

Black Literature and Its Tenets as Portrayed in Toni Morrison's Novels

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Abstract

This paper studies Toni Morrison's jottings to probe into different dynamics bedded into her vital novels. Since Morrison established her place within the American erudite jotting has been for the utmost part well entered both by her critics and then, her best- dealing and award- winning status for her literature testifies significance as one of the most fat and talented pens of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Still, because of diversity and changeable nature of her jotting, she has also been blamed negatively by numerous. One of them is the complexity of her language use. The objective of the paper has been to explore the tenets of Black Literature that differs from the American literature in general. How the writers of color including Toni Morrison outline a fictional world that shelters the characters like Beloved and Sula who surpass the common understanding about the people of color has been the focus of the article.

Key Words: African literature, Morrison, blackness, oppression and canon

Introduction

As Deirdre J. Raynor and Johnella E. Butle point out, the critical response is informed by "the critics' need to classify Morrison as a black woman pen, African American pen, American pen, woman pen, and critic" (175). For illustration, with each of her jotting, she has retained a capacity to take her critics and compendiums by surprise. In the 1970s, the Women's Rights and Black Rights movements bisected and black women began to write about their experience with a strong sense of autobiography and a womanish history. In this sense, the African American jotting benefits from being examined as "a mongrel artistic form" (Gray, Cherished 103) and, especially, as Morrison's Cherished shows, the protagonists "face the unbelievable results of race abomination in America and crop from their trials with a new sense of tone- power" (Guerin et al. 260). Morrison, therefore, helps the compendiums to comprehend her narrative strategy, through her own critical commentary given in numerous interviews and her own critical books and papers. One of her prominent critical workshops is the 1992 book *Playing in the Dark*. Her workshop contains so numerous rudiments that numerous different readings live. Frequently they are delicate to separate from each other. The feminist readings automatically concentrate on the questions of race, just as readings that place her in the environment of the African American erudite tradition. Both of them dwell on her position as a womanish pen.

Discussion

Critics place Morrison within the African American tradition and examine all her novels in terms of her developing commitment to partake her struggle for a result to the problems facing the African people. As Raynor & Butler point out, "Scholars interested in the study of African Americans during the slave period and indeed African American autobiographical slave narratives will find *Cherished* perceptive" (178). Raynor and Butler's argument suggests that Morrison examines the life of a slave through fabrication. In discrepancy, the pens of autobiographical slave narratives were frequently unfit to give the compendiums a detailed account of the life of slaves because similar narratives were controlled by the white abolitionists.

The major themes of Morrison's jotting are to review the notion of white American canonical textbooks and their idea of African American jotting as being non canonical or borderline. As Justine Tally observes this redefinition of Morrison's jotting as borderline in a preface to *The Cambridge Companion to Toni Morrison*:

These days, still, it's further than unhappy to define Morrison Na borderline," not because she has moved to the center of the canon, but because she has managed to move the center; or maybe it would be more applicable to say that because of her multi-faceted and unflagging work, she has helped change a confined, generally white, and manly- centered erudite world into a multilateral mosaic. (1)

Morrison's jotting, as Tally's passage indicates, is a source of commentary for all kinds of compendiums both the blacks and the whites; and those who read for and those who study the textbook for academic ends. It's intriguing to the sexists due to its focus on women and fatherhood. It's also intriguing to the ants of African American studies due to its subject matter and depiction of the development and value of a community to the black society.

The postmodern culture has lost a sense of its literal knowledge, of cause and effect. This has provoked multitudinous other antagonists to speak out. Kimberly Chabot Davis has explored such a provocation that can explicitly be seen Morrison's jotting as he, in his essay "Postmodern Blackness' Toni Morrison's *Beloved* and *the End of History*," notes:

My design is to examine how Toni Morrison's accredited literal novel *Beloved* (1987) enacts a mongrel vision of history and time that sheds new light on issues addressed by Jameson and Hutcheon in their propositions of the postmodern- motifs similar as the "fictionality" of history, the blurring of once and present, and the questioning of grand literal meta-narratives. (242)

For Davis, the postmodern culture has lost a sense of literal knowledge. In discrepancy, the postmodern fabrication is still explosively invested in history, but more importantly in revising the sense of what history means. Therefore, Morrison's novels have a complex relationship to history. Since the 1970s, she has seen a significant change in the civil rights for black people in America and a wider public recognition of the African American women pens. All her novels are, in a sense, the literal novels, for case, as Barabara Rigney

in her essay "Hagar's Mirror Self and Identity in Morrison's fabrication" writes, "Morrison employs in utmost of her novels, not to distinguish individualities. But (as blackness itself is a mark to emblemize their participation in a lesser reality, whether that's community or race or both. The marks are hieroglyphs, suggestions to a culture and a history further than to individual personality" (56). The result is a new kind of history, melding and interlocking different accounts and fictional responses to slavery. The important study of how Morrison's work re-visions history is Rigney's disquisition of the African American women pens' recovery of of history through their characters.

A number of critics have employed a complex theoretical base. Doreatha Drummond Mbalia provides the most sustained Marxist discussion of Morrison's work in relation to class hypotheticals. According to Mbalia's study of Morris Peach notes, "each of Morrison's novels explores some aspect the oppression anguishing African people" (13). In this sense, Morrison's class grounded and all of them are concerned with the exploited condition of African people in the United States. In her reading of Morrison's *Tar Baby*, Mbalia identifies that a reason for the oppression of African people is the profitable system. In agitating Morrison's workshop with Judith Wilson, in her essay "A Reflection of Morrison's *Tar Baby* Developed Class knowledge", she writes:

Class struggle, the struggle between the ruling class and the subject class, is the thematic emphasis of Toni Morrison's fourth work, *Tar Baby*. Racism, the primary focus of *The Bluest Eye*, is bandied as a equal but consequential cause of the African's oppression. The struggle between the relations, having been explored in *Sula* and resolved in *Song of Solomon*, gets little of the author's attention, for Morrison has sufficiently progressed to understand that the abecedarian cause of the African's oppression is the exploitive profitable system capitalism and its overseas extension, imperialism. (qtd. in 89)

Mbalia has anatomized Morrison's novels from the Marxist approach. It suggests that literature is a product of society, in which it's produced, arising from and dependent on material Mbalia, therefore, the abecedarian cause of African's oppression is the exploitative profitable system of capitalism and imperialism. Morrison's narration illustrates how completely she appreciates the power essential in the language both as a medium and an instrument. In his essay, "Representation, Race, and the Language of the Ineffable in Toni Morrison's Narrative," observes, "Morrison's imperialistic converse has persistently posited (321). Morrison, therefore, acknowledges complex pro capacity as a tool for and against oppression. In the prolusion to her critical work, *Playing in the Dark*, she note on forcefully elicit and apply retired signs artistic ascendance and dismissive 'othering' of Morrison's *Beloved* is one case of similar" language can forcefully elicit and apply retired signs of ethnical superiority, artistic ascendance and dismissive 'othering' of people and language"(x).

In the essay, "Memory Creation, and Writing" by Morrison herself, she affirms the authoritative part of African American language and culture to her writer " I wanted to write literature that was irrevocably, not because its characters, or because I was, but

because it took as its creative task and sought as its credentials those honored and empirical Black art” (389). In fact, it is into this "art" that the African initiated in their hunt for a literal knowledge and identity.

Whether the critics come from the academe or outdoors, one major point of their examination of Morrison's jotting is her use of language, either as a o attest to the author's skill as a pen or to emphasize the complexity of her jotting. Abdellatif Khayati further argues, “Toni Morrison brings together the art of liar and questions of race in a decisively political and ethical relationship centered in a language of felicity and emancipation” (313). Then, there lies a peril of ignoring the stories and trueness Morrison shares about the American culture the larger society and the experience of African Americans. In her narrative design, therefore, it articulates the conception of black American experience around diversity, not unity, of its literal forms.

Numerous of Morrison's workshops are in the liar form, employing the first person narrative to guarantee a sense of authenticity. These forms, springing directly from the slave narratives of history, produce numerous voices of people and challenge postmodernist critical beliefs and practices. For illustration, in *Beloved*, Abdellatif Khayati says:

Morrison introduces oral narrative ways reiteration, a shifting narrative voice, interactive-memory, and an episodic retelling of the once- that contribute to the shaping of the audial/oral and participatory dynamics of ritual black folk culture within the private, introspective form of the novel. (321)

According to Khayati, Morrison illustrates an inextricable link between the oral and spoken language. At the same time, as her use of orality points out, she provides a notice of written language forms insofar as the anthology accepts written forms as verity. The emphasis she places on the oral narrative links her contemporary written narratives to the African and African American history as history has been passed down through oral narratives.

An essential part of the African American oral tradition is the call and response fashion. The call indicates a connection, a participated history and culture and unifying listener and the speaker. It helps to lessen the distancing nature of written converse by allowing the anthology to make some connections with the characters because by close to an oral culture. Numerous black pens bring a dimension of their struggle with the written word. They acclimatize the call and response from the participatory forms of oral culture.

Although numerous critics have attributed difficulty in interpreting her jotting to what they perceive to be the complexity of her language use, Morrison has written the text from the perspective of African Americans so that her language could be decrypted through it. Her narratives invite numerous compendiums to construct a meaning from what they read. In fact, her novels are read as if the narrator is speaking directly to the anthology, eliciting every response. In African American erudite her essay “Tone, Society and Myth in Toni Morrison's Fabrication”, Cynthia A. Davis analyzes Morrison's use of myth and myth; the

significance of naming for the author, her characters and black culture and empirical questions Morrison's novels. In this case, she writes:

Toni Morrison's novels have attracted both popular and critical attention for their inventive mix of literalism and fantasy, unstinting social analysis, and passionate philosophical enterprises. The combination of social observation with broadening and demonstrative commentary gives her inventions the emblematic quality of myth, and in fact the hunt for a myth acceptable to experience is one Morrison's central themes. (27)

Davis's study is an important donation to the debate over the significance of myth in the African American jotting in which it warns of the troubles of abstracting myth from the black environment. Morrison's jottings combine an interest in the myth with a strong mindfulness of the black experience.

Likewise, Lenora Todaro, in her review entitled "Racism Creation Myth" has explored the working of myth in Morrison's *A Mercy*. The novel begins with the voice of Florens, a slave girl, chosen by her mama over her baby family to be traded as pay for her master's debt" Do not be hysterical. My telling cannot hurt you in malignancy of what I've done" (3). Florens's response to this immolation, the "mercy" of the title, raises questions upon the myth of the Garden of Eden. Todaro elaborates her point as she notes:

Morrison's nature – the concession of a slave girl- becomes the foundation for a creation myth the birth of racist America, with Adam and Eve played by the Anglo- Dutch dealer Jacob Vaark and his correspondence- order bridegroom, Rebekka, who arrives by boat, thankful to have escaped the squalor of London. Cast out of this new American Eden as questioners and orphans, they make a " family" of the unwanted Lina, a Native- American menial who" cawed with catcalls" and whose will was devastated by smallpox; anguish, a " mixed" girl who had no way lived on land" and washes up on reinforcement after a shipwreck; Will and Scully, indentured gay retainers; and Florens, the confessor. ([www.https://doi.org/10.18910/34539](https://doi.org/10.18910/34539))

Hence, Todaro has used an analogy between the story of *A Mercy* and the story of Adam and Eve. As similar, features of Morrison's fabrication similar as love turned outside out, history flipped on its head, biblical references, folk wisdom, ghosts and an old- fashioned heart- wrenching tale, bring a great relief in the novel. The myth has long been a contentious subject in African American literature and review. It questions the felicitousness of traditional black myths to ultramodern black experience because myth and myth can transfigure an acceptance of blackness as identity into an acceptance of blackness as limitation. Similarly, Morrison's novels draw on a wide variety of myth from a different range of the African societies.

Since in her essay "Beyond Morrison and Walker Looking Good and Looking Forward in Contemporary Black Women's Stories," E. Shelley Reid has examined the black women fabrication pens' erudite tradition. The extract discusses the contributions of

two great writers of the black literature who dedicated their life for the sake of art and creation which could transmit the information for the change in societal relations in the USA in the contemporary time. The passage reads:

It's delicate to imagine our classes, utmost ultramodern literature conference programs and journals, or indeed the original" mainstream bookstore being without the continuing wise presence of Toni Morrison or Alice Walker. To be sure, Morrison and Walker, and numerous of the black women who entered with them into our erudite cognizance, are still contributing their art and vision to our lives moment. (313)

In the late 1980s, the feminist review of African American literature sought to apply observation to the study of race. Barbara Rigney's essay "Hagar's Mirror Self and Identity in Tistion" complicates common hypotheticals about the tone and race as meaningful orders of erudite study, she argues, "His relational tone, which constitutes such an important pattern in Morrison's inventions, derives at least as much from the strong cling among her womanish characters as it does from ethnical identification. The natural countries of gestation and of fatherhood itself, in Morrison's terms, are endured as a splitting of the tone" (62). Rigney in a sense, challenges the notion of race as a determinant of identity, and a way in which the black women have generally been rendered unnoticeable. For a simply feminist theoretical reading of *Beloved*, Rigney examines Morrison's treatment of motherly space, her radical use of language and her interpretations of history as both fact and tradition. According to Bell, Morrison frames the bedded narrative of the impact of slavery, racism and sexism on numerous black women. Especially, Morrison's *Beloved* speaks in numerous compelling voices of black American women who endured a literal rape and a suffering spirit of blacks in surviving as a people.

The conversations of virility in Morrison's work also feel obliged to the development of feminist critical approaches. Some critics also examine how Morrison resists the centralizing gender in her narratives. An important issue is the emphasis on mannishness in the African American erudite converse. For a simply feminist theoretical reading of Morrison's novels, Barbara Rigney's argument is reflected in the following passage:

Maternal power, always nebulous in Morrison's novels, includes the inversely nebulous power to name, and a primary illustration of this Eva in *Sula*. That Eva murders her son is an extension of the emblematic fact that she has formerly paralyzed and rendered him immature by calling him 'Sweet Plum.' navigator Baby, Morrison implies, might have lived more effectively if Eva hadn't scouted his white skin and infantilized him in the same stroke with her capricious picking. (61- 62)

Raynor and Butler examine how Morrison resists a kind of gender in her narratives. She is frequently concerned with her manly housekeeper involvement in hegemonic virility. Her fabrication most frequently reflects ways that gender, class and race are digressive orders that structure the social practice known as masculinity.

In addition to foregrounding race and racism, Morrison emphasizes the construction of identity and how that identity isn't only racialized but unsexed as well. There are a number of reviews which illustrate different psychoanalytic fabrics on her fabrication. The maturity of approaches has concentrated on her black women characters. Houston A. Baker, in his essay "Knowing Our Place Psychoanalysis and Sula," examines the relationship between Sula and Nel will the phallus and the Law of the Father"(110) that psychoanalytic mod connections echo broader political pressures and difficulties within an African American life.

Conclusion

Morrison's novels are invested with postmodern themes. For illustration, *Sula* structured around the interplay between double resistances similar as bottom/ vale, white/ black, manly/ womanish and cherished examines necessary troubles of both memory and its suppression. *Beloved* has attracted a discussion within the postmodern frame. She has seen as rewriting American history from the black perspective, raising a voice and identity out of a battle with the white American converse. Regarding Morrison's novel *Beloved*, there is no innocence, no aesthetic word play that does not contemporaneously trace and abolish colorful structures of political and artistic meaning. In this respect, *Beloved* and other multilateral novels distinguish themselves from the full down fancy set up in textbooks frequently associated with the postmodern. Postmodernism is a marquee term with which to describe numerous different ways of reading. The very fact is that colorful interpretations can live of the same events.

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