

Abjection of Coloured Women and their Tragic Journey of Trifold Oppression in Toni Morrison's *Beloved* and *The Bluest Eye*

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Abstract

“...to get to a place where you could love anything you choose – not to need permission for desire – well now, that was freedom.” (Morrison, *Beloved*)

The world is gifted with various distinguished creatures irrespective of colour, creed, energy, work and so on. "Black" as a race is socially constructed by human being and this stereotype crosses the line when the so called white people imposed tortures quoting the skin colour and treating them as untouchables. The word "black" representing people itself is a falsified racist classification based on their skin colour for their dark complexion. Based on the trifold oppression they face, her writings states how people are denied from equality and subjugated as slaves in their own place. Morrison has won many prizes and awards and she is also a renowned speaker at major literary gatherings. She has a great concern on coloured people in general and so she reflects the trifold oppression and effortlessly she bring out the richness of black culture and it's ethnicity by reconstructing black images through her writing.

Toni Morrison writes the novel having coloured people as the central characters especially women. Only with Morrison, there was a turning point in the history of Black women's literature. This paper attempts to investigate the brutal state of coloured women who have experienced trauma in various forms. This study also broods over the trifold oppression in the form of race, gender and class which leads them to slavery throughout their lifetime.

Keywords: coloured women, race, class, gender, trifold oppression, slavery etc.

In the world of hierarchical structure, people are positioned by gender, race, culture, caste, creed, religion and what not. For some people, it becomes complicated when they are made to be separated from the society with trifold oppression such as class, race and gender. Being a black woman, Morrison narrates the first-hand experience of being a victim of racism through her writing. The endurance of sufferings based on the trifold oppression that has been imparted on them is breath-taking for the readers around the world.

At the eyes of the white race people, black people, especially black women are always seen as slaves. It is the very racism that compels the black people to see or make them feel unattractive and inferior to the so called white race. This is considered to be the falsified representation of the world toward the coloured people. Toni Morrison's responsibility towards her subjugated community is mirrored in both of her works, *Beloved* and *The Bluest Eye*. Be it Pecola or Sethe, all the women characters in the

novel have to face the struggle in terms of trifold oppression that the society imparts.

Toni Morrison as a writer has made a significant contribution to the American literature and is still being a beacon of writing about the coloured people. Morrison, being born and raised in Ohio in the African American community, worked as an editor at Random House and there she played an important role in promoting the works of African American authors after which she carefully crafted her masterpieces, *Beloved* and *The Bluest Eye* of which both of them are influential works of her exploring the themes of race, identity and black women condition.

In the *Bluest Eye*, Morrison's first novel, she portrays the reality of black women and how they suffer from white ones in the society in search for their own selves. Because of the colour tone they are excluded from the universe of love and care and their trapped in terms of gender and oppressed physically and mentally. Their silenced, isolated and desperate and carries unfulfilled desires in their minds. Morrison explores the problems of establishing the individual identity and self-worth in the society. *The Bluest Eye* reflects the life of a young girl named Pecola who finds difficult to understand and adjust with the norms of the society that has been late. Pecola prays for the blue eyes and she thinks that it is the ultimate solution of her trifold oppression. To match with the standards of physical duty set by the society she also seeks the power of a spiritual healer and she believes that she has been given the blue eyes.

Pecola being lonely in her bed prays to God to make her invisible because she thought that she was ugly and due to her disturbed condition she was unable to enjoy her childhood. She represents all other coloured women who have been facing the same condition in her prayer; "Please, God, she whispered into the palm of her hand. Please make me disappear" (*The Bluest Eye*, 45). Pecola worked as a maid in the house of Geraldine and she was treated as a slave by her junior. Once her junior light-skinned child throws the cat of Geraldine hardly and it dies. When Geraldine comes back home the junior accused the cat was killed by Pecola hence, Geraldine yelled at Pecola as, "You nasty little black bitch. Get out of my house" (*The Bluest Eye*, 92) and kicked her out from the house. Being sad and embarrassed, Pecola walks out of the house hearing those abusive words.

Morrison interweaves the threefold oppression of gender, race and class and its brutal consequences in her novel *Beloved*. The novel *Beloved* is one of the most celebrated books which portray the story of a woman Sethe who happen to kill her own baby girl in order to save her from the shackles of racism. This seems to be foolish in the eyes of the world but being a black woman, Sethe has to suffer in terms of race, gender and class and throughout her life she was caught by the clutches of the slavery. This story reflects a black mother's grief and probes deeper into the psychological effect of missing mother-infant bond. Morrison uses the apparition the supernatural element which keeps on haunting her seeking revenge on its killer. Morrison through her writing brings to the life of the deal infant as a beloved with supernatural voice.

Morrison makes use of the supernatural voice to represent the people who died at the hands of slavery. Sethe desperately wants the beloved to understand the fact that she tried to kill her baby so that she would be protected from the captivity forever. Black women have to face the oppressions like slavery and abuses physically as well as mentally that causes solation in their childhood. At a very young age, they are not offered proper love and affection. For instance, Sethe was abandoned by her mother and when she was thirteen years old, she was sold as a slave. She has a feeling that her mother did not really care her and comments, "She never fixed my hair nor nothing, She did not even sleep in the same cabin most nights" (*Beloved*, 60-61).

Sethe has to suffer badly because of slavery and was rapped brutally many a times and treated like a worm by her school teacher and her nephew who were white men. When she tried to take a stand by informing this to Mrs. Garner, the owner of the farm, Sethe was whipped so badly at her back. Sethe being the victim of slavery and molestation, she decided to kill her own daughter in order to spare her from the hands of white people. Fuston White in his *African American Review* stated this brutal consequence as, “It was not madness but the reality of slavery, that drove Sethe to kill her child, fully aware of the act and its brutality, as well as it’s compassion”.

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