



*Journal of Advances and
Scholarly Researches in
Allied Education*

*Vol. VI, Issue No. XII,
October-2013, ISSN 2230-
7540*

**RACISM AND SUPPRESSION IN TONI
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"BELOVED"**

AN
INTERNATIONALLY
INDEXED PEER
REVIEWED &
REFEREED JOURNAL

Racism and Suppression in Toni Morrison's, "The Bluest Eye" and "Beloved"

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Abstract – Toni Morrison' famous novels "The Bluest Eye" and "Beloved" are discussed as the presentation of racism, classicism, sexism, exploitation and suppression of black women in America. The relationship between mother and a daughter exhibits the feminine approach and the slavery system in America.

Key Words – African-American Literature, Motherhood, Feminism, Slavery.

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INTRODUCTION

Born on 18 February 1931 Lorain Ohio United States, Toni Morrison Original name Chloe Anthony Wofford may be considered the most formally sophisticated novelist in the history of African – American Literature. A thorough study of the works of Toni Morrison reveals that the main concern of her fiction is the burdens of history and the determining social effects of race gender, or class. Her early Years of life in Lorain compelled her to write on racism and classicism. After receiving a Bachelor of Arts degree in English from Cornell University in 1955, Chloe changed her name to Toni. In the year 1830 it was prohibited to teach the slaves in America. Her educational background and early years of her life inspired Toni Morrison to write on social and political consciousness. She was highly influenced by the theory of Jean Paul Sartre, the French existentialist professes that "Man is nothing but what he makes of himself". In most of her novels, she presents the African –American Socio-historical reality and the victimization of black people in America. In one of her interview she says;

I don't want to bow out with easy answer to complex Questions. It is the complexity of how people behave under white duress that is of interest to me".

Her works brought her many laurels including for Pulitzer prizes, American Book Awards and Noble prize for literature in 1933. As a black woman writer she explores the complexity of black female experience in white America. In an interview with Salman Rushdie She Says "I am not sure what the world negro means which is why I like books. What is a black/ woman/ friend/ mother. What is a black person? It seems to me that there so many that inform blackness. One of the modern Qualities of being an African – American is the flux is the fluidity the

contradiction. A streak not of capitalism, racism, sexism Classicism, Gender oppression, Exploitation, Suppression and economic relationship between master and slave exists in most of her novels. After the publication of her novel "Tar Baby" in 1981, she had been considered the most prominent author of America. Her reputation as the greatest novelist of America rests on the following novel.

1. The Bluest Eye (1970)
2. Sula (1974)
3. Song of Solomon (1977)
4. Tar Baby (1981)
5. Beloved (1987)
6. Jazz (1991)
7. Paradise (1998)
8. Love (2003)
9. A Mercy (2008)

DETAILS AND DISCUSSION

In her first novel "The Bluest Eye" published in 1970, the novelist lays emphasis on racism sexism and class distinction affecting the black girls in white America. The Whole story of the novel revolves around a young African girl named Pecola who suffers due to the society. Eleven Years old Pecola is a poor ugly black girl who becomes the victim of one another in a chain of black people including her own mother and father. Here the novelist wishes to point

out that black women in America suffer because they are black as well as economically poor. The young Boys on the playground also taunt Pecola for her blackness. She asserts "I write for black women. We are not addressing the man as some white female writers do. We are not attacking each other as both black and White men do. Black women writers look at things in an unforgiving loving way. They are writing to repossess, rename, renown". Liz Gant praised Toni Morrison's "The Bluest Eye" for having the courage to address "an aspect of the Black experience that many of us would rather forget, our hatred with of ourselves". According to The Times Literary Supplement, "Morrison's style rivets the reader Her synaesthetic, often rhythmic, even chanting prose recalls both Faulkner and Emily Dickinson." Thus we see that Toni Morrison reveals her heightened consciousness, race gender and class. She finds that sexism was equally oppressive. The elements of Racism and sexism are the products of capitalism- the economics system of slavery. The novel serves as a proof of Toni Morrison's low level of gender and class consciousness in her writings. She also thinks that racism was the main form of oppression of blacks in white America. In the novel "Sula" published in 1974 the novelist tells the intriguing story of Sula, Mae Peace an acutely sensitive and defiant woman. As a young girl she scares the community with her extreme emotions. Morrison's primary emphasis in the novel is on gender, especially individualism of the African woman. The concept of gender and its relation to the race and class is the keynote of this novel. The Times review said about this novel "Morrison explores the mythic power of femininity in a poor and isolated rural black community where women rule as mother. At one place Sula says that the black women are the enemy of the world.

After the publication of "Beloved in 1987" Toni Morrison acclaimed fame in America and nominated for the National Book Award. The novel "Beloved" received the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction in 1988, as well as the Robert F. Kennedy Memorial Book Award, the Melcher Book Award, the Lyndhurst Foundation Awards, and the Elmer Holmes Award. Sethe the main character of the novel lives in Cincinnati with her daughter Denver and her mother-in-law Baby Suggs. In the beginning of the novel Sethe introduced Paul D to Denver. The ghost of Sethe's dead daughter disturbs the life of her. The sexual relationship between Sethe and Paul reminds them both of slavery. Sethe also reminds her infant daughter whom she killed to keep away from slavery. After the death of baby Suggs Denver and Sethe lead a miserable life with the ghost of beloved. Ultimately Paul marries Sethe. Here the novelist explores the physical, emotional and spiritual devastation through the characters who are slaves in freedom. A streak note of symbolism runs through the whole novel. The symbol of Denver's red velvet is an image of hope and future whereas trees serve as the source of healing comfort and life.

CONCLUSION

Thus we see that Toni Morrison's novels reflect the reality of black mother, and the position of daughters, grandmother, father, friend and community. The lives of African women in America have been critically affected by classicism, sexism, racism, slavery and suppression which exhibit a deep understanding of human psychology. Black women have been treated as a separate caste by virtue of their sex. In her most famous work "The Second Sex" Simone de Beauvoir rightly points out that "one is not born but rather becomes a woman".

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