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Toni Morrison as a Womanist

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Abstract :

In literature we perceive the roles of women evolving through ages, but until recent times, most of published authors were men and depictions of women in literature is biased. There is literacy was strictly limited for female. When women want to write something they allowed to write in the room. When a woman comes with pen it becomes perilous for the process of writing provides her with a better sagacity to her own thoughts and emotions. Women gradually began to write and think for them, they commenced to write what they feel and suffer from this stereotype society. Many female authors converted their feelings into words and write about female and being a female in the society Chloe Anthony Wofford Morrison born on February 18,1931 in Lorain, Ohio, to Ramah and George Wofford. She known as another name of Toni Morrison , was an American novelist, essayist, book editor and professor. She graduated at Howard University in Washington, D.C.in 1949. From childhood she interested to reads many European and African writers with different languages.

Noble Prize awarded Toni Morrison is excogitated to be one of the most popular, passionate and important female author of her era and till today. Her writing gives glimpses of what she suffered and tolerated in her life. In her writings we notice she explicated the social problems of black female, depiction of women slavery, racism, segregation, marriage life, motherhood, sexism, women friendships and so on that she faced to being a black female and black female author. Toni Morrison was an African American female author, she apprehend the piteous and pathetic conditions of black women. She was legend and iconic figure being a female feministic author in America. From 1890 to 1920 we marked the highlight of the first feminist wave. Women were pursuing legal equal rights in the society, Women were given rights to education and paid work. Feminist activities and thoughts developed during the 19th and 20th century. It was a journey of women's for their liberation from imposition which took ages to make women feel they are free from this stereotype society. Toni



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Morrison also wrote for black female's plight and how they feel, in her novel she depicted the phenomenon of black women. Toni Morrison feels the suffering of her female characters we examined she explained the real pain of her character and described the mental and physical condition of her female characters. She does justice with her female characters, sometimes we observe female live dangerous life and be the victim of this stereotype society. Morrison defined sometimes some one's skin colour become racism. She exhibited what she observed and felt from her life as a black woman, she feels, creating, shaping and making a women characters.

Introduction :

Nobel prize winner and Pulitzer prize awarded Toni Morrison was a literary giant of her era and prominent for being both as a female and African-American female author. She played the role of unimpeachable cultural feminist and she always tries to deracinate the prejudice of people about black nationalism. In her works she has exposed the experience of black women in racist and thinking of stereotype society. She has explored feminist consciousness in the social content in her novels. She has written about the life and condition of black people in the United States. She was such an elegant woman who has revealed the spirit of past and truth of her surrounding.

Toni Morrison as a Womanist :

Morrison has explained African -American history in detailed with themes of racism, black nationalism, slavery, women condition and so on. Toni Morrison has denied to be a known as a feminist author, she always wants to give real reflection of the life of African people in America. She has focused on the racism, black nationalism and African people's conflict. When there is a question asked to Toni Morrison about feminist writer she has given such an impressive answer.

When asked to Toni Morrison in a interview 1998,



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“ why distance oneself from feminism ?”

She replied,

“ In order to be as free as I possibly can, in my own imagination, I can't take positions that are closed. Everything I've ever done, in the writing world, has been to expand articulation, rather than to close it, to open doors, sometimes, not even closing the book

– leaving the endings open for reinterpretation, revisitation, a little ambiguity.”

She has replied that I do not want to take any position as a feminist author and other through which I have to close my imagination and feelings. She wants to expose the truth of African women and expressed her feelings in words so, she has written about the condition of black women in her novels and expressed feminist perspectives. But she can not want to bind her thoughts in one word so she has described her emotion about being a black woman in her novels with wonderful writing. She also said, she puts her novel in open ending so one can judge her books so one can reiterate her work.

In 2012 also, she responded to a question about the difference between black and white feminist in the 1970s

She replied,

“ Womanist is what black feminist used to call themselves.”

She also explained,

“ They were not the same thing. And also the relationship with men. Historically, black women have always sheltered their men because they were out there, and they were most likely to be killed.”



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She expressed I would like to be Womanist because its a word which black feminist wants to call themselves. She has described the condition of black women is always under the men in that context men are always superior then them. Because of their colour they can't allowed live life with freedom and free from this stereotype society.

Morrison has created new literary home for African-American voice, she has narrated her experiences from African- American perspective. Through her writing she gave an essential aspects of American reality and creates history in literature. As a black female she has faced many problems during her life from surrounding which she has described in her novels.

Morrison has denied to be a feminist author but we observe in feminism view and feminist perspective in her novels. She has realised crucial condition of women lives which she has depicted through their novels. If as a reader we mark than we find how she her own identity as female author and faced the struggles in her life .

In novels of Morrison she has developed the new literature we can say a women literature which is written by women. As a female author she has a feelings about the condition and development of womanhood through childhood to adulthood. In her work we find the glimpses of feminism or feminist perspective , Morrison has depicted such wonderful and strong women characters which give the answer of such kind of male superiority or stereotype society. As a female author she has given strong and extremely powerful impact on the mind of readers.

When woman wants to write something than she tries to explain what she feels and observe form society as a woman. We mark in most of female authors work's , they have to struggle a lot as a female authors and as be a female also. Such kind of feministic vision we also mark in her novels , how she has experienced and examined a around her society and than after she has tried to explain that observations in her novels. Being a female is not a big issue in the world but follow the tradition of society to be a female it's very dangerous for female.



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When Morrison began to writings, she has criticized by many critics and her own contemporaries of male writers. But she has expressed what she felt and observed in her era, specifically as a female author and be a female and live life in society. There are male superiority in writing also, they think women can not write as they had but as a female author, Morrison has exposed the reality of female life with real reflection because she is a woman and she had gone through such kind of experiences which she has written.

Under the patriarchal system the ideal man-woman relationship is the one where the woman makes the man feel more like a man and the man makes the woman feel more a woman. But in the stereotype society men women relationship is just like a superiority of men on women. How it's difficult to live life for women as a slave in her own home. Women can do everything for their children and family but than also they never get little happiness in their lives, just because of they are women, they have no right to live their lives as they want, they just be a puppet for their family.

Morrison who explores the lives of women and how women are suffering form social and societal convention. It is a good if woman be a wife, daughter, mother, grandmother and friends but if she lives life as other wants to live, woman behaves be like a woman, if she tries to live life according to her desire than society ignores her from her community or family as portrays by Morrison in the character of Sula. She has depicted the life of single woman in her novel **Sula**,

Eva's husband leave her with three children and their is no sources of income, than also Eva raises her three children with hope and for their survival she has lost her one leg. Second character is a mother of Sula, **Hannah** is also leave by her husband and Hannah protects Sula as a single mother. There is a description of many female characters which are leave their impact on reader's mind like **Helen Wright**, **Cecile**, **Rochelle**, most important like Sula is **Nel**, Nel also loves her husband, she is obedient daughter and faithful wife but because of her husband her life becomes like hell. She has lost her best friend Sula and her



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husband. Her husband has cheated her, and leave her for Sula because he has extra marital affair with Sula. The overwhelming matriarchal structure of the homes, there is also an absence of fathers in the novel. Men like BoyBoy and Jude are introduced in the novel, but each of them eventually abandons his paternal role. Even Wiley who remains married to Helene throughout the novel is often at sea and not present to be a father to Nel.

In **The Bluest Eye**, also I examine how the husband of **Pauline Breedlove**, and father of **Pecola** is like behave as an animal. How it's dangerous to live life with such kind of father and husband. Pauline loves her but because of his drinking addiction she hates him so much. Because after drinking he has not such kind of consciousness that he has raped Pecola and Pecola be pregnant. For Pauline her husband is like a giant or like a bad man for her.

The author understand the value, moral and virtues of marriage life and she has expressed how a man forgets all the moral and virtues of marriage life and leave his wife or children to leave alone. Men never turn to see about their wives or children but women always protect their children if they leave or ignore by their husband. Morrison has her own personal marriage life which she live and then after divorced by her husband so if we observe as a female authors, she has exposed the reality of regarding male superiority or men power which she has experienced during her marriage life and after divorce.

Morrison has expressed her life with her female protagonist or female characters. What she thinks about a woman or being a woman. If we observe than Morrison expresses the condition of being a black woman the experience of her childhood. She has described incident that her friend wants to blue eyes that and their childhood innocent which she illustrates through the character of Pecola and Pauline Breedlove in **The Bluest Eye**, with that she explains her view about feminist through the character of Mrs. Mac Teer and daughter of Mrs. Mac Teer, Claudia and Frieda. In the novel of **Sula**, Morrison exposes her feministic perspective through Sula's character and through Sula's character she suggests



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how to live care free life in black community.

When we read the novels of Toni Morrison, I mark that there is her own identity as a female author, she has her own opinions about their female characters and feminist perspective according that she has portrayed her female characters. In her novels she has described that women play all roles like as a mother, daughter, sister, friends, grandmother and so on but she has ask questions regarding the status of women through her writing like women want to equal position in the world without gender discrimination, women shouldn't judge by society, women shouldn't observe by their outlook appearance, women should be free from stereotype society and thinking, women are not the tool of pleasure or sex, Women have all right to live happy life with freedom.

Conclusion :

As a female author Toni Morrison has expressed the life of African American women with new ideas and themes which give new way to women literature about women by women authors. Most of Toni Morrison's novels express a clearly feminist perspective like other feminist writers, Morrison is very much concerned to demonstrate that women are want to live life with freedom and confidence. There are novels **Sula**, **The Bluest Eye** which deals with such kind of psychological and physical conflict of women. **Eva's** character is like typical mother who lost her leg for their children's survival, I mark economical crisis in her life with insecurity, as a mother she lablised to killer of her son. She can't be good mother though she spends her whole life for their children. In the novel **Sula** through **Hannah's** character I mark how a mother's morals virtue and belief affects her daughter's life. That same thing I also observe in life of **Helene Wright** who raised by her religious grandmother, **Cecile Subatt**. **Cecile Subatt** is a strict, religious grandmother, she raised her granddaughter **Helene Wright**, **Hellene** follows morals and religious nature of **Cecile** and be a conventional woman who always believes tradition and culture of society. **Pauline Breedlove** who is a mother of **Pecola** who believes that she is not happy and ugly because of



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her black skin colour and white people live happy life. In her young age she watched Hollywood movies which gave impact on her mind , she always want to be white and live happy life like white people. She feels the black colour is a symbol of ugliness and sadness so she loses her self in movies which impact on her mind that she is ugly and the romantic love gives her beautiful life and happiness. She is forced by society to think that she is not beautiful and happy because of her black skin. Morrison has illustrated such kind of feministic perspective through her writing as a Womanist.



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