



Chains of Slavery in Selected novel of Toni Morrison

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Abstract:

Toni Morrison is an American author, editor, professor who got Pulitzer Prize for her fiction *Beloved* in 1998. She is the first black woman to receive Nobel Prize in literature in 1993. Toni Morrison's real name is Chole Anthony Wofford. She grew up in an American family that possessed an intensive love and appreciation for black culture. She has written some of the most significant and demanding fiction of the modern age. Her dazzling depictions of African-American experience are studied in high schools and colleges, debated in the media, and analyzed by scholars at an astounding rate. Morrison's novel characterized by visionary force and versatile approach gives life to an essential aspect. She is pioneer in Black feminism. In her works we see black women appreciate their race and their culture and do not want to be the part of lavish white society but at the same time it depicts the sufferings, oppressions faced by them due to slavery.

The present paper attempts to show the chains of slavery in African American Society. It also shows the oppressions faced by them due to slavery and Racism.

Keywords: Feminism, Black, Slavery, Suffering

Introduction:

The novel *Beloved* is very realistic picture of slavery system. In the novel Toni Morrison does not only describe slavery on personal account but all on all slaves of Sweet Home. The slaves of sweet home have to live a very miserable lives. That's why it become impossible to think about family. Slavery is very bad for men, but it is more horrible for women, it inflicted harm upon families, where men and women had suffered. The concept of family, in the tradition- al sense, was not even perceived before 1865 among black communities. "Slavery not only inhibited family formation but made stable, secure family life difficult if not impossible" (Williams, 2017, p. 1). In the consciousness of the many African-American women, under slavery and after, there implanted a picture of a horrible part, reminding them of degrading submission. Sexual abuse was one among the cruelest hardships endured by enslaved African-Americans, practices by their slaveholders. Enslaved women were forced to

submit to their masters' sexual advances, perhaps bearing children from whom they might be separated forever as a result. In fact, these experiences obliterate any opportunity for a Black woman to possess a transparent memory and a viable past. Toni Morrison, in her *Beloved*, tackles this point in particular. It is a completely unique of "Futile forgetting and persistent remembrance. Operating independently of the conscious will, memory is shown to be an active, constitutive force that has the power to construct and circumscribe identity, both individual and collective..." (Lawrence, 2007, p. 45).

Beloved portrays the impact of slavery experiences on the memory of society and that of the individual, who is denied in the process any sense of workable and meaningful past. The individual, in such a battle, is caught at the center of a war imposed by a past that refuses to die. To build relationships in such a bleak, tantalizing, and thwarting existence would seem futile. Toni Morrison succeeds in embodying these concepts in the character of Sethe. The narrative voice of *Beloved* is mostly here as she relives and 'memories' the distress of her slavery life. Eighteen years have passed since Sethe escaped from Slavery. After her escape to Cincinnati with her four children, Sethe was eventually chased by her old master. Rather than having children return slavery, she attempted to kill all of them, succeeding only in killing her baby girl. She lived with her remaining children and her mother-in-law. The ghost of the dead baby began to haunt their house, causing to perpetrate Sethe's suffering. She was still haunted by the pain of the past. A girl named *Beloved* came to visit the family, and it gradually became clear that she was the ghost of the dead baby. *Beloved* lives with Sethe, proving to be powerful and malicious. On discovering *Beloved*'s identity, Sethe believed that she had been given a second chance. Sethe tried to make amends for the past, but the girl's needs were devouring. The ghost did not forgive Sethe for the actions. A group of women came to force the ghost to leave, but Sethe is almost destroyed.

Cherished portrays the impact of slavery gestures on the memory of society and that of the existent, who's denied in the process any sense of workable and meaningful history. The individual, in such a battle, is caught at the center of a war assessed by a history that refuses to die. To make relationships in such a bleak, tantalizing, and baffling actuality would feel futile. Toni Morrison succeeds in embodying these generalities in the character of Sethe. The narrative voice of *Beloved* is substantially then as she relives and recollections' the torture of her slavery life. Eighteen times have passed since Sethe escaped from Slavery. After her escape to Cincinnati with her four children, Sethe was ultimately chased by her old master. Rather than having children return slavery, she tried to kill all of them, succeeding only in killing her baby girl. She lived with her remaining children and her mama-in-law. The ghost of the dead baby began to hang their house, causing to perpetrate Sethe's suffering. She was still visited by the pain of the history. A girl named *Beloved* came to visit the family, and it gradually came clear that she was the ghost of the dead baby. *Cherished* lives with Sethe, proving to be important and vicious. On discovering *Beloved*'s identity, Sethe believed that she had been given an alternate chance. Sethe tried to make amends for the history, but the girl's requirements were devouring. The ghost didn't forgive Sethe for the conduct. A group of women came to force the ghost to leave, but Sethe is nearly destroyed. 'Sixty years of losing children to the people who chewed up her life... five years of freedom given to her by her last child, who bought her future with his...to lose him too; to acquire a daughter... that daughter slay the children (or try to); to belong to a community of... free Negroes. and then have that community step back and hold itself at a distance— well, it could wear out even a baby Suggs,

holy'.(Morrison, *Beloved*, 1997, p. 177).

There are many characters in the novel to show the slavery but Sethe is the most important character in whose personality, the florilegium perceives the painful loss of a true maternal love. The weight of the history has lowered the possibility of a meaningful present and a promising future, Paul D tells Sethe that together they have “ move history than anybody. We need some kind of henceforth” (Morrison, *Beloved*, 1997,p. 273). Seethe also understands that “ her brain wan not interested in the future. Loaded with the history and empty for further, it left her no room to imagine, let alone plan for, the coming day.” (Morrison, *Be- loved*, 1997,p. 70). An necessary force in Sethe’s life, the history has applied a tremendous impact upon her present to the extent that has can’t visualize any sense of the future. Sethe’s traumatic memory thus controls her whole actuality. She tells her son, Denever, that “ nothing ever dies, and that the cinema and images of goods remain” (Morrison, *Beloved*, 1997,p. 36). A meaningful present, in the case of Sethe, is to be a woman living in a community and main-taining healthy connections with others, and to be a good ma in particular. The haunting of the cooperative history and the authoritarianism of the remembrances turn Sethe into a crippled character, socially and spiritually. It becomes apparent that “ In portraying the capacity of the history to hang individual and community life in the present, Favored brings into daylight” the ghosts that one harbored by memory and that hold their‘ hosts’in thrall, tyrannically dictating study, emotion, and action. (Lawrence, 2007,p. 45).

Toni Morrison in *Beloved*, reveals how these ghosts, which are‘ harbored by memory’, devour the memory of the community and the existent. This makes Sethe oscillate between remembering and forgetting, preferring to forget to‘ forget the history. Cherished, Sethe’s baby ghosts who returns to live with her ma and her family, Denever, functions as a scapegoat for the villainies of the history, and as a vehicle to free the community from these villainies. Still, *Beloved’s* return and bare actuality deepens Sethe’s sense of guilt, her shattered memory, and her loss of maternity. Although *Beloved’s* presence in the novel is a negative one, she helps in releasing Sethe’s guilt; this point helps Sethe who needs discipline in order to gain redemption. In utmost corridor of the novel, Sethe faces a multifaceted battle whose cerebral and emotional impacts have left her benefit, with enduring heartbreak. Sethe, unconsciously, accepts the discipline palmed by *Beloved*; Morrison finds that this becomes aptly necessary in a life of suffering and agony.

Morrison, in this way, tries to help Sethe repulse the history through this process of demanding discipline, in order to gain redemption and have a sustainable life. Sethe has to defy the villainies and darkness of the cooperative and individual history in order to free herself from their tantalizing impacts. Thus, Morrison uses to extends the power of exposure to her characters who uncover the retired declination they suffer; when they are ready to put their remembrances into words, Morrison states that “ the cooperative sharing of that information heals

Slave narratives are important not only for the fact they en- rich and diversify African American literature, but also be- cause they reveal the complexities of the dialogue between Whites and Blacks. The Africa-American experiencestarted when colonists bought twenty black people from “a Dutch ManofWarre”Trotter,2001,p.58),inVirginia,1619.White prejudice started to emerge as the introduction no facial laws became viable. In 1664, officials of Maryland ordered:“that allNegroesorotherSlaves...shallserveDuranteVitaandall children born of

any Negro or other slaves shall be slaves as their fathers were for the term of their lives” (Holt & Brown, 2000, p. 89). The state of Virginia, given the fact that they had brought people who had every reason to be defiant, endorsed in the late 1600s and early 1700s laws castigating the Blacks to be punished more severely than others for “being a brutish sort of people and reckoned as goods and chattels” (Morgan, 2000, p. 106). With these inhuman laws Virginians did not spare any chance to oppress the black slaves by denying them even basic rights and inflicting upon them severe punishments.

The novel *Beloved* is the life story of a slave. Sather is the main character of this story but the role of another character can not be ignored. Halle was the husband of Sather who was the other slave in the sweet home. The man could not love each other. There is an example of Sixo who is one of the miserable slaves of Sweet Home. One day he fell in love with a woman and took a decision to live with her but he is stooped by his master and tortured. He is burned alive and when they do not become successful they were shot dead. Paul D and Paul A are another example of slavery at Sweet Home. Once Paul D is tortured and compelled so much that he tried to kill his master. He is sold for prison from where he becomes successful to run away from there but he could not make his own family due to slavery. . I was big; Paul D, and deep and wide and once I limited out my arms all my life could get in between. I used to be that wide. I appear as if I loved more after I came. . or even I couldn't love em proper in Kentucky because they wasn't mine to like. But once I came, once I jumped down off that wagon—there wasn't nobody in the world I couldn't love if I wanted to. (Morrison, *Beloved*, 1997, p. 162). The story of the novel centers around the payoff of a child by her mother who has to kill her due to the fear of slavery because she knows that she can't live with the family. The slaves of Sweet Home live worse than creatures. The women have been ravished by their masters before their mistresses. The women were like machines only to produce the children. They can't suppose about family. There are numerous exemplifications of slavery in the novel. The mothers don't know the name of their children's father. Sather is the main character of the novel. Halle, Paul D, Paul A Sixo and Stampad are other characters who show the suffering of white people. The slave possessors and slave planters use women slaves for the purpose of coitus. The idea that Blacks were immoral, dissipated, and com-bendy enthralled the minds of the first English men who went to Africa to buy slaves. They make new black practice, according to ethnical traditions and tropical climate, as lecherousness. This idea was verified as the black women, working on American granges, frequently worked bent over. Therefore, the body of a slave woman didn't summon any respect, and was thus the target of the master who sexually abused his black slave girls and women. As this intelligence came commonly and applicable to numerous areas of the new mainland, figures of survivors were less, the thousands of slaves were vended, transported, and indeed stripped of their African names. This dehumanizing process was maintained by white colonists in pastoral and civic areas to insure the substance and satisfaction of the white pioneers.

When importing slaves became unlawful in 1808, resources had formerly been in peril of drying up. Still, the trafficking of slaves continued, and slaveholders and significant people were serving from its durability. But with these conditions on importing slaves, coupled with the growing demand for the black labor, there came the need for womanish slaves, who were valued for their reproductive eventuality. Therefore, the slave proprietor wished “to turn every youthful black woman into a posterity mare”. (White, 1999, p. 72). This tendency for reduplication turned slaves into goods valued only as wares. In the process, important pressure was wielded on mothers and

children in slavery, some preferred to stay with an unexpressed concurrence for sexual submission. Consequently, in the slave community, women came the focus of domestic connections, and in such a community there came the “supremacy of the mama-child bond over all other connections”. (White, 1999, p. 275). Womanish slaves were impelled, psychologically and physically, to experience the severe internal and physical pain of slavery. White masters used all cerebral and physical means to force slaves into obedience, and in the case of black ladies, this had the added dimension of sexual submission. Therefore, as one may see, over the times of slavery in America, Black people were reckoned as creatures and goods, exploited, abused, and denied introductory rights. Till Abolitionists boosted their crusade in 1865 to relieve the country of slavery, when freed Blacks saw themselves as American.

Toni Morrison, one of the most significant voices of her race and age, observes that “We were infrequently invited to share in the converse, indeed when we were its content.” (Morrison, *Beloved*, 1987, p. 111). As people who didn't write their history, African Americans have always felt the need for a sense of knowing their history in order to find a feasible association with the present and unborn. Morrison understands her charge to be recovering and reconstructing the gestures of these people

“Because if we don't know what our history is ... if we Third-World women in America don't know it, also, it isn't known by anybody at all. And notoriety has to tell notoriety commodity.” (Morrison, *Beloved*, 1987, p. 59).

the individual — and the collaborative”. (Morrison, *Beloved*, 1997, p. 248). Morrison has handed the anthology with a sub-textbook with the unprofessed intention to unravel the unspeakable effects Sethe is trying, and with the deliberate ideal to move the anthology engage in the fictional and realistic world of the narrative. Thus, she moves between the history and the present, memory and fact, memory and memory. etc. Morrison's mode of jotting is characterized by being tricky and creatively skilful. “She wasn't allowing of the atrocity the men committed on her, or the reason for her spooked reverse, but by this denial, the anthology has been made apprehensive of the horrible sexual act that she has been physically abused. Also. Her boy lapping in the billabong near her bases, and suddenly there was Sweet Home rolling out before her eyes. it made her wonder if hell was a suitable place too. the most innocent image has connotations that bring back the horror of what happened at the graphic Sweet Home.” (Morrison, *Beloved*, 1997, pp. 6-107).

In order to duck herself from these traumatic recollections and studies, Sethe has not only to forget them, but also to manage with her realistic life and individual traumas, Sethe's trip from slavery to freedom starts with her mindfulness of the necessity to relieve her children in the first place from slavery life. As Sethe is reunited with her other three children in freedom, she radiates with her new-plant freedom

To highlight the suffering of black people becomes the main motive for African American writers because in reality black people have to suffer in the hands of white people. The African-American experience started when colonists bought twenty black people from “a Dutch Man of Warre” Trotter, 2001, p. 58), in Virginia, 1619. White prejudice began to emerge because the introduction of racial laws became viable. In 1664, officials of Maryland ordered: “that all

Negroes or other Slaves... shall serve Durante Vita and every one children born of any Negro or other slaves shall be slaves as their fathers were for the term of their lives". (Holt & Brown, 2000, p. 89). The state of Virginia, given the very fact that that they had brought people that had every reason to be defiant, authorized within the late 1600s and early 1700s laws castigating the Blacks to be punished more severely than others for "being a brutish kind of people and reckoned as goods and chattels" (Morgan, 2000, p. 106). With these inhuman laws Virginians didn't spare any chance to oppress the black slaves by denying them even basic rights and inflicting upon them severe punishments.

CONCLUSION

The novel *Beloved* shows the slavery of three generations: first the mother Sethe as Baby Suggs, second Sethe, and third Denver. Sethe remembers that her mother saw her. Sethe explains that her mother had to work in the field from dawn to dusk and had no time to see her children. She was nursed by a woman called Nan who told Sethe that she was the only child that her mother claimed as her own. Sethe, a slave of the second generation. The mother of Sethe told her that she had been raped many times on the voyage to America. According to Sethe's mother, when she was on the boat travelling from Africa to America and she had many unwanted children whom she threw away and did not name. Sethe feared a lot to think about her mother but she had to face the same situation. The life of Sethe's mother was very miserable. The women slaves did not see the face of their children. Halle's mother has given birth to eight children by six different fathers but she did not see her four daughters. She worked on Sweet Home but her son Halle brought freedom for her because he gave his life as her cost. The wives were raped before their husbands in Sweet Home. One day Sethe is raped by the two nephews of the school teacher before Halle but Halle could not protest because he was a slave. Not only Halle but other slaves of Sweet Home see the vision of her rape. They raped her in a brutally manner. In Sweet Home there were many people who wanted to marry Sethe but she chose Halle among them because she found that he loved her mother very much so he would love her very much but due to slavery it did not happen.

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