

Reflection of Afro-American's Life in Toni Morrison's Novels

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Abstract:

The themes covered by Toni Morrison in her novels are wide-ranging and reflect the truth of African American life and society. Many of her novels are based on the injustice done to African Americans and encourage society to change. While Toni Morrison uses a variety of themes from her novels, she more frequently includes topics such as race, sex, and lust, which are very prevalent. The main character, who proves her existence and strives to find herself, is a common theme throughout her novels. With the help of her writings, Morrison has tried to expose the terrible conditions in the society, the treatment of these people and the atrocities committed against them. According to Toni Morrison, these are not just ordinary people who are constantly trying to find their existence.

Keywords: Race, lust, oppression, self-emancipation, exploitation, slavery, contempt.

The success of any writer's writing depends on the quality of the message they convey. Toni Morrison has tried to convey a different message from her novels with its deeper meaning. All her eleven novels *The Bluest Eye* (1970) *Sula* (1974), *Song of Solomon* (1977), *Tar Baby* (1981), *Beloved* (1987), *Jazz* (1992), *Paradise* (1997), *Love* (2003), *A Mercy* (2008), *Home* (2012) and *God Help the Child* (2015) stresses on dark realities of life and the injustice done to the people and she has tried to pull the attention of the readers from all her novels.

Also, many of her novels deal with the same subject in different ways. She has tried to awaken the reader with the help of topics like mental stress, sexuality, lust, exploitation, and self-identification. This pertinent work of Toni Morrison is certainly admirable. Each of Morrison's novels is wrapped in a different theme, but three or more of them are racism, sexual exploitation, desire, slavery, oppression, contempt. But the most common of these are racism, sexual exploitation, slavery. She deals with the above mentioned topics in such a way that the readers get a good message from her, which definitely leads them and their society in the right direction. Toni Morrison's writings have a strong place in the literature because the subject matter of her writing is often related to the lives of many or everyone. Going forward, it is clear that in many of

her writings, she has handled the struggle between good and evil very gently, which may be the struggle between good and evil within everyone. Such good and bad struggles affect not just one individual but the entire society.

One of the most common themes in her novels is the racial tensions between African Americans and white society. Most of the racial tensions are presented from the perspective of African American characters. Many of her novels were written in the 40's and 50's when African Americans faced slavery and injustice. Mainly *The Bluest Eye*, *Song of Solomon*, and *Beloved* these three novels are at the forefront. In these novels, the different themes mentioned above are described, while sometimes the same subject is presented in her novels. Many of the main characters in Toni Morrison's novels are seen trying to identify themselves, and some of the characters in the novels are like Sethe from *Beloved*. They kill their children to save them from slavery Practices and therefore slavery destroys not only one's life but one's entire life, one's ancestors, one's customs and traditions too. Due to such practices, a character in such situation reveals his basic nature and adopts the path of evil and himself becomes a victim of it. The subject that is most clearly addressed in all her novels is racism.

The novel *Song of Solomon* depicts the struggle of a boy to find his ancestry. Racism is

represented by the character of Railroad Tommy and Hospital Tommy, While exploring the legacy of the protagonist in the novel Song of Solomon, Milk Man realizes that the boy's grandfather moved away from the family to escape from slavery practices, and that this caused many problems for his entire family. In the same way, in this novel, Toni Morrison has presented the history of the life struggle of ex-slave Sethe and Paul D. All the events in this novel takes place in Sweet Home. While the characters in this novel speak affectionately about Sweet Home, there have been a number of atrocities happened there. The story of Sethe and Paul D is characterized by atrocities, fear and despair. This led to irreversible atrocities in his life. Toni Morrison's other novel, The Bluest Eye, depicts racial hatred not just of white people but of how black society itself is responsible for it. In this, the Breedlove family had to fall prey to racial hatred. The main character in the novel, Pecola's father, Cholly, was influenced by racism from an early age. Which caused him to become harsh and his daughter suffered the consequences. Thus the protagonist Pecola of this novel becomes a victim of the lust of her drunkard father. Her mother doesn't even pay attention to Pecola. Her mother also paid more attention to her white boss's daughter than that of her own daughter. Like Toni Morrison's other novels, this novel traces the persecution of people and the struggle for survival in slavery-ridden America. In American history, white Americans have been told for a long time how these African Americans should be deprived of their property, their rights, their social norms, and their laws. In this novel, blacks are deceived by lying and persecuting by the white society. This novel is wrapped up in conflicting emotions such as love, hate, and good-evil. The next novel Paradise deals with the skin of racial discrimination. The Ruby in this novel is the place, which is generally established to discriminate against the outside world of discrimination. Through this novel, the hopes and aspirations required for the harmony of the black and white society are fulfilled. The novel also reflects racial issues and the oppression of minorities in American history. The novel reveals that not only do white and black communities fight for racism, but blacks also have racism in this community for a long time. So in her

opinion the passion to solve the country's problem is extremely useful for getting racial justice. Through this novel, Toni Morrison portrays the dominance of men and women over black and white, as well as the way in which women struggle for justice. This novel explains how women can be superior to men and the justice that female characters get. Finally, Morrison novel Paradise suggests that bringing justice and love to African Americans is like going to heaven. According to her, only through the combined efforts of these people can a real heaven be established by eradicating the evils of sexuality and racism and achieving freedom of justice and integrity.

The persecution of women by men is illustrated in Toni Morrison's novel A Mercy. This novel depicts violence against women in a male-dominated society. The novel also explores the exploitation of 17th century workers and the restrictions imposed on them. The novel God Help the Child also revolves around racism and sexism. The female characters in the novel Tar Baby are called inferior and stupid because they are only females. According to Harper, "White women needed right to vote in political elections but black women need to vote, not as a form of education, but as a form of education". (Mishra 242)

This novel depicts the conflict between nature and civilization. It shows how a female character proves her superiority over others. The novel Jazz also dealt with various themes like motherhood, race, migration and violence. One common point is mentioned in both novels entitled Beloved and Jazz is that both tries to specify actual historical events, in a different way. The main focus of the novel Jazz is on individual psyches. In this novel Toni Morrison tries to expose the enervating white oppression. According to her, only through the combined efforts of these people can a real heaven be established by eradicating the evils of sexuality and racism and achieving freedom of justice and integrity.

Overall, Toni Morrison uses the characters and events in her novel to describe the lives and struggles of African Americans. She has also tried to make people aware of the extent to which racism has been eradicated and to what extent its roots are sowed in society today. The female characters in

Toni Morrison's many novels show their perseverance through the power of both love and trust, which gives such characters a chance to identify themselves. While searching for themselves, they often harm each other and cannot develop on their own. But it is clear from Toni Morrison's writings that not only the white society is dangerous for the people of this black society but also the black society itself is responsible for its own decline. Therefore, if the black society comes together, they can be freed themselves from the clutches of the white people and their oppression

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