
PSYCHO SOCIAL ANALYSIS OF MASCULINITY IN THE NOVELS OF TONI MORRISON

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The fundamentals of society stipulates that human beings possess qualities unique to them alone, distinct, from those of animals - love, tenderness, self-identity, interest, cognitive power, responsibility which make them lead laudable individual life acceptable by the society in which he lives. Sustained hatred, consuming jealousy, personal revenge, organized greed and aggression etc., are some of the negative human traits that are also available and go hand in hand with positive ones. In Toni Morrison's male characters, these diametrically variant traits are found, in some persons with high rate of positive ones and lesser share of negative qualities and in some others vice versa. All good natured persons, whether male or female are to be present only in utopian literature. Morrison's works are definitely are not at all utopian; for her, all good art has been political and some political situations vary considerably, sometimes congenial and, mostly erratic for Black Americans since seventeenth century in colonial and post colonial American lands.

Her sole aim lies in capturing the something that defines what makes a book 'Black' and not a sermon or an eulogy on Black community. She wants to kindle a quality of hunger and disturbance that never ends in the minds of

the readers to get to understand Black people's conscience in full genuine authority. Her novels bear witness to the experience of Black community and all the Blacks in that community, depicting them in all the facets of their personalities with no gender bar. She wishes to make clear that how the outlaws or pariahs under cruel circumstances and historicity survived, who failed, why and what was acceptable and legal in the Black community. She never frequently mentions of any prominent White ones in her works except those related with inhuman racism only and rarely of good ones like Amy Denver, an indented White runaway who helped fully pregnant Sethe in *The Beloved* to deliver her child safely and wished the child to be named after her as Denver, meaning 'the reliever' symbolically. Histories of people were propagated through folklores and folk songs in the past. Literature has usurped the place of folk songs and orature. The best weapon to bring out the root and ancestral glory of Black Americans assimilated by Toni Morrison's are novels, short stories, opera and in short, any sort of literary oeuvre.

Toni's discussion on male personalities range from crude fellows like Cholly Breedlove in *The Bluest Eye*, innocent and ignorant Paul D in *The Beloved* who lived in southern Reconstruction era after emancipation, somewhat poised ones like Hunters Hunter in *Jazz*, Stamp Paid of *Beloved*, a hybrid product of Great Migration era, Joe Trace, a baffled personality tossed between the rural Southern Culture and urbanized City life in the North, war torn, mentally shattered Shadrack advocating suicide tendency, in the novel *Sula* and the

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timid submissive poor folks of the Bottom land in Medallion city of *Sula* and the most sophisticated pseudo Black Macon Dead II with his son Milkman who nourishes an unquenchable quest for his identity and his roots in *Song of Solomon*, radicals like Guitar Baines in *Song of Solomon* and many more cluster of less pronounced male brethren sprinkled over all the five novels mentioned above.

The variegated portrait of so many masculine characters in a way eclipsing the highly lauded eco feminist females of Toni merit elaborate discussion and appropriation with reason and credentials. Indeed, the readers are able to reach an unshakeable decision of the complementary position, the both genders hold in Morrison's work.

Generally sociologists presume that personality is the individual characteristic reactions to social stimuli and the quality of his adaptation to the social feature of his environment, according to Floyd Allport. Another Sociologist Kempt (1918) has informed, personality as the habitual mode of adjustment which a person affects between its own ego centric drive and the exigencies of the environment in which he is pushed to live in.

The inner aspect of personality of people eventually is the sum total of all the biological innate dispositions, impulses and tendencies, appetites and instincts of the individual and the acquired dispositions and tendencies under the impulsion of varied environment also. Also varying patterns of infant care or loss of infant care, and even unduly harsh infant care show incredible repercussion in an adult life, later amounting to incest rape, irresponsibility towards family care and an undue emotional outburst as in the least provocation of Cholly Breedlove of *The Bluest Eye*.

Lack of insecurity in childhood and lack of parental love and care giving a void in men's life gets reflected pathetically in their later life, Du Bois also asserts. How, do we account for variations in personality of people undergoing all the above said situations within a given Black society? Irresponsible manhood among male Blacks widely present even after emancipation of slavery of which Toni Morrison exposes through her male characters, more or less all the husbands of female characters Pauline of *The Bluest Eye*, Rosa Dear, True Bell, Alice Manfred of *Jazz*, Eva peace of *Sula* and so on, on some pretext or other or for no reason at all. This exotic male incongruence posing them as bad and evil in an otherwise stoic and poised homely Black community need to be interrogated and appropriated with reference to the slavery hazard perpetrated in the antebellum South since 1740.

The African born gullible Blacks got traded into the colonial American alien lands engendering an unprecedented chattel slavery in which infants got separated from parents, put under the discriminating care of the slave master, wife being separated from the father of the child by trading and exchanging, being devoid of any right or ability to care the slave's family other than the work for the slave holders 'people and their property only. Constant fear of self survival instinct pushed male to act erratic, frequently forgetting the care of his wife or children under the cruel White racism.

Ever under the pressure of being displaced from one master to another with shattered hope to nurture his children, in course of time, the Black male soon became incapable of filial love, care and responsibility and also a steadfast love to their better halves too who by their maternal instinct stuck to the universal motherly care and steadiness as Hagar of Old

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Testament showed in bringing up Ishmael, her son, as a single mother. Escapist attitude of Black slave males necessitates single motherhood norm in Black Society. Original state of man (Black) was neither good nor bad, but was merely natural, a noble savage. Only social and harsh political historicity turned them into what they grew in their adulthood, French Philosopher Jean Jacques Rousseau also asserts.

Morrison's Characters, male or female, are all placed in extreme situations. Inborn feminine rejuvenating tendencies of female characters overcome the desperate situation by their constant improvising tactics. But for no reason known, males succumb to the pathetic experience and lose their characteristic inclusiveness of ancestral trait in the alienated land. Morrison forces them to the edge of endurance and pushes them beyond a limit, any human being can bear. Under those conditions, of pushing towards an abyss, even a good man tends to act in remarkable and terrible ways. But, ironically the push towards the nadir of suppression and subservience also kindles the heroic man who dwells inside him.

Only under this heroic impulse, Morrison tries to navigate, how such people survive, who went under, who didn't, what the civilization was, and why such psychosomatic reverberation among the repressed ones. The reason why Morrison wishes to probe her Black Characters in her novels by allotting them unheard of cruel experiences, is just to show explicitly to the readers how the Black Americans are a stable people making enormous contribution in whatever way to the society remarkably just by scratching the surface of their potential ancestral heritage as a race, to reach out to the astonishing treasure under it, in the form of oral history, myth rites and rituals.

However her characters are as crazy and exotic, evil or bad, whatever it may be, Black male and female are two sides of the same coin of Black heritage, a wonderful legacy of Africans. Females of Toni shine out as the pillars of familial concepts and feminine interests engraved deeply in them, whereas the exotic, but exquisite masculine population of Morrisonian empire stand out as epitomes of being 'Black' under any environment, none lesser, nor higher than their counter parts in her novels.

There are so many less significant male Blacks dispersed in many of Morrison's novels. Sixo, Halle of antebellum South slavery era, Felice's father Frank of post migration era, Soaphead Church in *The Bluest Eye*, drunk addict Plum being burnt by his mother Eva peace in *Sula*, Mavlonne's unscrupulous nephew in *Jazz*, Arch Bishop of the South in *Song of Solomon*, the stunted Dewys of *Sula*, all add more flavor to the literary achievement of Toni Morrison in excavating the potential of Black Manhood in an unbeaten track, on par with her feminine characterization.

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