked with his father and his values, and subsequently with his aunt and her values. Macon Dead II is, 'more white than black.' He is meticulously Eurocentric while Pilate is Afrocentric in her outlook and vision. Pilate, Reba, Hagar, Ruth,

Corinthian and Lena walk in quest of fulfillment. Except for Pilate, no other woman is able to recognize and appreciate her place in black American society. On the other hand, Pilate confronts the very social order that declines to admit her. Therefore, she thrives in generating a matriarchal social order. Like Eva, she looks after her family and controls over it like an exact matriarch. It is third novel of the novelist. The novelist forms reminiscent imagery of urban northern life that is compared against rural Southern life for four generations of an African-American family. Profoundly covered with folklore that remains African and Southern culture lively even among the city dwellers. The narrative discloses a distressing and intimate searching of the family of Macon Dead. *Tar Baby*, a modern version of the folk tale. It was published in 1981.

Toni Morrison was featured on the cover of *Newsweek*. It is also interesting to note that never before had this happened to a black American woman writer. This is set in the French West Indies, outside of the predominantly black community and outside of the borders and protections of life in the United States. Noticeably, it was also her first book with white people as central actors. It is a truthfully public novel regarding the situation of society probing the relationships between blacks and whites, men and women and civilization and nature. It is packed with allusion of African-American folklore and mythology. In

chapter 3, I have put his endeavor about the feminism. Of course, his focus is on the novels of Morrison, in particular, her treatment to the feminism. Feminism involves the numerous and frequently normative meanings base the events that were taking place in the world around them and incorporate them into their novels. This is the strong and dominant voice in their literature. Of course, there are many reasons that the treatment of African Americans in America was filled with brutality and hate. However, they have also suffered by the attempts of white slave owners to try and erase not only the history of African Americans, but their heritage as well. The character of Beloved herself is the very essence of the past and present intertwined in a consciousness. Her behavior puts her as a baby. Her supernatural sign is the consequence of unresolved inconsistency in the motherchild bond between Sethe and Beloved.

The character of Beloved is a position of play where the slavery of the past, and the state of freedom in the present collapse. She is murdered by her mother to set aside her from the dreadfulness of slavery. Her death is because of by one side of the binary. When she gets there at in the form of the young woman, she causes the temporal binary to collapse. She makes Sethe keep in mind her mother, and the forgotten African language of her childhood. Sethe at first declines to accept Beloved as her dead baby and accordingly refuses the past for the reason

that of her maternal guilt. But in doing so, she is in this world where she is preoccupied by the past. For the period of her time at , *Beloved* outlines a kind of bubble inside which the past and the present are one, and old harms are called forth, remembered and put to rest. She is an embodiment or a ghost of the past, walking in the present, affecting the exorcism of the horrors of the very past that she embodies. In terms of the feminism of the novel readers can observe the binaries of good/evil in the novel.

The narration of *Jazz* is an impersonal. It enlightens stories not only about its characters, but about itself as a cultural form as well. The narratives personified in the sign of the blues to which the novel's title submits are turned into in the narrator's onomatopoeic descriptions of the characters exchanges with the urban landscape. This analogy appeals to the material conditions of African American men and women who migrated to Northern cities in the early twentieth century, and turns 'unreliability' into a cause for celebration.

At the end of the novel, the narrator, allegorically 'playing' a record on a phonograph. The storyline seeks to explore the feminist concepts and patriarchy in *Paradise*, in search of a reason for the attack. It declares that in *Ruby*, patriarchy and feminist awareness are in contrast that eventually lead to the massacre. Even though the racist matters are exceptional as well.

Other than feminist issues and the associated struggles among two opposed groups of people give sufficient clarification for the massacre. The novel is a multilayered novel, which engages several characters in the historical background of African American black people, who a long time ago determined to put up their own community. They did their best to put off it from any harm. Their thought was crucially embedded on a reversed racism, and hatred of white people. The novel depicts a story of a community in 1990s in Oklahoma, who built and lived in a town called Ruby. The town was near a convent, in which some women lived together; free and playfully.

Again, the story of a quarrel between these two communities; people of Ruby and women in the convent. It commences with a shocking opening. Then moves backward, more than eight years ago, and starts from the beginning of the story; the story of Ruby and its people, as well as the story of the convent and its residents. *Tar Baby* touches the current feminist movements. Particularly, her two characters touch this sensitive issue delicately. With the help of patron Valerian Street, Jadine Childs has assimilated into the white world as an educated fashion model. Son, in contrast, was raised in an all-black community in rural Florida. Much of the novel's dramatic tension originates from the power struggles between these two vastly different characters.

Morrison's interest in feminism is evident in her creation of an active workshop at Princeton University, the Princeton Atelier, which promotes collaborations across the arts, and her active participation with Oprah's Book Club. Her diverse accomplishments have secured her an enduring place in literary history. In the conclusion, one can agree with Simon de Beauve that 'one is not born, but rather becomes woman... it is civilization as a whole that produces this creature, intermediate between male and eunuch, which is described as feminine.' However, in the fictional world of Morrison feminism keeps the tone of humanism. It becomes a strong weapon in the hands of suppressed and marginalized.

She tries to give the equal justice, but naturally her inclination is towards the black women in which she was born and brought up. She has a clear and correct understanding of the working of the masculine and feminine mind. She portrays the frivolous attitude of man who casts away women like worn-out shoes in the presence of new ones. She shows that man is not able to fathom the mysteries of the feminine mind. He wants man not to consider women merely as a means for the release of sexual energy. The present chapter puts man-woman relationship in detail with respect to her novels, *Beloved*, *Jazz*, *Songs of Solomon*, *Sula*, *Tar Baby*, *The Beloved*, *The Bluest Eye* and *Paradise*. It also invites few query that crop up in the minds. In view to this topic are: What is relationship? What approach of relationship stayed alive between man

and woman in African American society? *Beloved* is about women, which marshals the description form of bravery in the African American fictional world with keeping unique focal point on the man-woman relationship. The major thrust of this thesis is to explore and explicate the implication of man-woman relationship. Morrison's novel *Jazz* presents with the issue of romantic love and desire against the backdrop of man-woman relationship. It puts that problem as a battle for both self-identity and recognition. She also succeeds to cast light on feminism.

In *Song of Solomon*, Morrison deals with ancestral myth that directs about man woman relationships. The novel *Tar Baby* itself reinterprets a folktale that almost certainly originated in Ghana however, which turn out to be exclusively American from side to side retellings on Southern plantations: Br'er Fox efforts to trick his arch enemy, Br'er Rabbit, by placing a sticky doll made from tar in its path (the *Tar Baby*). After Brer Rabbit gets stuck to the doll, he tricks Brer Fox into helping him escape. Some critics have argued that Br'er Rabbit represents a black slave who tricks or outwits his white master. The ever-changing authenticity of life unavoidably imitates itself in literatures. All Morrison's novels in use up for reading at this time expose the wide-ranging segment of man-woman relationship; marital, premarital, and extramarital. A close study of Morrison's novels, not a chronological one reveals the state of man-woman relationship as it existed in

America. This was a male-dominated society as regards this relationship. The burden of chastity and seclusion was put on the woman while men enjoyed the freedom of permissiveness. They considered women as creatures for their delectation. This attitude of man towards woman is seen in her fictional world. And the final chapter is Conclusion. It puts systematically and analytically the brief information about the critical endeavor. In sum, Morrison's novels replicate her yearning to illustrate on the people, places, language, values, cultural traditions, and politics that have formed her own life and that of African American people. While putting her creative endeavor, she does not suggest any solutions to concerned problems, or she abridges the multifaceted authenticity of the past or present. She employs the supremacy and magnificence of her mind's eye to deal with them. Consequently, this study has analyzed her fictional world in terms of various factors and examines the impact of race, class and gender on the relationship. Morrison's novels are the testimony of how women confront the challenges and threats of patriarchal institutions. This endeavor uses characterization and plot analysis to explore the different multilayered stories. As findings this study unearths the bonds of human relationships.

Through a selection of Toni Morrison's novels *Beloved*, *The Bluest Eye* and *Sula* I have tried to understand African-American culture and history. This history is of interest as it is based on an understanding

of difference. These novels have helped me enter a very different culture and history, and aided me in my understanding of a largely neglected section of the human community, whose lives and cultures, have been indelibly effected, like ours, by imperialist and colonial processes. Morrison is of the view that a writer's cultural and personal history undoubtedly shapes her work (Furman 105). Her concern is to reflect the racial dimensions of the society through her writings, which provides an elaborate and detailed picture of slavery and racism.

In her critical works, she traces the presence of African-American mores and customs or Africanisms from their early appearance in 18th century personal narratives to its use in contemporary fictional narratives. Her fiction also reflects this critical-historical understanding. For example, in *Beloved* she has used her researches into African-American history to depict the entire picture from the time of slavery till the aftermath, which nevertheless still bears the traces of slavery. The authentic record is fictionalized through the making of individual characters, empowering the stories to record the mental injury clearly. Images, for example, the scars on Sethe's back, or on the other hand *Beloved's* voracious hunger for sugar alludes to the loathsome encounters dispensed on slaves as they were made to work in sugar estates and the horrendous recollections that scarred the lives what's more, personalities of Black individuals. Proceeding onward, in *The*

Bluest Eye Morrison has exhibited the impacts of white culture on black individuals.

In this novel Pecola is an image of absolute disintegration as she faces both between prejudice what's more, intra-bigotry.

Likewise she is denied of her mom's fondness, is assaulted by her dad, and lives a destitute rootless presence. She is persuaded that there is just a single way out of all these issues – that is to have blue eyes. Her aching for blue eyes makes her vibrate that like Soaphead she has blue eyes. In any case, before the end she is left just with an unavoidable feeling of misfortune.

Moreover in Sula there appear to be a continuation of the topics and structures presented in The Bluest Eye, despite the fact that the feeling of abhorrence is depicted in an unexpected way. Sula is not quite the same as the general population of the Bottom. Before she is presented in the novel the perusers know about other characters, for example, Shadrack, Helene, and Eva. This not just gives a foundation of the hero, yet in addition demonstrates the unmistakable distinction between alternate characters and Sula. Indeed Sula's closest companion Nel is totally not quite the same as her. Nel is cheerfully hitched, and speaks to common duty while Sula, who sells out her closest companion by laying down with her spouse, is the individual who denies every single social standard. With these cases from every novel I have attempted to feature

and demonstrate the historical backdrop of subjugation and in addition the historical backdrop of the obstruction against servitude.

This thesis makes a study of the treatment of the subalterns in the work of Toni Morrison, going into the various categories of the subaltern as also the various forms of subalternity Morrison depicts in her novels. This thesis has tried to investigate into the conditions that determined the status and situations of each form and category of subalternity. As it comes out into Morrison's work subalterns can be divided into African American men, African -American women, African-American children, and white women. In the interest of making a detailed study of each category a separate chapter has been devoted to each category. The second chapter has studied the first three novels of Morrison viz. *The Bluest Eye*, *Sula*, and *Song of Solomon* in order to focus on the divergent facets of subalternity. The third chapter has highlighted Morrison's representation of subalternity in her next three novels, viz. *Tar Baby*, *Beloved*, and *Jazz*. The next chapter has investigated *Paradise*, *Love*, and *A Mercy* in an attempt to foreground the subalterns and their representation by the novelist.

In *The Bluest Eye*, *Sula*, and *Song of Solomon*, we have found that the social, economic, political and psychological background of the characters determines the degree to which an individual suffers in society and is made another.' How the process of othering takes place

and to what extent it torments and bewilders the subjugated characters reveals a lot about the forces responsible for that. The subalterns in Morrison's first three novels can broadly be distinguished into those who are turned subalterns on the basis of the sex, age, education, and profession. In *The Bluest Eye*, Morrison challenges America's complacent belief in its benevolent self-image through representations of children who experience race, class, and gender oppressions.

Through Pecola and her two friends who witness her exploitation both psychological and sexual, the novel implicitly emphasizes the connection between the thematics of childhood innocence in American culture and an ideology of national innocence. *Sula* also examines female identity, but with less vulnerable heroines. Whereas Pecola's isolation leads to her doom, *Sula* Peace and Nel Wright live in stable families and form a friendship that supports their growth into womanhood. The unorthodox sexual behaviour of *Sula* is an attempt at 'becoming' and unbinding herself from the shackles of a community that has continually hindered her self-assertion. In *Song of Solomon*, the protagonist becomes intimately connected to a communal and historical knowledge and grows through that relationship, however, remaining a psychologically oppressed man who is turned into another by his historical background. In the third chapter, we find the earlier shades of subalternity where children are in the background and the grown ups are

foregrounded. Like her earlier novels, Morrison's *Tar Baby*, *Be loved* and *Jazz* portray how African - American women, under the white duress, suffer at many levels. *Tar Baby*, for instance, is a journey of a black woman who struggles to come to terms with her aspirations as a modern materialistic black woman. It is the struggle of a modern black woman for self -fulfilment and her attempt to make a niche for herself against a background of white racism. *Jadine* is a black woman who ultimately loses her roots from both the worlds, and becomes a double orphan, a pariah figure. Morrison describes *Jadine* as a person who loses her identity as a black woman, internalizes the white values and forces *Son*, a criminal turned lover and later her husband, to abandon his identity as a black man. *Beloved*, unlike *Jadine*, is an oppressed woman who was killed by her subaltern mother. Even when the ghost of *Beloved* attempts to break the shackles of subalternity and strives to assert itself within the gamut of its family, the familial forces reduce it to a nullity.

*Beloved* is an instance of subaltern consciousness where a female is unable to rise against that consciousness. *Jazz* is a product of slavery, segregation, poverty, and disenfranchisement. It narrates how a culturally oppressed community links its assertion through its atavistic music. It is also the affirmation of individual and group worth: the soul's manifestation of its love for its complement, the rejected flesh. The

novel is also a tribute to the soul's resilience; it is ultimately one process through which it may heal itself.

Through Violet and Dorcas, the novelist has given impetus to the smouldering crisis of their inner and outward life which throws them on the periphery of capitalistic society thus making them others. The fourth chapter has highlighted how various people are subjugated in the American society by forces arising from its own set-up. *Paradise* is a study of both —inter-racial and intra-racial conflict where both, blacks and whites, face oppressive forces and become subalterns.

It is interesting to note how the already oppressed black class erases psychological forces menacing their existence thus becoming a threat for other ethnicity. *Paradise* exposes this oppression of the whites when nine black Americans kill five women who were not blacks. The blacks of Haven in the same novel refuse to accommodate the pure blacks on account of the difference of their colour. In this novel Morrison has presented a community splintered not by white racism but by intra-racial caste based on colour and gender, and a community further diminished by intolerance based on fear of a women-centered enclave. *Love* not only reformulates some of the crucial issues that impinge on African-American interests within American politics, but also departs significantly from the normative triumphalist discourses of the Civil Rights movement. Through *Cosey*, *May and L.*, Morrison has

shown the othering process with its nullifying impact on the characters. *A Mercy* is less a piece of historical fiction than it is a psychological case study of the personality types that violently came together in the New World. Florence and other women in the novel represent subalternity as they suffer in one way or the other either from the mean and selfish men they confront or the society they live in. *A Mercy* is not so much a novel about race, but a meditation on ownership and the ways in which the enslaved internalize their subordination; it is nothing less than the colonization of the self. The subaltern in her novels are not only the African Americans who suffer pangs of being African by origin and American by virtue of living, they are also the whites who are made marginalized for one reason or the other. Moreover, there are categories of the subaltern within African -American community and those who are not blacks.

The journey of the fictional world of Toni Morrison from *The Bluest Eye* to *A Mercy* is circular. She emphasizes the subjugated experiences of the black women in her first novel and returns to them finally. From *Pecola* to *Florence* through *Beloved*, Morrison has highlighted how different characters have been turned into nullities or 'others' in the American set -up where white is usually right. Her focus remains as to how and to what extent the institution of racism and slavery have affected the lives of her major characters who happen to be

black Americans. The study has also revealed that in the fictional world of Morrison the African Americans suffer from a triple oppression in America. African females, she exposes, are the most exploited and oppressed, abused and used human beings on the American continent and their friendship is what saves them and cushions the blows of oppression.

And of that sector, she asserts, the African girl is the most vulnerable. The literary world of Morrison also points out how conscious and interested the novelist has been in the vulnerable sector of the African population in America. Pecola and Claudia/Frieda in *The Bluest Eye*, Nel and Sula in *Sula*, Hagar in *Song of Solomon*, Denver in *Beloved*, Dorcas and Felice in *Jazz*, Billie Delia and Pallas in *Paradise*, Heed and Christine in *Love*, and Florence in *A Mercy*—all exemplify the plight of the African female child. They suffer either because of their family or because of the society where racism is rampant which forces the black Americans to lead a life of subalternity. Her appeal and her power go beyond the stories she tells in her books and even beyond the way she tells them. In a way, she has used her stature as a platform to draw attention to the black conditions in the American continent. She pulls those things from the past that will help to guide us now. She nourishes our minds and our souls, and, some feel, she has helped to redefine black womanhood. So she is more than just a great writer. She is a great black

woman, a living, breathing example of all that makes black women great — strength, determination, accomplishment and the ability to balance a personal life with professional obligations.

Morrison herself belongs to a class that has been designated psychologically a second-rate citizenship in America. She therefore can feel and share the anguish of the people whose life she describes in her work. There is, hence, a ring of authenticity in her fiction related to the representation of the subaltern. At the same time being one of the subalterns in American society, she is not able to detach herself from her subject thereby lacking the artistic objectivity a great writer generally displays. Morrison speaks what is unspeakable for mainstream discourse —the juxtaposition of women and collective history, the dissolution of boundaries between sign and historical event, the unification of myth and cultural codes, the reinscription of meaning itself through a rendering of identification and desire. She writes in the difference, in the space s and the margins, from the vantage of otherness which then becomes the familiar.

Through her novels and the subalternity represented in them, Morrison has come to terms with the dual consciousness confronting African Americans and also a part of the solution which must be embraced by them. The novels make clear the facts that African people in America suffer from a crisis of their African personality, stemming

from America's nation-class oppression. This also carries a political dimension where in capitalism seems to be a big enemy in all its forms and disguises. The solution, she suggests indirectly, lies in a collective, not individual, struggle against this enemy. Further, Morrison crystallizes the strategy —political education through communication — that ushers in the solution —for it is the lack of communication that causes the major disasters in her novels.

Toni Morrison in her novels provides a very detailed description of the different experiences of the African Americans who have been in search for their identity. She deals with multiple oppression that contributes to the identity formation of the African Americans, in general. She explores African American identity by a process of going deeper into the main characters' past.

While comparing her all novels, dealing with them in chronological order – namely *Tar Baby*, *Beloved*, *Jazz* and *other*, the main purpose of my thesis is to demonstrate on the main female as well as male protagonists, how the process of uprooting from their homes has influenced the main characters in their long journeys while searching their identities. Besides this, these journeys whether successful or not, are also described in details. Since the topics such as lost love, trauma, home, memory, past, etc. are recurring in her works, they are touched upon, too.

To start with uprooted and orphaned Jadine Childs in *Tar Baby*, she is a typical example of African American woman, who does not identify herself in terms of her African American origin, but by her beauty which opens the door for her successful career in modelling industry. She has totally succumbed the white culture, which has undoubtedly an enormous influence on her development. Having graduated from Sorbonne, she has an art history degree. This self-confident, self-sufficient and successful young woman meets Son, a typical representative of African American culture, who brings her about to pose questions about her African American identity. At the beginning, Jadine is haunted by her past. She has been living according to the white standards and now she is exposed to Son, who introduces his knowledge of the past to Jadine, who has completely lost this link. What is essential here in Jadine's conflict with herself when she cannot preserve a sense of her identity. Being completely removed from home, her roots, she is not capable of finding her true connections to home, to her past.

Thanks to the character of Son Green, an African American stowaway, who secretly follows Jadine and hides in the mansion where she stays, it is transparent that Jadine's life is going to be dramatically changed. Son was born in Eloie, Florida, which can be perceived as Son being more grounded than Jadine, who is to a certain extent homeless. Isle des Chevaliers, a place of escape for Jadine, where she stays in

between her modelling career, is a kind of home, where she comes to have a rest. As evident, for both of them the island is not a native homeland.

Juxtaposing Jadine and Son, their quest for identity complicates their own relationship. Their journey in search for identity is not possible to solve. Jadine and Son are complete opposites which can prove that their backgrounds are so different that neither of them will admit the claims of the other. Nevertheless, they will not be wholly free and still will be in search of identity.

As far as Sethe, a former slave woman, in *Beloved* is concerned, she is an example of a rebellious mother, who murders one of her four children to avoid physical, emotional and oppressive horrors of a life spent in enslavement. She manages to kill one daughter, who comes back as a ghost that now haunts the house, where Sethe stays with Denver, the only daughter who survives. Sethe's body full of scars and wounds from the past, both physical and psychic, is not a suitable place, where identity can be recognized in a positive way. Sethe's past full of cruelty shapes her life to the extent she is not able to recover her identity and thus it remains wounded.

Whether Sethe has the moral right to carry on the infanticide is the central question of the novel. However, Sethe declares "if I hadn't killed her she would have died and that is something I could not bear happen to

her” (Beloved 236). This act of killing can be understood as Sethe’s salvation from the institution of slavery and Sethe’s love for her children. Sethe goes on when stating that “to kill my children is preferable to having them die” (Beloved 243). This proves that Sethe’s love for her children is much stronger than killing them. Sethe’s deep love for her children can be explained by the fact she is an unloved woman. Sethe never experiences her mother’s love, a relationship with her husband Halle is strong, but his psychological absence is evident. Sethe’s two sons vanish because they are scared of Sethe would try to kill them again. Denver is frightened that Sethe may kill her, too. Throughout the novel it is obvious that Sethe does not know how to love herself. Her identity is lost in all the pain she experienced in the past. The only place, where she is able to some extent define her identity, is the refuge among the four walls of Bluestone Road. Figuratively speaking, the premises of the house lock her and this can be perceived as an attempt to revise the past and free her from the heavy burden of the murder she has committed. This Sethe’s feeling wakes into being the ghost of Beloved. Thanks to the character of Beloved, a powerful symbol of the link between the present and the past, Sethe’s wounds caused by slavery are open again and the slow process of constructing her identity begins. Beloved’s appearance and presence plays a crucial role in formulation Sethe’s identity.

As for Paul D, a former slave and a wanderer, he is not sure what it means to be a man, thus he is also in a search for his own identity. He locks his past and his memories from the past into a tobacco tin, which he carries all the time around his neck. Considering this tin, it symbolizes his repressed experiences and his past. With his arrival to Bluestone Road, and whenever he comes in contact with Sethe, a piece of his past opens. As stated earlier, with coming across Beloved, he first tries to exorcise her and afterwards is unable to resist intimacy with her, they have a sexual intercourse. Paul D shifts in his life and loses control of his past.

In fact, Beloved and Paul D have much in common. Being both unsettled, they hope to find a home and a family. As for Paul D and Sethe, their past makes them understand easier each other's feelings. After Sethe's memories of killing her daughter are brought to the surface, Paul D is threatened and walks away. He starts his healing journey by going back in his memories of Sweet Home, and gradually recovers his manhood that is essential for finding his identity.

As far as Joe and Violet Trace from *Jazz* are taken into consideration, their past lives have a major effect on their present lives and clash of these two opposites is the principal cause of their struggle while searching their identity. With their transition from the South to the

North, past is still creating them. However, they have access to the South only through memory.

Joe, an adopted child, never having a last name, family roots, is a typical example of a man having no sense of self, in other words lacking self-identity. This lack causes Joe's seven changes in his life. With respect to Wild, Joe's biological mother, who abandons him, she yields from the society and she creates her own space of home in the wild nature. Joe's desperate attempt to find her and define his mother's identity is a very significant element in his own search for identity.

Another crucial character who is searching for her identity is Violet, Joe's wife, who is also an abandoned child. She comes to New York City with Joe, leaving behind her memories and traumas of her childhood. Despite Violet's struggle with her past and with pain she experienced, she considers the South as a place, where she had her own identity. Being lonely, silent and obsessed only with herself, Joe discovers love and comprehension he needs in the arms of Dorcas, his young mistress. Joe finds in Dorcas the mother he never knew and longs for the love from her. His obsession with Wild is transferred to Dorcas, who unfortunately later rejects him for a younger man. Joe's never-ending hunt, abandonment and loss which he has suffered climaxes in Dorcas' killing, which can be perceived as Joe's freeing himself. Metaphorically, Sethe's act of killing can be understood with the same

intention of freeing herself, but in her case from slavery. Violet's terrible monstrosity of assaulting the Dorcas' corpse at the funeral splits her into two different characters. However shocking Violet's reaction is, it can be explained as anger to Joe's adultery. As evident from her actions, she goes completely mad. She somehow begins to realize the difference between who she is and who she was before moving to the North. She even does not hide her feelings anymore, therefore, she does not repress the past.

These characters use their traumatic pasts to describe the present. In short, Joe with no much past, has to create the past himself and thus is able to more freely create it. The absence of the mothers is also considered as the determinant while searching the characters' identity.

In sum, Son, Sethe, Paul D, Joe, Violet and Dorcas, they all have to face with the difficulties of being the orphaned or abandoned children. Almost every character is in a desperate search for his/her mother. Parents, in general, form the part of identity. The absence of the mothers can be seen as the absence of their roots.

Finally, this work brings an evidence that the quest for one's identity, which is a long-run process, is the central theme in the analyzed novels. Examining the central characters in details – African American men and women, it is apparent that their traumatic past lives, uprootedness and their repressed memories influence their search for

identity. Jadine Childs and Son Green's quest for identity is probably not successful at the end. Jadine being completely removed from her roots is not able to find her true connections to her past. Son, being a total opposite, is at the end diverted to the wild side of the Isle des Chevaliers, probably still searching his identity. Sethe, Denver and Paul D's quest for identity, fully influenced by their past full of cruelty in slavery, is at the end to a certain extent successful by Beloved's appearance. Joe and Violet are the characters, whose quest for identity is also influenced by their past. If their search for identity is at the end of the novel successful, is not mentioned.

To bring the conclusion to an end, this thesis, focusing on the in-depth analyses of the characters and examination of their past, reveals that in most cases the quest for identity is not always a successful process, eradicating social evils is the only way to regain the easy going simple life.

African American literature finds its origin in these acts of literary defiance and self-definition. According to Christopher Mulvey, African American literature finds its provenance in two distinct genres: the narrative of enslavement and the (white) popular novel, but he states that as a genre it "owes its distinctiveness to the slave narrative (Graham 20)" because here authors were "working through a pattern of realization, resistance, flight, survival and deliverance focusing on actions and

themes that were not commonplaces of the Victorian novel" (Graham 18). While not commonplaces of the Victorian novel, these tropes are recurrent themes within the recuperative narrative discourses found in historical enslavement narratives that persist into modern fictional texts such as *Beloved*. It is no coincidence that these tropes-realization, resistance, flight, survival, deliverance-are also commonplaces found in the recuperative texts of trauma survivors, as part of the therapeutic progression of those psychological discourses. These tropes manifest in actions of self-definition, of agency and of resistance.

The ultimate acknowledgement of the sacrifices of the enslaved is our acceptance of that obligation to remember them and their experiences, and to honor their labor which shaped our world. Those who were lost in Middle Passage, and those who were lost in the New World, have passed out of history into anonymity. Restoring them and their stories to the chain of history requires bringing forward that story and that obligation to the next generation.

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