

Beloved as a Saga of Black's Courage and Suffrage

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ABSTRACT

The famous Afro- American novelist Toni Morrison is the most sophisticated author in the history of Afro-Americans. She has procured numerous literary awards which include a Pulitzer Prize that was secured by her in the year 1988 for her outstanding work *Beloved* and a Noble Prize in the field of literature in 1993. She has been acknowledged as a strident voice for the exploited Blacks who were harassed and mistreated by White Americans. Being herself as a Black African, she knew the hardships of black people and the callous attitude towards them so she has tried to portray all the miseries of Black people in her works before us. The major themes in her works are violence, slavery, oppression, racial discrimination, psychological devastation, feminism and many others. Her works are preoccupied with the quagmires of the Black people during the past as well as the present but she dodges any direct censure of the White Americans because she has slightest interest in the racial confrontation and she desires to write for the people of her own race in particular. Slavery and Suffrage of Blacks is a phase that is indelible for many Afro-Americans even today. The famous novel *Beloved* portrays most realistic picture of the life of Black people. In this current research paper, the focus would be on throwing a light that how the novel sets an example of Saga of Black's Suffrage.

Keywords: Exploitation, quagmire, racial confrontation, slavery, suffrage, callous, etc.

INTRODUCTION

Toni Morrison has emerged as the most famous and significant African-American novelist. Her novel *Beloved* is based on a real incident through which she came across in her life through news clipping when she was looking for the history of Black people. The news was entitled as "A Visit to the Slave Mother who killed her Child" which narrated the story of a mother who killed her own child as she didn't want her child to live her lifespan as a slave. So in order to save her child from slavery, she murdered her own child. This was the incident that gave Morrison the idea to create her story for the novel *Beloved*. As it is based on the most oppressed period of slavery in the history of Black people, the novel dramatizes a haunting experience of the previous and present experience of a woman. The novel also perfectly sets itself for the gender studies as the protagonist Sethe has been shown as a very strong feminine figure of that time. Being a Black and a woman simultaneously her atrocities expanded. But when she killed her child in front of the White Masters who came to catch her, she became the most strongest figure and this deed by her haunted white people so badly that they had to run away as they thought she has gone totally mad because she killed her own child. The following research paper has a modest aim to show the history of slavery and struggles faced by Blacks.

DISCUSSION

Beloved, one of the most famous writings by Toni Morrison draws our attention to the psychological turmoil faced by a woman named Sethe in the context of slavery as after experiencing so many atrocities given by White Masters throughout her past, she was disturbed mentally as she had to kill her own child in order to save her from slavery and callous attitude shown by Whites.

Sethe's Killing of her child is justified by Morrison thus:
That anybody white could take your whole self for anything that came to mind. Not just work, kill, or maim you, but dirty you. Dirty you so bad you couldn't like yourself any more. Dirty so bad you

forgot you forgot who you were and couldn't think it up. Though she and others lived through and got over it, she would never let it happen to her own. The best thing she was, was her children. Whites might dirty her all right, but not her best thing, her beautiful, magical best thing-the part of her that was clean.

There are so many characters in the novel that had very bad experience of slavery at Sweet Home Plantation in Kentucky. The novel has numerous stories and some of these stories revolve around Sethe, Paul D, Baby Suggs, Halle, Denver and the most important character Beloved. The story moves forward in flashback which has been presented before us through the conversation between Paul D and Sethe. Earlier the owners of the Sweet Home Plantation were Mr. and Mrs. Garner who were benevolent and kind by heart. Although they were benevolent masters yet it is very contradictory idea that there was benevolent slavery in the times of Mr. and Mrs. Garner because they were kind towards their slaves in comparison to the other masters. But when Mr. Garner dies and his brother, who has not given any name in the novel rather he has been mentioned as schoolteacher throughout the novel, takes the charge of Sweet Home Plantation. All the slaves called him as schoolteacher as he always imposed his cold rules on the slaves and the alphabet "s" in his name is kept in lowercase which is very ironic itself as although he enjoys the position of an owner and shows extreme power over the slaves but they attribute no respect to him at all as he is very cold, sadistic and vehemently racist in nature. He started oppressing the innocent people who were appointed as slaves in Sweet Home Plantation. The main character Sethe in the novel represents "the silenced voice of millions of Black slave women." She was raped for many times and humiliated by White people.

When Paul D appears at 124, Bluestone Road, she tells him that how the white people stole her milk and schoolmaster's nephews behaved with so much brutality with her. She says, On the other hand Paul D's life is also filled with unbearable horrors. Paul D didn't remember his parents and was also a slave at Sweet Home Plantation. When schoolteacher appears there, who is so odious and strict that the slaves planned to runaway from that place. But in his attempt to run, he was caught and as a part of punishment his hands were chained behind his back and his tongue was held down by an iron bit. Later he was sold to another master, Brandywine and he attempted to kill him. For this he was imprisoned and made to work in mines but he escaped out of that place where there was flood all around. The slavery experiences faced by him made him so broken that he suspected his own manhood but when the ghost of Sethe's killed daughter seduces him and he impregnated her, he regains his confidence that he is a man.

Thus the novel is a best work that can be acclaimed as the saga of Black's courage and suffering. As just before and after the Emancipation act such was suppression of the black people during that time that William Styron wrote,

"Beat a nigger, starve him, leave him wallowing in his own shit and he will be yours for life."
This can also be seen through the conversation between Paul D and Stamp Paid,
"Tell me something, Stamp," Paul D's eyes were rheumy.
"Tell me one thing, how much is a nigger supposed to take? Tell me. How?"
"All he can", said Stamp Paid. "All he can."
"Why? Why? Why? Why? Why?"

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